Dear Members of ICADS Societies,

I've just completed booking my travel arrangements for the upcoming World Congress in November. It took longer than I anticipated. Some parts are fairly straightforward. Other parts are more complicated. I'm sharing my research with you in the hope that it will simplify your booking decisions.

First it must be acknowledged that one size doesn’t fit all. Different people prioritize different factors. The most common options are lowest price, shortest travel time, preferred departure and/or arrival times and convenience of fewest steps to get from point A to point B.

The website that I have found to be consistently the most helpful in sorting through all the many options is www.kayak.com. It allows you to book multi-city itineraries as well as one-way and round trips. It will automatically show you the lowest price fare as well as the shortest travel time. There are many options to select particular carriers, alliances and departure and arrival times.

For people who will only be attending the Congress in Buenos Aires, the booking procedure will be relatively simple – a round-trip ticket from your home city to Ministro Pistarini International Airport. The three-letter code is EZE.

Here is a link to a website that provides information on transfer options from EZE to the city center. https://www.welcomepickups.com/buenos-aires/airport-transfer-to-city/

For people going to the pre-tour in Mar del Plata, things are more complicated. The three-letter code for Mar del Plata is MDQ. There is only one flight each day from EZE to MDQ – Aerolineas Argentinas #1600 Departing at 9:00 AM arriving at MDQ at 10:05 AM. The problem is that the vast majority of arriving international flights arrive after 9:00 AM or such a short time before 9:00 AM that there is not enough time for a legal connection – the minimum amount of time needed to deplane, clear customs and immigration and walk to the domestic departure gate.

Is there a Plan B? Yes! Similar to New York City with JFK and LaGuardia, Buenos Aires has a second, domestic airport – Jorge Newberry – with the three letter code AEP.
There are currently five different non-stop flights from AEP to MDQ departing 8:00 AM, 1:25 PM, 3:15 PM, 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM.

The good news is that these one-hour flights are relatively inexpensive – somewhere between 50 and 90 USD. It is best to buy a ticket on these flights as a separate 1-way ticket. When I included it with the other international segments from my home city to EZE – returning either from EZE or Montevideo (MVD), the total fare increased by several hundred dollars.

How does one get from EZE to AEP? Here is a place to start: http://transargentina.com

How does one get from the airport at Mar del Plata to your hotel? There are taxis. Beyond that, I have not yet been able to determine if there are shuttle vans.

For thrift minded people, there is shuttle service from EZE to Mar del Plata in vans.

There is also frequent deluxe motor coach service with onboard lavatories departing from the central bus terminal in Buenos Aires. The link to the following website gives additional information about these options: https://www.rome2rio.com/s/Buenos-Aires-Ministro-Pistarini-Airport-EZE/Mar-del-Plata-Airport-MDQ I’m not sure if the pricing is accurate and current. This topic is also discussed on the Trip Advisor travel forum.

Transportation from Mar del Plata to Buenos Aires is included in the cost of the pre-tour as is transportation from Buenos Aires via ferryboat to the start of the post-tour in Montevideo.

The last issue is what to do at the end of the post-tour in Montevideo.

The least complicated option is to book an onward flight from Carrasco International Airport in Montevideo (MVD).

Returning to EZE airport in Buenos Aires from Montevideo is a three-step process.

1. Transfer from hotel to ferry dock
2. Journey time from dock in Montevideo to the dock in Buenos Aires
3. Transfer from dock in Buenos Aires to EZE

The fastest, best-known ferry company is Buequebus. Their website is buquebus.com. At the present time availability is only loaded into their system up to the last day of September 2019. The most likely day that post-tour participants would want to return to Buenos Aires is Saturday, November 16th. The latest similar date for which availability is loaded is Saturday, September 28, 2019.

The schedule is not user-friendly to someone who wants to return home as quickly as possible. Buequebus offers two types of service – fast with a journey time of 2:15 and slow with a journey time of 4:30. On Saturday, September 28th, the fast service is only available in the evening – departing at 7:30 PM and arriving in Buenos Aires at 9:45 PM – too late to connect with most evening departures.

The earlier, slow departures are as follows:

LV 6:46 AM – AR 11:16 AM - This would work but requires a very early hotel departure.

LV 1:46 PM – AR 6:16 PM – This might work depending on your flight departure time and advance check-in requirement for your flight.
Of course, if one wishes to spend one or more additional days in Buenos Aires, there is no problem.

Do you want maximum level of door-to-door service with minimum handling of luggage? Yes, it’s wonderful to see that man holding a sign with your name on it as soon as you emerge from immigration! Here’s where you can find him: https://www.viator.com/tours/Buenos-Aires/Buenos-Aires-International-Airport-Private-Arrival-Transfer/d901-5239EZEAPTHTL_P

To the best of my knowledge, this information is accurate as of today. Travel schedules and prices are always changing. If any of you have personal knowledge of any of these destinations and can correct any errors or omissions in this summary, it would help all of us to receive the updates.

If you have any questions regarding travel, please contact our Argentine travel expert, Nathalia Canet - nathaliacanet@hotmail.com.

There is an old saying – “Man plans and God laughs.” Unanticipated events are always happening. Some of them impact travel plans. Experienced travellers know the value of Travel Insurance.

Best,

Joe Loundy, President
ICADS Board of Directors
(Former Travel Agent)