

ARGENTINA

SIERRAS CHICAS

Between the pampas and the Andes, within a range of hills called the Sierras Chicas, the 6,500-acre Estancia Los Potreros offers a taste of Argentina's treasured rural traditions. A working ranch, home to 500 Aberdeen Angus cattle, it's where lasso-wielding gauchos on Criollo horses expertly round up the herds, while guests sip mate tea through metal straws and dine on simple classics like gnocchi, empanadas and meat straight from the asado.

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PHOTOGRAPHS: TEAGAN CUNNIFFE

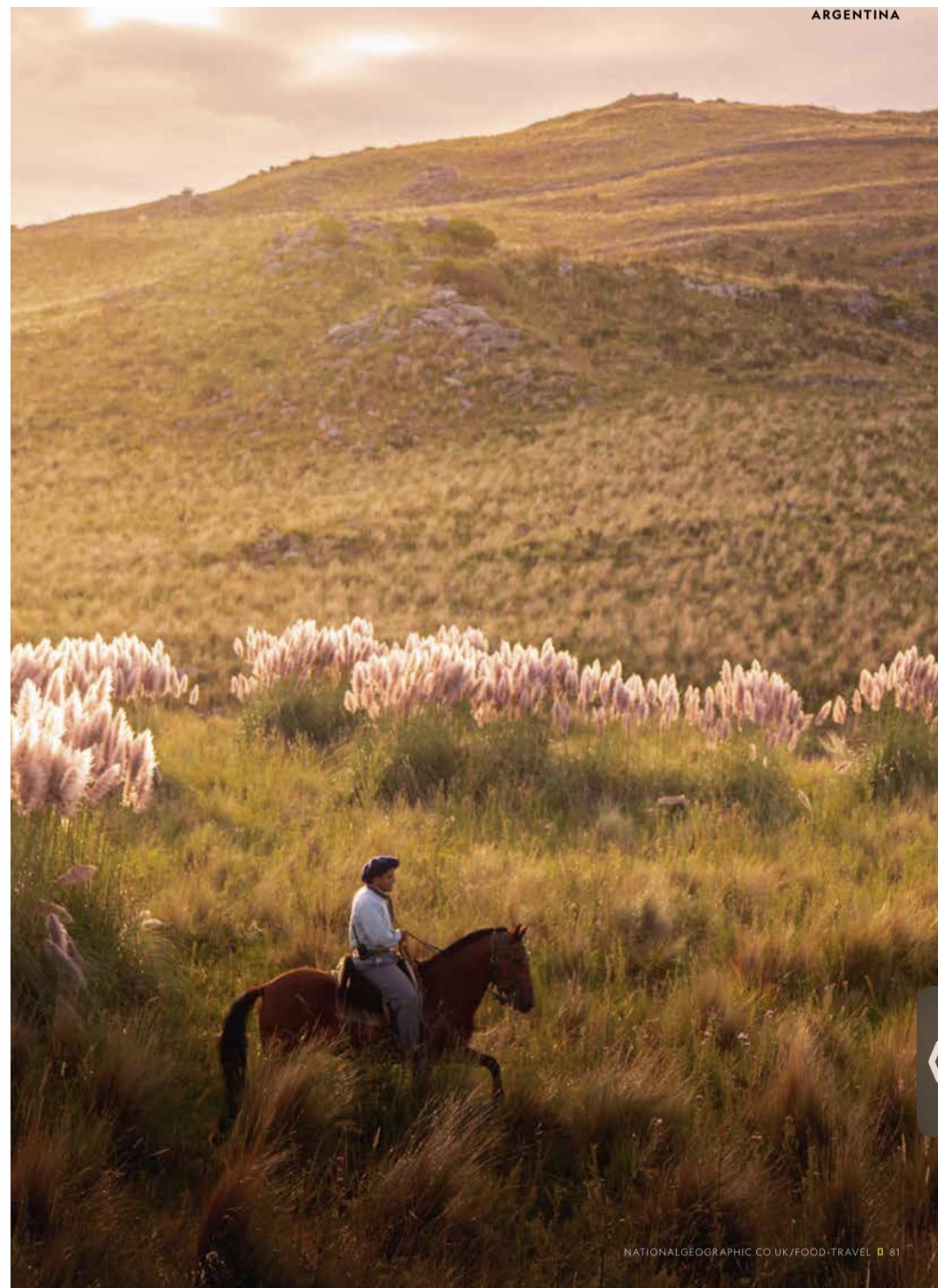




So much more than a mere barbecue, the asado is a way of life in Argentina. It's also a rite of passage: Leo Godoy (pictured) cooked his first aged 14 under his father's tuition, and has been cooking them ever since. The preparation begins in the morning with the selection of the wood. The fire is then lit, the wood and coals are maintained and, finally, the meat is cooked. Empanadas, meanwhile, are a similarly beloved Argentinian culinary institution. Meaning 'wrapped in bread', they're traditionally filled with ground beef, chicken or ham and cheese. However, every region has its own take on them. In Córdoba province, sugar is sprinkled on top and a few raisins are added to the mixture to make empanadas cordobesas.



Originally of Scottish origin, the Beggs family settled on the estancia in the early 20th century. The ranch remained within the family for four generations, with the first guests arriving in 1947. Lunch is taken on the long wooden table on the porch, and everything served up is cooked from scratch each day, including the cakes and breads, largely using organic ingredients from the estancia. The Italian influence on Argentinian food is unmissable. More than 60% of Argentines are of Italian descent, and on menus across the nation, you'll find dishes such as butter and sage ravioli (pictured) — adapted versions of pasta dishes brought over by Italian immigrants of the late 19th and early 20th century.



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Early gauchos were famous for being resourceful — they could make their own bridles out of rawhide and preserve meat without the aid of refrigeration. As a nod to its roots as a working cattle farm, Los Potreros has captured this gaucho spirit, reintroducing methods of preserving both meat and fresh produce, including making chutneys and jams and smoking meats. This farm-to-table approach means that much of what's consumed on the estancia is homegrown, such as the figs (pictured), which are often used to make jam. Meanwhile, chef Paula Delgado prepares a tortilla de papas, or Spanish omelette, made with potatoes and onions, using a recipe from Argentine culinary legend Doña Petrona. ●

