

LIONEL MESSI

ARGENTINA CAREER GUIDE

From his dramatic 2005 debut to World Cup glory and the final chapter of a 21-year international career.

208	126	70	21	6
Caps	Goals	Assists	World Cup goals	World Cups

The story in one sentence: Messi's Argentina career moved from pressure and lost finals to Copa America triumphs, a World Cup title and one of the longest elite international careers in football history.

Career at a glance

Lionel Messi's senior Argentina journey began in 2005. Over the following two decades he became the national team's record appearance maker and record goalscorer, won the 2022 FIFA World Cup and lifted the Copa America in 2021 and 2024.

This FINTER guide is designed as a quick companion to the full interactive English article on FINTER.dk. Use the article for videos, the interactive timeline, voting and the full quiz.

Interactive article timeline - printable version

2005 - The beginning

Messi makes his senior Argentina debut against Hungary. The appearance becomes famous because he is sent off shortly after entering the match.

2014 - World Cup final

Argentina reach the World Cup final in Brazil. Germany win 1-0 after extra time. Messi receives the tournament's Golden Ball.

2016 - A retirement that did not last

After another painful Copa America final defeat, Messi announces his international retirement. He later returns.

2021 - Copa America breakthrough

Argentina defeat Brazil at the Maracana and Messi wins his first major senior international trophy.

2022 - World champion

Argentina defeat France after a 3-3 final and a penalty shootout. Messi lifts the World Cup as captain.

2024 - Copa America again

Argentina add another continental title during the most successful period of Messi's international career.

2026 - Final chapter

Messi's sixth World Cup becomes the final World Cup chapter of an international career that began 21 years earlier.

Why Messi's Argentina story matters

The most useful lesson is not that every player should try to imitate Messi. It is that development and success are rarely linear. His international career included criticism, major final defeats and a temporary retirement before the biggest victories arrived.

For young players: focus on close control, scanning before receiving, first touch, changes of speed and continuing to learn after disappointing matches.

Three Messi-inspired training ideas

- 1. Close-control slalom:** 5 minutes. Keep touches short and accelerate out of every change of direction.
- 2. Scan + receive:** 5 minutes. Check over both shoulders before receiving, then use the first touch into space.
- 3. Change of pace:** 5 minutes. Dribble slowly, sell a body movement and accelerate for 3-5 metres.

Messi Argentina Quiz

Try these before checking the answers.

1. In which year did Messi make his senior Argentina debut?

Your answer: _____

2. How many senior Argentina appearances did he finish with?

Your answer: _____

3. How many Argentina goals did he score?

Your answer: _____

4. When did he win his first Copa America?

Your answer: _____

5. Which country did Argentina defeat in the 2022 World Cup final?

Your answer: _____

6. How many World Cups did Messi play?

Your answer: _____

Answers: 1) 2005. 2) 208. 3) 126. 4) 2021. 5) France. 6) Six.

Debate: Messi's greatest Argentina moment

Choose one and explain why: Copa America 2021 / World Cup 2022 / Copa America 2024 / the 2014 World Cup run / his final Argentina match.

My choice: _____

Why: _____

Continue on FINTER.dk

The full English FINTER article adds video links, a clickable timeline, shared reader voting, a scored quiz, FAQ, records and links to FINTER's Messi Academy and football skills content.

Suggested article URL: finter.dk/lionel-messi-argentina-retirement-international-career/

[FINTER](#) - football history, training, quizzes and interactive football content.