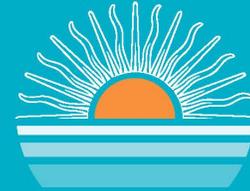


Weekly Asado

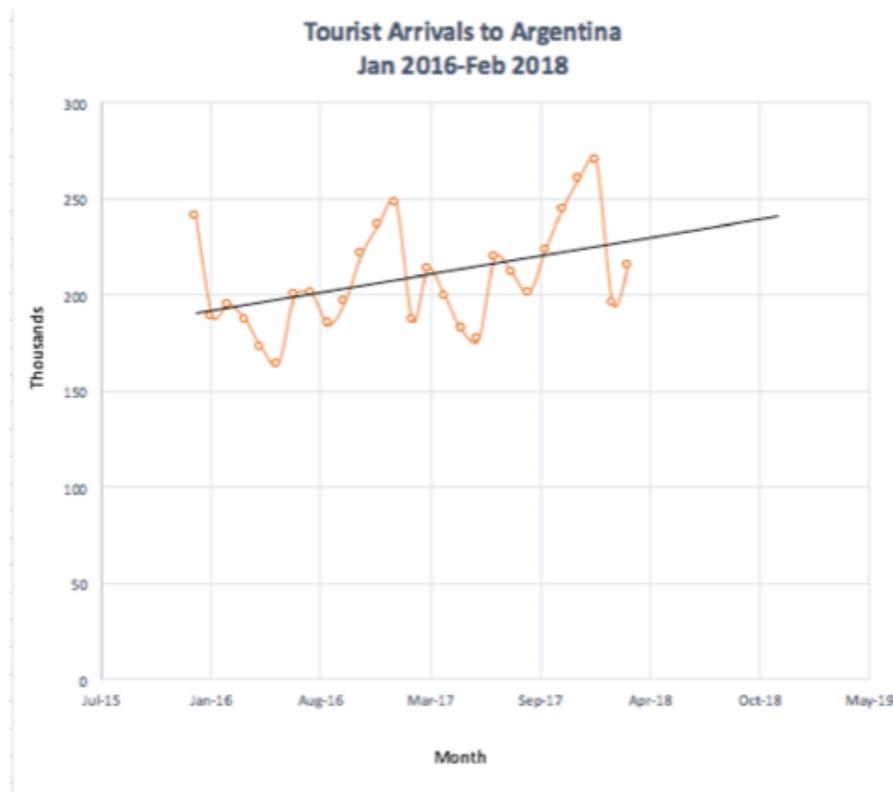


Wilson Center

Argentina Project

Friday, June 1, 2018

Buy low: Empanadas on sale



@ArgentinaProj



The [plummeting peso](#) spooked Argentines last month, and prompted President Mauricio Macri to beeline to the International Monetary Fund. But amid the panic, there was an overlooked silver lining: Argentina's depreciated currency could be a boon to tourism, and help reduce the country's staggering current account deficit.

The Argentine government likes to compare the country to Australia, another geographically remote agricultural powerhouse. But on tourism, there is no comparison. Last year, Australia's tourism industry generated \$42 billion, almost double the \$23 billion economic contribution of the

tourism sector in Argentina, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council. Moreover, the number of international overnight visitors in Argentina actually *fell* between 2014 (7.9 million) and 2016 (7.3 million), according to the United Nations’s World Tourism Organization.

That trend appears to have reversed itself over the past few months (see graph), and without a moment to spare. Argentina’s current account deficit could hit four percent of GDP this year, analysts estimate. Increased tourism could help, and for that, the depreciated peso is a godsend. The weaker currency encourages visitors traveling with dollars and discourages Argentines from taking trips abroad. “*En Iguazú, están felices con la devaluación,*” Argentina’s transportation minister, [Guillermo Dietrich](#), recently [said](#). “*Van a venir más paraguayos, más brasileños, más personas de todas partes del mundo.*”

Bad blood (sausage): Dueling little goats



The Salvadoran [pupusa](#) is beloved in Washington and despite its ubiquity, the capital’s *pupuserías* seem to coexist amicably. Not so for Uruguay’s national dish, the mighty [chivito](#). The hot sandwich – a heap of steak topped by bacon, ham, eggs, tomatoes, green olives, mayonnaise and melted cheese – is at the center of a food fight between the former owners of Fast Gourmet on 14th Street and the restaurant that replaced it in the unusual gas station locale, Panino Gourmet.

Chivitos are rare enough in Washington that the former Fast Gourmet owner, Lina Chovil, was apparently [surprised](#) to find the dish on Panino Gourmet’s menu. She accused the restaurant of “stealing our recipes and concept,” and has since opened a rival food truck, as she works to pay back taxes owed to the city, which reportedly caused the closure of her brick-and-mortar operation. (Ms. Chovil is not alone; The Washington Post also observed “striking similarities between the two menus,” and reported that a former Fast Gourmet cook is the chef at Panino Gourmet.) As for the “clone-like eatery” on 14th Street, as Eater [described](#) it, Panino Gourmet is still promoting the *chivito*, its “top seller and most Delish” [menu item](#).

Don’t want to take sides? Head to Upshur, in Petworth, where [Ruta del Vino](#) serves Uruguayan Tannat, *empanadas* and *chorizo* bathed in chimichurri.

South Korea: South America

Earlier this year, as South Korean trade negotiators retooled the five-year-old free trade agreement with the United States – in response to President Trump’s criticisms of the “horrible” pact – they were also quietly casting about for new, and less nettlesome, partners. Unexpectedly, that quest has reinvigorated talks between Seoul and the Mercosur customs union.

In March, Brazilian President Michel Temer met with Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon, and the two agreed to expedite trade negotiations. Indeed, despite Mercosur’s focus on a long-deferred deal with the European Union, South Korea’s trade ministry says serious negotiations will begin this spring. The potential deal would increase Korean exports of consumer electronic goods and auto parts to South America, and expand Mercosur’s exports to South Korea of corn, soybeans and other grains.

La pantalla grande: Washington Jewish Film Festival



Argentina is home to Latin America’s largest Jewish community, estimated at more than 180,000. Though a small minority in a nation of 44 million, Argentina’s Jews have deep roots that have long attracted interest from the country’s celebrated film industry. Just look at last month’s Washington Jewish Film Festival. Festival organizers included *two films* from Argentina, both examining the lives of Eastern European Jews in South America: “[The Impure](#),” about Jewish women brought to Argentine brothels in the early 20th century, and “[The Last Suit](#),” about a Holocaust survivor in Buenos Aires.

In fact, one of Argentina’s recent blockbusters, “Relatos Salvajes,” also has a uniquely Jewish spin to it, with Jewish religious and cultural themes mentioned in almost every plot of the movie, culminating in a delightfully notorious Jewish wedding scene.

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