



10 dishes every visitor to Argentina needs to try

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President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama have been immersing themselves in Argentinian culture during their visit to South America, tangoing with professional dancers at a state dinner in Buenos Aires.

While beef is the backbone of Argentina's daily diet, there are plenty of other tasty treats awaiting the Obamas in the world's eighth-largest country.

Besides taking inspiration from Italian and Spanish migrants, Argentina's dishes also feature ingredients from the Andean northwest as well as Patagonia in the south.

Ready to start eating?

Here are 10 of the top dishes every visitor to Argentina should try.

Argentina's favorite street food, these stuffed dough pockets are similar to Puerto Rico's empanadilla or a Cornish pasty.

Translating as "wrapped in bread," empanadas come baked or fried and can be veggie or carnivorous.

Common fillings include chicken, cheese and ham, sweetcorn, caprese or blue cheese.

Beef -- either chopped or sliced by hand -- is always a popular option, though seasoning such as cumin, spring onion, boiled egg or potato depends on the province of origin.

Look out for regional specialties, too: quinoa and goat's cheese in the northwest province of Jujuy, or lamb in Patagonia.

So how to tell the difference between flavors?

Most empanaderas provide a handy repulgue (a term used to describe the method used to fold the edges of the dough) map as a guide through the different crimped edges, which denote flavors.

Another cheap and cheerful street food hit, choripan is usually served as an entree at an asado (barbecue).

But thanks to its hands-on shape, this sausage sandwich (where chorizo or sausage

teams up with pan or bread) is an ideal snack for travelers on the go.

You can slather it in chimichurri, a spicy sauce made from oregano, parsley, garlic, chili flakes and red wine vinegar -- or salsa criolla, a tomato, onion and red bell pepper variant.

While chorizo is usually made from pork, boar sausages can also be found in some restaurants.

While Argentinian pies might share some physical resemblances with their Neapolitan cousins -- they have a circular form and dough base. That's where the similarities end.

Inch-high crusts tend to go light on tomato sauce while overcompensating with so much Argentinian-style mozzarella cheese, it drips down the side. Garnishes include green olives, oregano, or dried chili flakes.

An entire cheese-and-tomato pizza is often simply referred to as una muzza. Some traditional pizzerias in Buenos Aires sell by the slice, designed to be eaten standing at the bar.

Customers can also order faina, a filling slice of chickpea pancake, to soak up the gooey cheese.

Another Argentinian dish with Italian influence is milanesa, known as escalope in the rest of the world.

Usually made from silverside -- a round of beef from the outside of the leg - or chicken breast, the meat is hammered down to a thin cut before being bathed in breadcrumbs, then either fried or baked.

Toppings, however, raise this dish's excitement levels.

A caballo (on horseback) means topped with a fried egg, a la napolitana ups the ante with cheese and tomato sauce, while a la suiza uses gruyere.

Larger appetites should order completa, with ham, cheese and tomato sauce. Best accompanied with French fries and a token salad.