

Patagonia & Chilean Fjords

Day 1 ARRIVE IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA. Welcome to Buenos Aires, proud capital of the vast country that occupies most of the southern part of the continent. Your hotel is available for mid-afternoon check-in.

Day 2 BUENOS AIRES. Included private sightseeing starts in the colorful La Boca district, site of the city's first port. Take a short WALKING TOUR of this unique neighborhood, then on to San Telmo, famous for its late-colonial buildings and a popular gathering spot for artists. At the Plaza de Mayo, see La Casa Rosada (the President's Pink House) and the Metropolitan Cathedral, which houses San Martin's Mausoleum. Drive past the ornate Colon Opera House before reaching the CEMETERY OF THE RECOLETA, burial site of Eva Perón. This evening, perhaps savor the city's atmosphere on an optional dinner at a local restaurant, followed by a performance of Latin America's most sensuous dance—the Tango! (B)

Day 3 BUENOS AIRES-USHUAIA. Fly to Ushuaia, the “End of the World,” situated on the island of Tierra del Fuego. Once a secluded outpost and penal colony, Ushuaia is now a growing community thriving on timber, fishing, and tourism. This afternoon, enjoy a PRIVATE TOUR OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO NATIONAL PARK to learn about its bountiful flora and fauna. With the Chilean Andes as the backdrop, the scenery is nothing short of spectacular. (B)

Day 4 USHUAIA (EMBARKATION). Embark on your 4-NIGHT CRUISE aboard the Stella Australis. The voyage will take you through channels, bays, fjords, and past massive glaciers, snowcapped mountains, and unexplored areas of incomparable beauty. During the night, traverse the Beagle Channel to cross from Argentina into Chilean waters. (B,D)

Day 5 CRUISING: CAPE HORN & WULAIA BAY. Around the break of dawn, cross into Nassau Bay and enter the remote archipelago that comprises Cape Horn National Park. Disembark in Cape Horn National Park (weather permitting) to see Cape Horn, a sheer, almost 1,394-foot-high rocky promontory where the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans merge. In the afternoon, go ashore with your Naturalist in historic WULAIA BAY, once the site of one of the region's largest aboriginal settlements. Here, walk through a Magellanic forest and keep an eye out for elephant seals! (B,L,D)

Day 6 CRUISING: PIA & GARIBALDI GLACIER. Overnight, continue around the western end of Tierra del Fuego via the very narrow Gabriel, Magdalena, and Cockburn Channels to Pia Fjord. Here, board the zodiacs for exploration of PIA GLACIER. Take a short hike to gain a panoramic view of the spectacular glacier, which extends from the mountaintops down to the sea. In the afternoon, drop anchor near GARIBALDI GLACIER to see one of only three glaciers in Patagonia that is gaining mass rather than staying the same or slowly shrinking. Hike through virgin Magellanic forest to a glacial waterfall, a towering wall of ferns and moss, and spectacular viewpoints looking down on the glacier and fjord. (B,L,D)

Day 7 CRUISING: AGOSTINI SOUND, ÁGUILA GLACIER & CONDOR SOUND. Sail through the intricate channels of Tierra del Fuego to reach Cockburn Channel. At Agostini Sound, board Zodiac boats to explore ÁGUILA GLACIER, which hovers above a placid glacial lagoon surrounded by Patagonia's sub-Antarctic rainforest. Walk around the edge of the lagoon near the base of the glacier and keep an eye out for the condors that can sometimes be seen here. Learn from your Naturalist about the formation of glaciers and their influence on the abrupt geography of the region's channels. In the afternoon, cruise CONDOR SOUND via Zodiac and hopefully see some of the abundant Andean Condors in the area. (B,L,D)

Day 8 CRUISING: MAGELLAN STRAIT–MAGDALENA ISLAND–PUNTA ARENAS, CHILE (DISEMBARKATION). Cruise into the Strait of Magellan and anchor off MAGDALENA ISLAND where you will go ashore for a visit (weather permitting). Once an essential source of supplies for navigators and explorers, now this island is home to an immense colony of Magellanic penguins. During your walk, you'll also see the lighthouse, which guides ships on their way through the Strait of Magellan. In September and April, this excursion is replaced by a Zodiac ride at Isla Marta to observe sea lions. After your visit, sail to Punta Arenas and disembark. (B)

Day 9 PUNTA ARENAS–SANTIAGO. Fly to Santiago, Chile's capital. This country is more than 10-times longer than wide, with 2,650 miles of beautiful Pacific coastline. (B)

Day 10 SANTIAGO. Located in the center of the country and perched between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes, Santiago has evolved as the country's political, commercial, and cultural capital. Step back into the 16th century on your PRIVATE CITY TOUR as your Local Guide traces the city's history and heritage. Start at La Moneda, the official Government Palace, and nearby San Cristobal Hill with its landmark statue of the Virgin Mary. Your tour ends at the Plaza de Armas, the main square, with a visit to the 18th-century CATHEDRAL. (B)

Day 11 SANTIAGO. Your vacation ends after breakfast this morning. (B)