

# In Buenos Aires, it takes Abasto hotel tour to tango

By **BILL CORMIER**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BUENOS AIRES, Argentina** — At this Buenos Aires hotel, there's more to lodging than a soft bed and a breakfast buffet. Travelers can sleep, eat and dance tango all under one roof.

Welcome to the Abasto Plaza Hotel, which bills itself as the only five-star tango theme hotel in Buenos Aires. Here corporate travelers are the main business, but tourists also are finding a place to kick up their heels and enjoy the ultimate tango experience — without leaving their home away from home.

Guests sleep in rooms decorated

with tango motifs, eat in a hotel restaurant with a nightly show by two tango champions and shop for dance shoes in the hotel's tango boutique.

Even the concierge is a "tango guest relations" manager whose uniform looks like a black tango dress and whose job it is to set up guests for nightly dance lessons on the hotel mezzanine and arrange tango tour packages downtown.

The marketers are intent on capturing a growing group of tourists drawn to Buenos Aires by the moody, melancholic dance that began on the waterfront a century ago and now has admirers the world over.

Today tango is being taken up by

young Argentines and infused with elements of hip-hop and other dance styles. Broadway-style reviews and Hollywood films with tango plots keep international interest high, and now many tango schools offer inexpensive lessons throughout Buenos Aires.

"They say if you come to Buenos Aires and you haven't danced tango, then you haven't been to Buenos Aires," said 19-year-old Brazilian tourist Emilene Faria, a hotel guest taking her nightly tango lesson.

She giggled as an Argentine tango instructor led her through her paces, proud to pull off the eight basic steps that are the foundation for the tango dance.

Pooped after training? There's the Tango Cafe bar in the suites and a whirlpool bath on the balcony, perfect for soaking tired feet while taking in the skyline.

Gaspar Godoy and Gisela Galeassi, who won the World Tango Championships two years ago, provide lessons to the hotel guests every weeknight before performing at dinner.

"One, two, three!" Gaspar shouted as some 15 hotel guests stumbled to recorded tango music across the floor.

For reservations at the Abasto Plaza Hotel, go to [www.abastoplaza.com](http://www.abastoplaza.com)



## Wildlife scares are tough to bear

Chicago-based Jerry Soverinsky is riding coast-to-coast and documenting his trip weekly in the Herald.

By **JERRY SOVERINSKY**  
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

I've been cycling through New York's Adirondack Mountains these past few days — some of the most scenic stretches of my trip to date — and I have been noticing a bear theme in many of the tiny villages that I passed. Bear silhouettes on mailboxes; bear names for businesses (Bear Realty, Little Cub Ice Cream, Grin 'n Bear It Dentistry, etc.); bears everywhere. So at the end of my ride earlier in the week, I was sitting in a hotel lounge sipping a beer and chatting with locals, when I broached the subject.

"What's with all the bear stuff?" "Black bears. They're everywhere," replied the bartender.

Holy crap. Bears? Everywhere? I was suddenly nervous. "I'm cycling through bear country?"

He replied, "Don't worry, we haven't had a mauling in years."

But what I heard was, "We're due for a mauling."

And what I really needed to hear was, "We've never had a mauling."

And so the rest of the night, because I'm obsessive, I kept replaying my last few rides, imagining all of the strategic spots where a hungry bear could have attacked.

Despite my traveling solo cross-country for the past two months, I'm a big coward. And as I travel more than 4,000 miles, my worst fear is animals. Fortunately, being clueless helps.

Last month, I was cycling through Wisconsin, when I met a group of fishermen eating lunch. I was telling them about my trip, and just before I was preparing to resume my ride, I joked about my animal fear, and mentioned how glad I was to be in a state that didn't have wild animal issues.

"What're you talking about?" said a guy with a blue hat. "We've got mountain lions, bears, wolves, and coyotes, not to mention a fairly aggressive species of moose."

My two remaining riding days in Wisconsin seemed like a month. Every time I turned a bend in a forested region, I nervously peered into the thick brush, expecting a hungry, four-legged, sharp-tooth-bearing creature to pounce on me, devouring me whole.

As I head for Vermont and New Hampshire, I'm looking forward to challenging rides in the Green and White Mountains, an appropriate physical challenge as I approach the Atlantic and my finishing point for the trip. Just one question, though, New Englanders: Got any bears?

If so, keep it to yourself.

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