



Immigration to Argentina

16th-20th century

Note to Teachers:

The information from this PowerPoint primarily comes from my translation of Califa's comic book, *La inmigración en la Argentina: Los que fueron llegando*. I found this book at El Ateneo bookstore in Buenos Aires, and I was thrilled to find a resource written at a middle school level.

The information presented in the PowerPoint is an overview of Argentina's immigration history, written with middle school students in mind. Although a PowerPoint was the easiest way for me to present the material to teachers, it is lengthy and may not be suitable for all classes. Feel free to adapt to meet your needs.

Starting Point

A discussion of immigration to Argentina should begin with an examination of how conquest and colonization affected the land already inhabited by the indigenous people of the region.

Indigenous Presence

- Argentina was already inhabited by old and developed native tribes when the Spanish arrived.
- Towns existed in the Andes, the plains, and the islands.
- Some towns were based around agriculture, livestock, hunting, fishing, gathering fruits, etc.

Indigenous Presence

- Guaranis, located in the north of Mesopotamia and in Paraguay, navigated the Uruguay and Paraná rivers and settled in Río de la Plata.
- Mapuches of Chile crossed the neuquina mountain chain in order to form relationships with Pehuenches and Tehuelches.



First Immigrants

- In the 16th century, the first immigrants arrived to Argentina: the Spanish.
- Spanish conquest occurred by different routes – from Peru and Chile and by the Río de la Plata.

Spanish Settlements

- The Spanish arriving from Peru founded the first cities of the North: Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Jujuy and Salta.
- Those from Chile founded Mendoza and San Juan.
- Those who arrived by ocean founded Asunción (in Paraguay) and Buenos Aires.



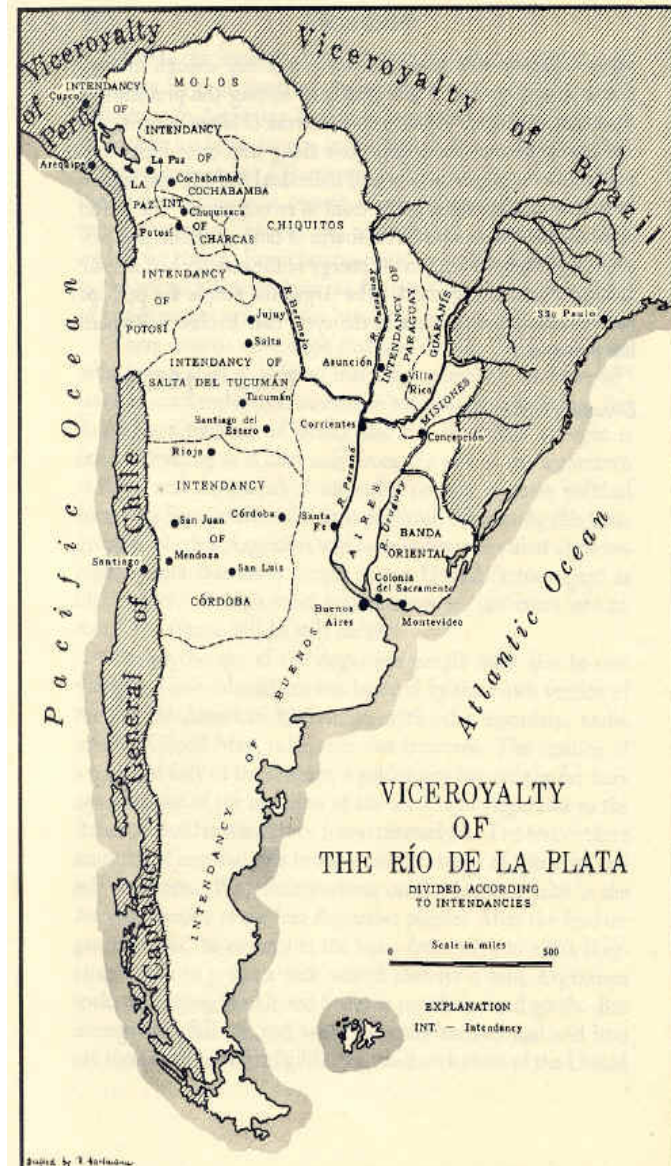
Present-day city of
Tucumán in
Tucumán Province

Division

- Spain had settled several villages by the 17th century.
- By this time, the majority of the population was born in America.
- There was a clear division between Spanish or “peninsulares” (Iberian from Spain) and “criollos” or Creoles (Spanish-speaking Americans).

Spanish Influence

- The Laws of the West Indies prevented Europeans, other than Spanish, from entering America.
 - These laws did not allow entrance to Spanish Moors and Spanish Jews.
- Men from Spain held most of the positions of power in Argentina.
- 1776: Spain created the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata.



Río de la Plata

- El Río de la Plata was an entry port for people and goods.
- The Spanish Crown allowed some foreigners like the English, Portuguese, Italian, and French to trade and settle in Buenos Aires.



Map of the Río de la Plata



View of Buenos Aires from the Río de la Plata, c.1880

Unwilling Immigrants



Sculpture of “The Slave” in
Palermo, Buenos Aires

- Trade to Río de la Plata brought unwilling immigrants – African slaves.
- Start of 19th century: Almost half of the people in cities of the viceroyalty like Buenos Aires, Santiago del Estero, and Tucumán were black and mulatto.

English

- Failed English invasions in 1806 and 1807 led to British soldiers remaining and settling in Buenos Aires or inland cities.
- Wealthy “criollo” families welcomed the British and many married their daughters.

Scottish

- 1825: A group of Scottish immigrants arrived and founded a city called Monte Grande in the province of Buenos Aires.
- They devoted themselves to dairy farming.
- Scottish immigrants also came to Argentine Patagonia and became sheep herders and ranchers.

Sheep ranches in Patagonia



Irish

- There were also a lot of Irish immigrants in Argentina.
- They settled in the countryside and raised sheep.
- Middle of 19th century: 3,500 Irish had settled in Argentina.



Group of Irish immigrants in Argentina in the 19th century



Group of Irish dancers in Argentina

Promises to Foreigners

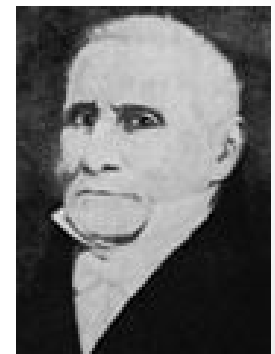
- The First Triumvirate in 1812 offered to protect individuals and families emigrating from other nations who wanted to settle in Argentina.



Manuel de
Sarratea



Juan José Paso



Feliciano
Chiclana

Rosas' Government



- The war for independence, the struggles within the country, and the government of Juan Manuel de Rosas did not encourage immigrants from afar who were coming to Argentina because of individual desire.
- In the meantime, there were some internal migrations for displaced immigrants.

New Ideas

- 1852: Juan Manuel de Rosas was overthrown.
- The overthrow promoted the idea that Argentina should abandon its colonial past and become a modern country.
- An important piece to achieving this new idea was immigration.

New Ideas

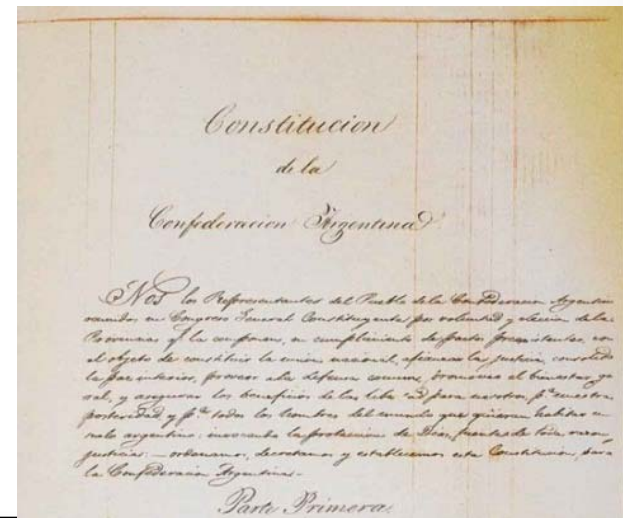
- Argentine politicians and writers, exiled in Uruguay and Chile during Rosas' government, admired the development of European countries and the United States.
- They saw these countries as models for Argentina's future development once Rosas was out of power.

New Ideas

- These individuals came to an agreement about certain aspects of Argentina's future.
- One such agreement was that the country should allow foreign immigrants to settle so that the country was no longer a "desert."

National Constitution

- The National Constitution was approved in May of 1853.
- Its preamble states a number of goals that apply "to all men in the world who wish to dwell on Argentine soil."



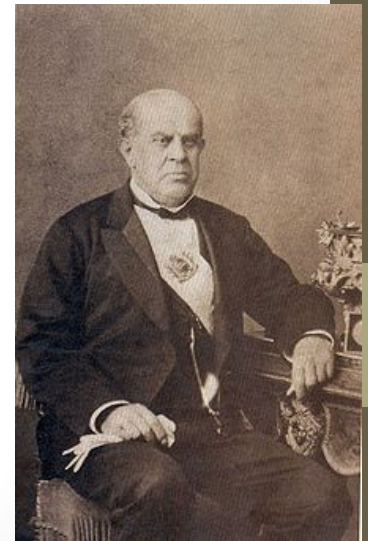
National Constitution

Article 25 reads:

- *The Federal Government will encourage European immigration, and it will not restrict, limit or burden with any taxes the entrance into Argentine territory of foreigners who come with the goal of working the land, improving the industries and teaching the sciences and the arts.*

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento

- Sarmiento, an intellectual, writer, and President of Argentina, was a proponent of immigration as a solution for the country.
- He was convinced that Argentina would leave “backwardness” if it incorporated immigrants.



Domingo Faustino Sarmiento

- He believed British and German immigrants, who were great in number, could educate the “criollo” population to be more like them.
- He also brought a model of urban and agricultural development from the United States to Argentina.

Arrival of Peasants

- Around 1850: Several provinces signed contracts with employers to bring peasants from Europe.
- First province to do so was Corrientes.
- 1853: Corrientes brought the French who could cultivate wheat, corn and cotton.
- The French would become owners of the land after 5 years.

Arrival of Peasants

- Entre Rios, another Argentine province, brought a hundred Germans the same year.
- Each German family received 16 hectares of land, seed, four oxen, two horses, two milking cows with calves, firewood and food to last a year.

Farm Colonies



Photo of Esperanza in
Santa Fe

- 1856: The idea of forming farm colonies spread.
- Many Argentine employers and European businesses offered to bring peasants to Argentina.
- 1856: Three groups arrived to the Port of Buenos Aires, totaling 840 people.
- They traveled by covered wagon to Santa Fe to settle.

Esperanza

- This began the first big colony of immigrants: Esperanza.
- The majority of settlers were Swiss, who spoke French or German.
- The Italians arrived later.
- Each family received more than 30 hectares of land.
- They were to build their homes and only raise enough food to feed themselves the first year.

Esperanza

- The settlers had to protect their houses and fields because of the natives.
- They sold their first grains a year later.
- Esperanza prospered.

Growth of Colonies

- The number of new colonies grew.
- Santa Fe and other provinces founded more colonies.
- A Swiss colony was established in Baradero, the oldest town of Buenos Aires province.



Map showing where Baradero is located

Growth of Communication

- Improved communication was necessary with new settlements.
- 1870: A railway line uniting Rosario with Córdoba was inaugurated.
- This railway connected farming settlements with city markets and ports.
- It required workers, often foreigners, to construct the routes and stations.

Welsh

- Many Welsh migrated to the United States.
- They did not want to live under English political and religious authority.
- They wanted to keep their customs and language.

Welsh

- 1862: A group formed in Wales to settle in Argentina.
- A delegation traveled to learn about the country and negotiate with the government about establishing settlements.

Welsh

- In 1865, 153 settlers went ashore from the *Mimosa* and settled in the Punta Cuevas area.
- New life was not easy at first because there was no drinkable water nearby and the first harvests failed.
- It is believed that in the initial months they stayed in natural caves until they built homes.

Welsh

- Even with hardships, the settlers, with help from the authorities of the city of Carmen de Patagones, founded Puerto Madryn and Rawson.
- They constructed irrigation canals.
- The government delivered domestic animals.
- The relationship with the natives was good because of mutually beneficial trade.

Welsh



A Welsh tea house in
Gaiman, Argentina

- A group traveled to Wales in order to convince others to settle in Patagonia since the Welsh colony was still struggling.
- 1874: A second, larger group arrived.
- Later, Welsh brought tools and machines.
- They founded other cities like Gaiman and Trelew.

Welsh



Old Welsh stone
house in Chubut,
Argentina

- The descendants of the Welsh in Chubut are a large community that maintain many of the same traditions as their ancestors.
- On July 28, they celebrate “El Dia del Desembarco” or Landing Day with recitals of music and poetry.
- They drink tea and eat Welsh torts.

Avellaneda Promotes Immigration



- Immigration was promoted during the presidency of Nicolas Avellaneda (1874–1880).
- The “Ley Avellaneda” was a national law passed in 1876 that encouraged immigration.

Avellaneda Promotes Immigration

- Avellaneda proposed organizing immigration and founding more agricultural colonies.
- He created the General Department of Immigration and the Office of Lands and Colonies.

Avellaneda Promotes Immigration

- Avellaneda wanted to make it easier for immigrating agricultural workers to work and to give them some land ownership.
- He called the provinces to imitate the initiative using provincial land.
- Fourteen new colonies were started by the end of his term.

Ley Avellaneda

- The law permitted the search for those interested in settling in Argentina.
- People called “agents” traveled through European villages encouraging peasants to settle in Argentina.

Ley Avellaneda

- The search for immigrants was profitable in countries experiencing economic and political hardships.
- In Italy, the poor saw no future and were enticed to settle elsewhere.

Help for Immigrants

- Some countries published manuals or guides to help immigrants.
- In Italy, there was a government office that advised those who wanted to leave Italy.
- There were printed brochures and books with simple explanations about Argentina, including the country's customs.



Jewish Population

- German Jewish banker, Baron Mauricio de Hirsch, founded a society to help Russian Jews immigrate to Argentina.
- He bought land in Santa Fe, Entre Rios, Buenos Aires, La Pampa and Santiago del Estero.
- The society paid for most of the immigrants' travel costs and necessities during their first years.

Jewish Population

- In 1896, the number of admitted Jews was 6,757 and in 1910, the number grew to around 19,000.
- By then, Jews had more than 600,000 hectares of land cultivated in Argentina.
- From the initial colonies, many Jews organized to go live in other parts of Argentina.

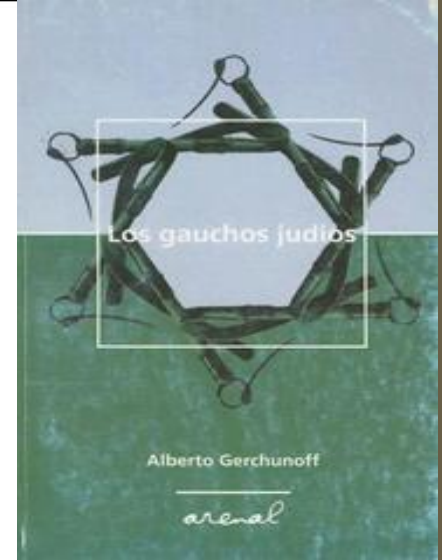
Jewish Population

- Later, Jews came from Romania and Poland.
- The presence of Jews grew in the 20th century due to persecution by Hitler's government in Germany.



Libertad Synagogue in Buenos Aires

Jewish Population



- Jews that settled in the countryside adopted many “criollo” customs.
- In Santa Fe and Entre Rios, these Jews were called “gauchos judíos.”
- A writer, Alberto Gerchunoff, wrote the book *Los Gauchos Judios* in 1910, describing this lifestyle.

French

- 1884: Clemente Cabanettes, a Frenchman who settled in Argentina, traveled to France and returned with a group of almost 200 French peasants.
- They founded a colony that is today the city of Pigue.



Clemente
Cabanettes

French

- 1898: These French settlers founded a cooperative society to help in case of bad harvests and to buy tools and improve farms.
- This began the activity of cooperatives in Argentina.
- It was soon imitated by other colonies in the country.

French

- The first French farms had houses close together and shared a water windmill.
- This let settlers be close and help one another.

Immigrants Help Economy

- The settlers' crops allowed Argentina to stockpile its own supply of wheat.
- By the end of 1875, Argentina had a supply of wheat to export.
- The major exports were still meat and wool.



Immigrants Help Economy

- The main areas of wheat production included Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Entre Rios and south of Córdoba.
- In order to encourage people to buy Argentine wheat, the government put high taxes on imports like flour.

Refrigeration

- Another great agricultural change was the invention of refrigeration.
- This allowed meats to be preserved longer.
- The first refrigerated ship arrived in 1876.
- The invention of refrigeration led to slaughterhouses.

Cows



- Argentina started to bring other breeds of cows and sheep from Europe in order to improve their existing stock.
- The Holland dairy cow was brought to the Pampas in 1880.

Cows

- As a result, the “Holando-Argentino” breed started.
- This breed produces almost all of the milk in Argentina.
- The Irish and Basque immigrants were involved with dairy production.

Conflicts with Indigenous

- The use of agricultural lands became more limited.
- Native tribes controlled lands in much of Argentina until 1879.

Conflicts with Indigenous

- The government could not control more than half the province of Buenos Aires.
- The army owned a line of small forts that tried to limit the movements of the Pampas Indians.

Conflicts with Indigenous

- Some Indians routinely raided ranches, capturing cattle and people.
- Córdoba, San Luis and Mendoza were dangerous areas due to conflicts with natives.
- The government could not monitor Patagonia, except for a few coastal cities.
- El Chaco was another region dominated by the indigenous.

Government Approach to Natives

- The opinions of what to do with the natives were divided.
- Some said that the natives should be eliminated through warfare.
- Others said that the decision was up to the state, but that natives should be incorporated into civilization.

General Julio A. Roca



- General Julio A. Roca became president in 1880.
- He supported using the military to end indigenous power.
- He believed he would be victorious because the army possessed new firearms – Remington rifles.



"Conquest of the Desert" by
Juan Manuel Blanes

Campaña al Desierto

- The Desert Campaign was a military campaign beginning in 1878.

Campaña al Desierto

- This military campaign included the death of peaceful natives and the forceful resettlement of others.
- Native women were enslaved and brought to houses in the cities to do housework and nanny for families.
- The defeat of the Indians allowed the Argentine state to gain large amounts of land.

Rio Negro

- 1882: Several colonies were settled in the Rio Negro Valley.
- These colonies developed into cities like General Roca, General Conesa and Choele Choel.
- These colonies had immigrants from Italy, France, England and later, Jews from Russia.

Rio Negro

- Andean rivers provided water to the lands through ditches.
- An Italian engineer named Cesar Cipolletti helped with reservoirs and channels of water.
- These irrigation techniques made it possible to grow fruit in the Rio Negro valley.

Military Campaigns

- Another military campaign in El Chaco ended the indigenous control in the region.
- Agricultural colonization in Chaco and in Misiones started with families from Italy, Poland, Spain, Germany, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, etc.
- The idea of resisting the Indians led to the name Resistencia, the capital of the Chaco province.

Misiones



- This area received immigrants from Ukraine, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland.
- In the 20th century, immigrants came from Arabia, Russia and Japan.
- The colony increased production of a typical crop: yerba mate.
- The immigrants adopted the custom of drinking mate.

Apóstoles and Oberá

- Apóstoles and Oberá were cities that grew from immigration.
- In Oberá, the people celebrate the annual National Festival of the Immigrant.
- The immigrant communities and their descendants participate in the festival.



Ukrainian Ballet performs

Misiones Music

- The presence of many cultures in Misiones is evident in its folk music.
- The music includes types of European origin: the chotis, a dance typical of Madrid, the waltz and the polka.

Misiones Music

- The accordion and the violin were instruments brought by the immigrants and used in traditional Argentine music.
- Chamamé, a type of folk music from the Argentine northeast, incorporates the Spanish guitar and European accordion.



Musicians in San Telmo, Buenos Aires use the accordion and violin.

Arab Immigrants

- Around 1880, Arab immigrants arrived from Syria, Lebanon and Palestine.
- These immigrants settled in Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Salta, La Rioja and Catamarca.
- They devoted themselves to business in small stores or as peddlers.

Arab Immigrants

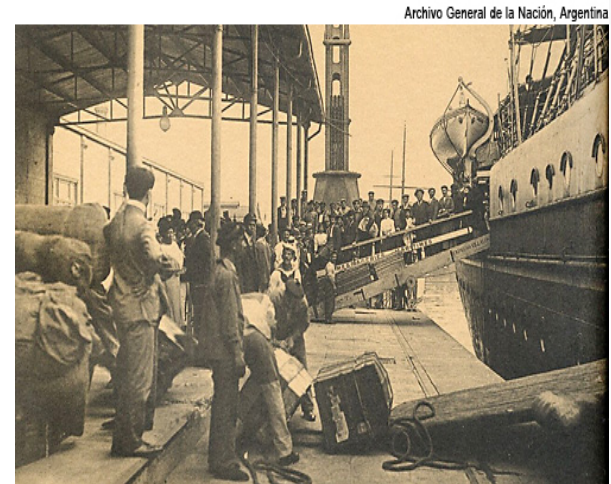
- These immigrants acquired customs like drinking mate.
- Those who returned to their countries continued to drink mate.
- Syria and Lebanon receive almost half of the exports of Argentine yerba mate.

Growth of Cities

- Not all immigrants wanted to work in the fields.
- Cities grew and needed workers in all types of trades.
- By 1890, the majority of immigrants were living in the cities.

Arrival of Immigrants

- The port of Buenos Aires regularly received ships with immigrants.
- When a ship with immigrants arrived, workers from the General Immigration Office reviewed documents.



Immigrants disembark at the Port of Buenos Aires

Arrival of Immigrants

- The General Immigration Office tried to get immigrants jobs and paid for the expenses of their relocation.
- They offered courses on agricultural machinery.
- They had interpreters who spoke several languages.
- They had an office dedicated to women's work.

Arrival of Immigrants



- 1906: The Hotel de Inmigrantes, or Immigrant Hotel, was built near the port to house immigrants until they found work or until their families came to retrieve them.
- The hotel allowed thousands of people to stay free of charge.
- Immigrants remained between five and fifteen days until the Immigration Office got them work.

Immigrant Hotel



- The hotel had four floors.
- On the ground floor, there was the dining area, kitchen and garden.
- The bedrooms were located on the upper floors.
- During the day, women took care of the children and housework.
- Men left to learn more about the city.

Growth of Cities

- The cities of Buenos Aires and Rosario grew as more foreign immigrants remained in the cities.
- There was a migration from the countryside to the cities.
- According to a census taken in the city of Buenos Aires:

Year	Inhabitants	% of Foreigners
1869	187,126	40%
1895	663,854	37%
1914	1,575,814	49%

Growth of Cities

- Between 1880 and 1910, more than 3,200,000 foreigners arrived to Argentina.
- 2,100,000 people settled permanently.
- Some immigrants changed their minds after they arrived, or they were unable to find jobs.
- Others came to Argentina in order to make money and then return to their own country.

Italians and Spanish

- During the late 1800s and early 1900s, most immigrants came from Italy and Spain.

	Italians	Spanish
Between 1869–1895:	51%	19%
Between 1895–1914:	36%	41%

Ethnic Neighborhoods

- Immigrants often settled together in certain neighborhoods: Jews in Villa Crespo; the Italians in la Boca; the Spaniards in San Telmo.



Street in San Telmo,
Buenos Aires



Street in La Boca,
Buenos Aires

Conventillos

- The tenement house or “conventillo” became a place for poor immigrants to live.
- Conventillos were collective dwellings, where a person or a family rented a room.
- They shared other spaces like the bathroom, laundry room, patio and sometimes the kitchen.



Patio of a conventillo around the beginning of the 20th century



Newspapers

- Different immigrant communities started newspapers.
- Sometimes newspapers were written in the immigrants' native language like La Patria degli Italiani in 1876.



New Political Ideas

- The large number of immigrants began to frighten wealthy “criollos,” who saw their world changing.
- Immigrants brought new and strange political ideas from their countries to Argentina.
- Immigrants shared socialist and anarchist ideas and organized the first trade unions and political parties.

Modern Working Class

- Immigration led to the rise of the modern working class.
- Strikes and demonstrations started.
- On May 1, 1890, the first “Day of the Worker” was celebrated in Argentina.
- In Buenos Aires, nearly 1,800 people, almost all foreigners, attended the event.



Demonstration of the 1st of May 1909 in Buenos Aires

Modern Working Class

- 1902: The government passed a law that said that any immigrant considered "undesirable" could be expelled from the country.
- This law was intended to scare the political leaders or trade unions that were not native Argentines.

Education

- 1884: Law 1420 of Common Education established mandatory free primary education.
- The law's goal, in part, was to make the immigrants and their children more "Argentine."

Military Service



- 1901: Obligatory Military Service was required of all native Argentine.
- The sons of immigrants learned that their country was Argentina.

Note: Serving in the Argentine military is no longer compulsory.

Decline of Immigration

- Around 1920, the arrival of immigrants declined.
- However, more immigrants arrived in the next twenty years due to:
 - the end of WWI
 - totalitarian governments in Germany and Italy
 - the Spanish Civil War
 - WWII

Problems in Europe

- The problems in Europe led to hundreds of people fleeing to countries all over the world, including Argentina.
- Many immigrants had important jobs, but political persecution forced them to immigrate to other countries.

Bordering Countries

- Some people from countries bordering Argentina settled in nearby provinces.
- Others traveled to Buenos Aires, the Atlantic coast, or Patagonia.
- Immigration was often temporary.
- Immigrants from bordering countries worked harvesting crops or at jobs in the city until they made enough money to return home.

Bordering Countries

Bolivian Immigration

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number of Immigrants that Arrived</i>	<i>Number of Immigrants that Left</i>
1938–1947	22,232	21, 437
1948–1957	82, 194	47, 326
1958–1967	209,653	131, 268
1968–1974	224, 451	149, 129

Bordering Countries

- Immigrants from Paraguay began entering Argentina in 1947 due to a civil war.
- Most of these immigrants worked in construction and lived in Buenos Aires.

Bordering Countries

- There was also immigration from Chile and Uruguay.
- Many Chileans settled in Patagonia.
- Those from Uruguay preferred Buenos Aires.
- The mother of Nestor Kirchner was a Chilean immigrant.



Nestor Kirchner,
former President
of Argentina

Bordering Countries

- Immigrants from countries like Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay did not always have the documentation to enter the country.
- When immigrants do not have documentation, they are considered “illegal immigrants.”

Asian Immigration

- In the last thirty years, a significant number of Asian immigrants have arrived in Argentina from China, Taiwan and Korea.
- Japanese immigrants arrived after 1920.
- Some lived in the countryside, others in the city.
- The Japanese were active in horticulture.



Japanese garden in
Buenos Aires

Asian Immigration

- In Misiones, the Japanese cultivated tea and yerba mate.
- In the cities, they started cafés or dry cleaners.

Asian Immigration

- 1960: Korean immigration and Chinese immigration became important.
- The impact of this immigration became visible after 1980.
- Most of these immigrants came with enough resources to start businesses – supermarkets, shops or textile factories.



Chinese supermarket in Argentina

Asian Immigration

- Chinese, Korean and Japanese restaurants have been successful in the big cities.
- Chinese food and Japanese food, like sushi, have become well known.



Chinese restaurant in
Belgrano, Buenos Aires

Influence of Immigration

- Immigration brought not only people, but also ideas and customs that influenced the national Argentine identity.
- Soccer was brought to the country by the British, who came as railroad employees.

Fútbol stadium in
Buenos Aires



Food

- Many of the foods Argentines eat came from other countries.
- Argentine cuisine is a mixture.
- They have pizzas, pastas, stews, desserts and ice cream that reflect the influence of the immigrants.



Ice cream with dulce
de leche

Food

- Empanadas are served throughout Latin America because they arrived with the conquistadors.
- Rice with milk or “arroz con leche” was also brought to America by the conquistadors.
- “Arroz con leche” was actually inherited from Spain’s own conquerors: the Arabs. Arabs brought rice, sugar, and delicious spices like cinnamon to Spain.



Empanadas



Arroz con leche

Food

- Stews or casseroles came from Europe. They incorporated vegetables and legumes.
- Milanesa is a classic of Argentina that came from Italy; it is named after the Italian city of Milan.

Chicken Milanesa



Tango

- The Tango reflects the influence of immigration on Argentina.
- It is the most typical Argentine symbol.
- It is a mix of different dances and music.



A couple dancing the tango in San Telmo, Buenos Aires.

Tango

- The tango was developed in the brothels of Buenos Aires.
- The dance combines the Cuban habanera, the milonga, African candombes, Andalusian tangos and Italian melody.
- The Italians contributed to the dance with nostalgic and sorrowful music, typical of the thoughts of immigrants longing for their homeland.

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