

# GAY FRIENDLY ARGENTINA HAS GOT THE EDGE



On 15th of July, a bill legalizing same-sex marriage was passed in Argentina thus making it the first Latin American country to do so. It comes as no surprise that an already popular holiday destination will attract much more international attention because of it this year.

After a heated debate which divided the country, **Argentinean President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner finally signed the bill which legalizes same-sex marriage on 15th July.** Many aggressively fought against it and while the capital Buenos Aires happily accepted, numerous rural country areas which are deeply Catholic find the new law difficult to accept. However, **tourism experts agree this is the best news and Argentina is preparing for a tourist boom in 2010.**

A survey in 2008 estimated that 17, 8% of visiting tourists were indeed lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT). The fact that Argentinean government made a stand and openly supports same-sex marriage will inevitably result in a massive increase of LGBT visitors in the near future. This topic was discussed at the recent GNetwork360 tourism and marketing conference and the Tourism Minister Enrique Meyer mentioned that „Argentina is already standing out...Interest in tourist is already rising as this is a country that is more open than other in terms of rights and how it treats citizens.“

**The LGBT travelers present a very significant group in terms of tourism;** especially US citizens are famous for their passion for travel. Nearly 84% of LGBT people here possess a valid passport in contrast to only 32% of heterosexuals. **Their spending potential is vast and Argentina will undoubtedly benefit from this.** It already belongs to one of the most popular destinations in Latin America, and now the newly passed bill added considerable value to their tourist potential.

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