

# Puerto Madero

## EXPENSIVE

\*\*[Cabana las Lilas](#) ARGENTINE This is where locals always bring out-of-towners to impress them. Widely considered the best *parrilla* in Buenos Aires, Cabana las Lilas is always packed. The menu pays homage to Argentine beef, which comes from the restaurant's private *estancia* (ranch). The table "cover"- which includes dried tomatoes, mozzarella, olives, peppers, and delicious garlic bread-nicely whets the appetite, but don't forget that you're here to order steak. The best cuts are the rib-eye, baby beef, and thin skirt steak. Order sautéed vegetables, grilled onions, or Provencal-style fries separately. Service is hurried but professional. This enormous eatery offers indoor and outdoor seating, and in spite of its high price, it is casual and informal with patrons coming in everything from suits to shorts. Alicia Moreau de Justo 516. at Villaflor in Dique 3.. Reservations recommended. Main courses \$11-\$20. Daily noon-midnight. Metro: L. N. Alem.

## Recoleta

\*\*\*[La Biela](#) (Café) Various Sources Originally a small sidewalk cafe opened in 1850, La Biela earned its distinction in the 1950s as the rendezvous choice of race-car champions. Black-and-white photos of these Argentine racers decorate the huge dining room. Today artists, politicians, and neighborhood executives (as well as a fair number of tourists) all frequent La Biela, which serves breakfast, informal lunch plates, ice cream, and crepes. The outdoor terrace sits beneath an enormous 19th-century gum tree **opposite the church of Nuestra Senora del Pinar and the adjoining Recoleta Cemetery**. This place ranks among the most important cafes in the city, with some of the best sidewalk viewing anywhere in Recoleta. You might just feel like you're in Paris when you come here. Av. Quintana 596, at Alvear. Main courses \$3-\$5, Daily 7am-3am. No metro access.

\*\*\*[Oviedo](#) (Spanish inspired seafood & pasta) Soft lighting, white tablecloths, tranquil ambience, and sea-themed artwork adorning the walls will greet you in this elegant Spanish-style establishment in the heart of Recoleta. In a meat-centric city like Buenos Aires, beautifully cooked seafood is a welcome change, and Oviedo is the best in the city. From classics to modern creative, the kitchen turns out beautifully plated fillets of fish—don't miss their daily catch with pickled baby vegetables and the pristine shellfish. They're no slouches in the meat department either. Top it all off with one of the better wine lists in the area, and you're in for a memorable lunch or dinner. Various sources. Antonio Beruti 2602 at Ecuador

\*\*\***Dahau Restaurant** (Fodors) An oasis of elegance and grace in the heart of old, wealthy Recoleta, the Duhau is not only a grand hotel, but it also serves up some of the best food of any hotel in the city. While French technique may be the base, the ingredients are pure South America. Particularly favored by the chef are the seafood and meats of Patagonia. Standout dishes include butter-soft Angus tenderloin, crispy sweetbreads, and a decadent molten chocolate cake. If the weather is nice, grab a table on the terrace overlooking the courtyard gardens. Don't miss a pre- or post-dinner visit to the wine and cheese bar with a fantastic array of each, by glass, bottle, and small plate, respectively, and then take an after-meal walk through the hotel's underground art gallery. In the Park Hyatt

## INEXPENSIVE

\*\***Juana M PARRILA** (Fodors) This amazing little parrilla is easily overlooked, but you shouldn't miss it. A family-owned affair, it takes its name from its owner and is known almost solely to Portenos who want to keep this place all to themselves. Located in the basement of an orphanage, which was once the city's Catholic University, this neoclassical building is one of the few saved from the highway demolition that created the nearby La Recova area. This cavernous industrial-chic space is white and luminous by day, with seating for more than 210 patrons. At night, when the space is lit only by candlelight, trendy young patrons flood in, chattering the night away. The menu is simple, high-quality, and amazingly inexpensive, with a free unlimited salad bar with several healthy options. Carlos Pellegrini 1535 (basement), at Libertador, across from the La Recova area. Main courses \$3-\$4, AE, MC, V. Daily noon-4pm and 8pm-12:30am. No metro access.

## Palermo

\*[La Cabrera Norte](#) Parrilla (Ivonne & Jenny & Fodors) 5127 Cabrera (La Cabrera I at 5099 Cabrera so make sure you go to Norte)—make reservations (no one will be in restaurants before 9 pm, 10 pm on the weekends) and order the Lomo

**La Dorita** Parrilla (Fodors) Humbolt & Costa Rica Occupies two corners of the street

**Miranda** Parrilla (Fodors) Costa Rica 5602

\*\*\***Don Julio** Parrilla (Fodors, Jenny) Behind an unassuming facade, and amid rows and rows of empty wine bottles that festoon every available surface, one of Palermo's best steak houses awaits you. A mixed local and expat crowd packs the place at lunch and dinner, dining on the fantastic ojo de bife (rib eye) and cuadril (rump steak), plus great chorizo sausages, and pretty much anything else you might want off a grill. One of the city's better curated wine lists adds to the fun—ask for Pablo, the owner, who knows the ins and outs of every bottle on his list. Address: Guatemala 4691, at Gurruchaga, Palermo Soho

[La Cabrera](#) Parrilla (Fodors) Palermo's best parrilla is on the quiet corner of Cabrera and Thames. Fun paraphernalia hangs everywhere, giving the feel of an old grocery store. La Cabrera is particularly known for its excellent provoleta de queso de cabra (grilled goat cheese) and its chinchulines de cordero (small lamb intestines). Try also the cuadril vuelta y vuelta (rare rump steak) and the mollejas (sweetbreads), which are also top-notch. The servings are abundant, as is the noise. What really sets it apart from other parrillas are the complimentary side dishes like pumpkin purée, eggplant salad, and others. Address: Cabrera 5099, Palermo Soho,

Rio Alba Parrilla (Fodors) In terms of quality, price, and charm, this is the best parrilla in Buenos Aires. Period. It consistently serves the tastiest and tenderest cuts of beef. The asado de tira is particularly good, as is the flavorful entrana. Ask for a minigrill at your table to keep your meat warm; you're going to need time to finish the enormous servings. The old-school waiters wear vests and bow ties and refuse to write anything down, but they always get the order right. This place is packed every night of the week with businesspeople and families. If you arrive after 9:30 pm, expect to wait for a table. Address: Cervino 4499, Palermo

**Social Paraíso** LUNCH (Various) Simple, airy, friendly, elegant—this Med-Argentine bistro has just the vibe for a lunch or dinner stop after a round of shopping. Pastas such as ravioli are best. Vegetarians will also be happy here, with inventive entrées that feature meaty vegetables like eggplant. Social Paraíso has kept its prices low even as its fame has grown, and the two-course lunch is always a steal. It gets crowded and loud in here, but that adds to the charm. You can practically sit inside the kitchen and watch the young cooks work their magic. A small open-air patio fits a few tables; if the weather and mood are right, ask to sit outside. Address: Honduras 5182, Palermo Soho

Closed Monday

# San Telmo

**\*La Brigada** (Fodors) STEAK You'd be hard-pressed to do better for Argentine steaks, anytime, anyplace. Amid elaborate decor, including scores of soccer mementos, a courtly staff will treat you to unimpeachable *mollejas* (sweetbreads) and *chinchulines de chivito* (kid intestines), plus a brilliant array of grilled steaks. The baby beef is tender enough to cut with a spoon. Skip the sister restaurant in Barrio Norte, which isn't up to the same standard. Reservations recommended. Estados Unidos 465, between Bolivar and Defensa, San Telmo. \$-\$\$\$ . Closed Mon. Metro: Independencia.  
AE, MC, V

**\*\*Bar El Federal Cafe** This bar and restaurant, on a quiet corner in San Telmo, presents a beautiful step back in time. Fortunately, as another *bar notable*, it will stay that way forever. The first thing that will strike you here is the massive carved wood and stained glass ornamental stand over the bar area, though it originally came from an old pastry shop and is being reused here. Local patrons sit at the old tables whiling away their time looking out onto the streets, chatting, or sitting with a book and drinking tea or espresso. The original tile floor remains, and old signs, portraits, and small antique machines decorate this space, which has been in business since 1864. Bar El Federal is among the most Porteño of places in San Telmo, a neighborhood that has more of these establishments than any other. Some of the staff has been here for decades on end, and proudly so. Food is a collection of small, simple things, mostly sandwiches, steaks, *lomos* (sirloin cuts), and a very large salad selection. High-quality pastries are also offered to complement the menu. Corner of Perú and Carlos Calvo, San Telmo. \$2-\$6. Sun-Thurs 7am-2am; Fri-Sat 7am-4am. AE, MC, V. Metro: Independencia.

**\*\*La Coruña Cafe** This extremely authentic old cafe and restaurant bar, another of the bares y cafés notables protected by law, is the kind of place where you'd expect your grandfather to have eaten when he was a teenager. Young and old alike come to this bar, which is a very local spot, with people catching soccer games on television or quietly chatting away as they order beer, small snacks, and sandwiches. The TV seems to be the only modern thing in here. Music plays from a wooden table-top radio that must be from the 1950s, and two wooden refrigerators dating from who knows when are still in use for storing food. The old couple that owns the place, José Moreira and Manuela López, obviously subscribe to the view that if it ain't broke, there's no reason for a new one. Bolívar 994 At Carlos Calvo, San Telmo. Daily 9am-10pm. \$2-\$4. Metro: Independencia

## Ice cream

**Persicco** at Salguero y Cabello in Palermo (**Ivonne too**)

**Volta** in Palermo on Avenida del Libertador

**Freddo**: You Hill find one store in Quintana and Ayacucho in **Recoleta** (half a block Hawai from where I lived).

## Bars

**Gran Bar Danzón** A small, intimate bar, Danzón attracts a fashionable crowd. An excellent barman serves exquisite cocktails, and a small selection of international food is offered as well. Smart, relaxing lounge music is played at night. Libertad 1161 at Santa Fe, (Retiro).

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