Discover the spectacular scenery and attractive towns of some of the most isolated regions in Argentina and Chile. Immense glaciers, deep blue lakes, pristine forests and towering peaks all await you on this adventure of a lifetime!

Trip Highlights
- Ushuaia - the most southern city in the world
- Beagle Channel - the straight which separates the islands of the Tierra del Fuego archipelago. See sea lions, penguins, cormorants and albatross
- Strals of Magellan & Tierra del Fuego (Land of Fire) National Park
- Punta Arenas - frontier town & Seno Otway Magellanic penguin colony
- Torres del Paine National Park - stunning scenery, snow covered mountain peaks, glaciers, flora and fauna.
- El Calafate and the spectacular Perito Moreno glacier
- Bariloche - outdoor pursuits
- Pucon on Lake Villarrica and Villarrica Volcano
- Salto del Laja - waterfalls dropping 47 metres
- Santiago - Chile’s European style capital city

What’s Included
- 17 nights in hotels, hostels and guesthouses (3 star or similar), 3 nights assisted camping
- 3 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 3 dinners
- Excursions to Fitzroy NP, Moreno Glacier, Torres del Paine NP and Tierra del Fuego NP
- Beagle Channel cruise
- Visit to Seno Otway Magellanic penguin colony
- Escorted by a tour leader and driver. Cook at Torres del Paine NP and specialist local guides at some sites.
- Transportation by private touring vehicle, boat and taxi
- Boat cruise around the Perito Moreno glacier.

What’s Not Included
- International flights and visas
- Items of a personal nature and additional meals

Days 1-3 : Welcome to Argentina!
Arrive to our Ushuaia hotel. The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

Ushuaia is the most southern city in the world with a setting that’s hard to beat, dramatically located between towering mountains and icy sea. Here we can enjoy an included cruise on the blue waters of the Beagle Channel, named after Charles Darwin’s boat HMS Beagle. As we explore the straight which separates the islands of the Tierra del Fuego archipelago, keep your eyes peeled for whole colonies of sea lions, penguins, cormorants and albatross. We may even be lucky enough to see a whale.

We then visit the nearby Tierra del Fuego (Land of Fire) National Park, where the Pan American Highway ends 17,848 kilometres from its starting point in Alaska. The national park, which has often been compared with Alaska’s panhandle, covers 63,000 hectares of mountains, lakes, deep valleys, glaciers and rivers. You can trek along various trails through the beautiful beech forests, spotting wildlife along the way, including guanacos, foxes, beavers, condors and oyster catchers.

There are also some interesting museums in Ushuaia which reveal its interesting natural and colonial history, such as the Maritime Museum and Museum at the End of the World. At the Ushuaia tourist office you can have your passport stamped with an official End of the World stamp. Those interested in steam trains might like to go for a train ride on the Tren del Fin del Mundo or End of the World Train.

Overnight - Ushuaia (3)
Days 4-9: Glaciers, ice & wildlife

Ushuaia - Punta Arenas – Torres del Paine National Park – Puerto Natales. The scenic drive from Ushuaia takes us to the Straits of Magellan where we cross from Tierra del Fuego (Land of Fire) to the South American mainland and enter Chile.

Punta Arenas is Patagonia’s most important commercial centre and this duty free port was an early frontier town. Before the opening of the Panama Canal, the only way around South America was via the extreme southern tip of Chile and therefore Punta Arenas was a necessary stopping point in the Pacific-Atlantic shipping route. There is time to visit Zona Franca, the duty free district en route to Punta Arenas.

We now continue on to visit the majestic Torres del Paine National Park, named after three massive granite towers that rise out of the earth. Covering more than 180,000 hectares, the park boasts stunning scenery with snow covered mountain peaks, glaciers, beautiful lakes and valleys with a diverse variety of unusual flora and fauna. Some of the varied and amazing creatures you might spot include skunks, Andean condors, black-chested buzzard eagles, chilla foxes, culpeo foxes, guanacos (a relative of the llama), Chilean flamingos and rhea, a type of emu. Vividly coloured flowers, various evergreen plants and orchids may be seen. The best way to discover the national park is on foot and trekking here will take your breath away.

We have plenty of opportunity to trek the many trails in the park. Some of the walks are quite demanding, but there is a good range of options for all grades of walkers. Options include a full day trek with incredible views of the famous ‘towers’ (this walk can be demanding with the final section walking in scree, however it is well worth it), a full day trek and catamaran trip across Lago Pehoe for a full view of the Grey Glacier and a more sedate three hour scenic boat trip (dependant on boat availability). We stay in pre-erected tents in the park with all meals included (you need to bring your own sleeping bag, mattresses are provided). Camping in Torres del Paine is a great chance to explore pristine wilderness and enjoy the great outdoors.

Travelling on, we come to the misty port town of Puerto Natales, an important base for agriculture and tourism. Overnight - Punta Arenas (2), Torres del Paine NP (3), Puerto Natales (1) (L, A, D, D, D; 3)

Days 10-14: Perito Moreno glacier & Fitzroy NP

Puerto Natales - El Calafate – El Chaltén - Perito Moreno. We resume our journey to head for the town of El Calafate, located on the southern shore of Lake Argentino. El Calafate is our base to visit the spectacular Perito Moreno glacier. With a height of around 60 metres and a front of five kilometres (three miles), covering some 250 square kilometres the glacier is an incredible sight and is one of the few glaciers in the world to be growing slightly, not decreasing in size as most glaciers do. Named after Argentine explorer Francisco Merino, the glacier is coloured in a variety of hues from blue to grey to white and continually cracks and cracks. Advancing at a speed of around two metres per day, it can put on a spectacular show when giant chunks of ice at the outermost edges crack under tremendous pressure, rupture and crash into the water – a process known as calving. You will have the chance to walk around some paths and terraces where you can get some great views of the glacier. We also go on a boat cruise taking us almost the full width of the glacier for amazingly close-up views.

We travel on through the windswept Patagonian countryside stopping enroute at the small town of El Chaltén, our base for visiting the Fitzroy National Park, which is renowned for its spectacular scenery and a great place for trekking. Options include half or full day treks to Lago Capri or various other trails to take in the views of the Fitzroy Massif and the many glaciers. Our next destination is the multicultural town of Perito Moreno, where we overnight to break up the journey. Overnight - El Calafate (2), El Chaltén (2), Perito Moreno (1) (L, D)

Days 15-20: Villarrica Lake & Volcano

Perito Moreno - Bariloche – Pucon – Santiago. Our next stop is the resort town of San Carlos de Bariloche, also known simply as Bariloche, on the shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi. This town is a famous winter ski resort, but it also has a great deal to offer during other seasons and is a favourite holiday spot for Argentines. Originally built by Swiss and German immigrants in the Alpine style, here you will find charming Swiss-style chalets, numerous chocolate shops and even St. Bernard dogs with brandy barrels around their necks.

With the towering peaks of the Andes to the west, the glistening lake in front and the Patagonian steppe to the east, outdoor adventures abound in Bariloche, with popular options including mountain biking, horse riding or a bus ride along the lake with an opportunity to take in the sensational scenery from the cable cars.

If you’re very (very!) lucky you may spot the legendary Nahuelito, a giant creature which the indigenous Mapuche people believe lives in the depths of the lake. There haven’t yet been any recorded sightings to support this story, which predates the Loch Ness Monster, however despite that, the Buenos Aires Zoo took it seriously enough to make a trip to the lake to search for evidence in 1922.

Heading south through vast vineyards, farmlands and pine-forests we come to Salto del Laja, or Laja Falls, where we stop to take photos above the impressive waterfalls which drop 47 metres over the rocks below. In addition to the main, most frequently photographed waterfall, there are also three other smaller falls nearby.

We continue to the Lake District of Chile and the small resort town of Pucon on Lake Villarrica, overlooked by the perfect cone-shaped Villarrica Volcano. The whole area, known as “El Camino de los Siete Lagos” is surrounded by lakes, mountains, forests, rivers and waterfalls. These natural attractions offer many exciting optional activities such as trekking to the top of the active volcano, white water rafting, horseback riding, mountain biking and water sports on the lake such as sailing, kayaking, sport fishing and water skiing. We have plenty of free time to take advantage of some of the great activities on offer or simply relax.

On day 20 we arrive to the capital and economic centre of Chile, Santiago. The fast growing city...
encircled by the peaks of the Andes Mountains to the east and a smaller range of coastal mountains known as the Cordillera to the west. With its fountains, parks and imposing neoclassical buildings standing side-by-side with glossy office skyscrapers, Santiago is a modern city very much in touch with its colonial past. 

Pedro de Valdivia established Santiago in 1541 but not much remains of its original glory, except Santa Lucía Hill where the original fortress was constructed. From the top of the hill here are excellent views of the city below. However, for even better photo opportunities, take a funicular railway to the top of San Cristóbal where the Statue of the Virgin overlooks the capital and the distant Andes. At this very pleasant viewing area you’ll find wine-tasting facilities and a couple of beautifully situated swimming pools. Much of the city is best explored on foot, particularly neighbourhoods like Bellavista which features outdoor markets. In the Plaza Constitución at the Palacio de la Moneda you can see the changing of the guard on most days. There is an interesting culture to explore in Santiago, with chic cafés, impressive museums, excellent restaurants and great shopping opportunities to enjoy.

While in Santiago you can take an optional excursion to Chile’s cultural capital, the port of Valparaíso. Take a funicular elevator from the flat town centre up the hill to explore the labyrinth of streets and cobblestoned alleyways of this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Overnight - Bariloche (2), Pucon (3), Santiago (1) (L:3)**

**Day 21:**

**Our amazing Patagonian adventure comes to an end today. Please confirm with the reception the check out time. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.**

The itinerary listed above is to be used as a guide only. Occasionally we may need to update this document and it may be different to the information printed in our current brochure. Tour leaders may need to make adjustments due to unforeseen circumstances during the tour. It is very important that you visit our website and review a copy of this dossier as close as possible to your departure date in case of changes that may affect your plans.

**Single supplement**

If you paid our single supplement for this tour, a single room for all nights of your tour including your stay in Torres del Paine NP where you will be provided with a single tent.

**Arriving to Ushuaia**

If you are flying to Ushuaia via Buenos Aires we recommend you change money at Buenos Aires airport. Change enough into the local currency (Argentine pesos) for at least the first four or five days of your trip, especially if you are arriving on a Saturday night. If you do not have time at Buenos Aires airport you should be able to change money at Ushuaia airport and in the town. Banks are open from 10am to 3pm and there are lots of ATMs along San Martin. Changing travellers cheques in Ushuaia can be difficult and expensive.

**Airport transfer**

If you have booked an arrival transfer with us (not included in your tour, offered at an additional cost) and you are going to be delayed more than two hours, you must advise us of the delay at least six hours before arrival. If we are advised in time, we will make every effort to reschedule your transfer and your driver will be asked to wait for two hours after your new expected arrival time. However, if we are not made aware of any change, the driver will only wait for two hours after the original scheduled arrival time and after this point it will be up to you to arrange transport to your hotel at your own expense. Please contact us on the emergency contact person as detailed on your voucher.

Making your own way to our start hotel

If you decide not to pre-book an arrival transfer, pre-paid, fixed-price taxis (approximately US$5) are available inside the arrivals terminal.

Start Hotel Address:

**Hotel Tierra del Fuego**

Gobernador Deloqui No.198 (esq. Rivadavia)

Ushuaia

Tel: (+54) 29 0142 4902
Fax: (+54) 29 0142 4901

**Top tips for arriving**

Your hotel should have safe deposit boxes for your use (you will get an itemised receipt). Please leave all of your important documents, money and travellers cheques here when you go out but remember to carry some form of ID and a photocopy of your passport with you.

It is not advisable to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in major South American cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety. Crime in Latin America is not as bad as its reputation but you must be sensible and alert.

Pack warm!

**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

**Our Partners**

Please note that this tour is run in conjunction with Tucan Travel. Travellers on your trip will have made their reservation with On the Go Tours or Tucan Travel.

**What to Pack**

You must be prepared to carry your own bags at all times. We therefore strongly urge you to use a frameless backpack or sports type shoulder bag (or similar soft, frameless luggage) and limit your luggage to a maximum of 10-14 kilograms. It is very important that you do not bring too much luggage as you will find it extremely difficult to get on and off buses and trains etc and there is a fair amount of walking to and from hotels. You are also likely to encounter many cobbled streets and dirt roads so suitcases and luggage on wheels are unsuitable. Travel is rarely kind to luggage and you can expect your bags to suffer wear and tear during your tour.

In addition to your main bag, you will need a small daypack for your everyday things (e.g. camera, water bottle, sun cream, hat, sweater etc) while travelling, sightseeing or on overnight excursions. Try to keep this bag as light as possible and make sure that all main sections of your bags can be padlocked. Do not leave ANYTHING of value in your main luggage – keep it on you or in a safe.

**Essential for all tours**

- Tour Voucher and Tour Go Guide
- Passport (with 2 photocopies - one kept separately & the other to give to the tour leader with your next of kin details)
- Cash/ travellers cheques/ credit & debit cards (with photocopies kept separately)
- Travel insurance certificate (with a photocopy to be given to your tour leader)
- Spare passport photos (you may need these for obtaining visas)
- International airline tickets (with a photocopy kept separately)
- International Vaccination Certificate (Yellow Fever if applicable)
- International student card (may get you discounts into some sites)
- Your travel consultant’s phone number and email address (it is very important to have this as it is much easier to confirm/ change flights etc via your agent)
- Cotton money belt and/ or pouch to store your valuables under your clothing
- Suggested equipment (some useful, some necessary - use your discretion)
- Sunglasses
- Small calculator (to help with currency conversions)
- Lookable pouch for your money and valuables to use in safety deposit boxes
- Plastic bags (very useful for wrapping camera equipment, soap, shampoo bottles, wet clothing etc)
- Inflatable pillow
- Small collapsible umbrella (also good for sun protection)
- Pegless washing line and travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferably)
- Universal washbasin plug

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**Suggested equipment (some useful, some necessary - use your discretion)**

- Universal washbasin plug
- Suggested equipment (some useful, some necessary - use your discretion)
- Sunglasses
- Small calculator (to help with currency conversions)
- Lookable pouch for your money and valuables to use in safety deposit boxes
- Plastic bags (very useful for wrapping camera equipment, soap, shampoo bottles, wet clothing etc)
- Inflatable pillow
- Small collapsible umbrella (also good for sun protection)
- Pegless washing line and travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferably)
- Universal washbasin plug
• Torch
• Binoculars
• Travel alarm clock
• Travel plug adaptor
• Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, anti-septic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc.
• Small sewing kit
• Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor (this can be expensive to buy locally)
• Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream
• Tampons and condoms
• Toilet paper (best to carry a roll with you at all times) and/or tissues (purchase locally)
• Antibacterial hand cleansing gel (the type you can use without water)
• Moistened face tissues (e.g. Wet Ones)
• Ear plugs
• Travel sickness tablets (these are usually easy to buy over the counter locally)
• Cheap plastic wristwatch
• Spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and solution (a lens prescription is also advisable in case of loss or breakage)
• Camera/video camera with plenty of film or digital camera with spare memory cards
• Spare rechargeable batteries for camera etc
• Writing materials, address book and diary
• Pocket size Spanish phrasebook
• Travel games, cards & couple of paperbacks
• As gifts for local children - pens (with advertising on them), coloured pencils, small notepads. To discourage a begging mentality we recommend that you try to give these gifts at schools or childcare centres rather than on the street

Clothing & Foot wear

All clothes should be lightweight, durable and easily washable. Please do not bring any military or camouflage-style clothing as it can be dangerous to wear and occasionally illegal. Everybody ALWAYS packs too much, so rather than bringing lots of chunky sweaters, wear clothing in layers when in the colder regions. Nights can be cold at higher altitude so it is a good idea to bring at least one pair of warm trousers or jeans plus several thinner sweaters/ fleeces which you can layer (note: it is very easy to buy extra sweaters/ jumpers locally).

Check the climate and altitude at www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour. We do not feel that it is necessary to include a full packing list as you will know what you need depending on the duration of your tour. However we do recommend that you bring the following:

- A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- Easy to pack wide-brimmed hat or cap
- Sarong - very useful as a beach towel, bag, hat, shawl and wrap around
- Towel
- Swimsuit
- Sandals/flip flops

It is also ESSENTIAL that you have good, comfortable shoes that are suitable for walking and trekking. These don’t need to be expensive boots, but they should have good ankle support and grip, be worn in and ideally waterproof.

Personal Safety

It is not advisable to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery whilst in many Central American cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety. Crime in Latin America is not as bad as its reputation but you must be sensible and alert.

Health

Please see your doctor or travel clinic for an up to date list of all recommended vaccinations for the regions you will be travelling to. We recommend that you do this at least eight weeks before you travel, as you may need a course of medications or more than one vaccination. In general we recommend that you are vaccinated against Tetanus-diphtheria, polio, hepatitis A and Typhoid and if travelling to a jungle area, yellow fever. Vaccinations are solely the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

The malarial risk varies in the regions of South America and in some areas appropriate preventive medicines are needed. Measures should always be taken to avoid mosquito bites, such as nets and creams. Please check with your health care professional as to the best and most up to date remedy for this mosquito borne disease.

It is not recommended that you drink the tap water in any of the countries we visit and we recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that quite often we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc.

Welcome Meeting

The address of your start hotel can be found on your tour voucher. On arrival you should look for a Tucan Travel information sheet and welcome note on the hotel notice board where you will find details of the pre-departure/welcome meeting. The tour leader or a representative will normally hold the pre-departure meeting early in the evening of day one (assuming that all travellers have arrived by then). You will be briefed about the tour, given an outline itinerary for the next few days and any questions will be answered. After the meeting there is usually an option for everyone to go out for dinner and drinks to start to get to know one another.

Please note that you will need to bring the following items to the pre departure meeting:

- The original copy and a photocopy of your passport
- Vaccination certificates (if required)
- Travel voucher
- Details of your travel insurance policy number and their 24hr emergency contact number

Hotel & Transfers

Day 1 of all our tours is simply a joining day and the tour actually departs the joining city on day 2. The last day of your tour is the official departure day and is free for you to pack or sightsee before you depart. All tours are scheduled to arrive at your final destination the afternoon/evening before your departure day. Therefore very little time is spent in each of the starting and finishing city and you will need to allow a few days at the beginning or end of your tour if you want to explore them further. This is particularly important for passengers joining tours in high altitude cities (Quito & La Paz) so that you can acclimatise before the tour begins. We can book pre and post tour accommodation for you upon request.

Check in time is at 1300 hrs on day 1. If you wish to use the services of a room before or after checkout time, or you are arriving very early in the morning of day 1, you will need to book an extra night, which we can arrange for you. All rooms are on a bed only basis unless otherwise indicated.

Airport transfers in joining and departing cities (except where indicated in the What you Get section of this Go Guide) are not included in the tour price but can be booked upon request at an additional cost. Please see the tour price page of our website for information on prices.

Important: If you have booked an arrival transfer with us and you are going to be delayed more than two hours, you must advise us of the delay at least six hours before arrival. If we are advised in time, we will make every effort to reschedule your transfer and your driver will be asked to wait for two hours after your new expected arrival time.

If, however, we are not made aware of any change, the driver will only wait for two hours after the original scheduled arrival time and after this point it will be up to you to arrange transport to your hotel at your own expense. Please contact us on the emergency number on your tour voucher.

Optional Excursions

During your tour there will be free time to enjoy a range of optional excursions which are listed at the end of this pdf. Your tour leader will be able to make recommendations and bookings in advance for most of these activities so you have more flexibility and control over your itinerary. Please note that you may not have time to do all of the optional excursions listed. Should you wish to partake in optional activities in the city where you tour starts/ ends, please check their is sufficient time to do so or alternatively consider booking pre/post tour accommodation.

Tipping

Although tipping is not a natural part of many Western cultures it is expected in South America, where many workers are very poorly paid and depend on tips for their main income. The local people work very hard to provide a good service and this is due in part to the tips they have received from foreigners in the past. However all tips are at your own discretion and you should not feel obliged...
or pressured to tip at any time – particularly if you feel that the level of service was not up to standard.

As a general guideline a gratuity of 10% of the total bill for your waiter is recommended in restaurants. You should be aware that prices on the menu often exclude service charges but they are added to the bill (10%) and local taxes (anywhere between 2% and 20%). If it is included then you are not expected to pay an additional tip, although this is still appreciated. Some restaurants have a ‘cobertura’ (cover charge) which is normally added onto the food section of the bill, not the total, so watch out for this when dividing the bill with other group members.

It is customary to tip your local guides on both included and optional excursions. As a guideline, we recommend US$3–5 per person for a half/full day excursion. Your tour leader will generally pass around an envelope for the local guide on included excursions. The tour leader will indicate on the envelope the amount of the tip usually given per person to the guide.

This information is given as a guide as many travellers are unsure how much to tip. Should you wish to give the local guide your tip personally and not with the group tip then please feel free to do so.

Inca Trail and Lares Trek - the commonly accepted combined tip for guides, porters and cooks on the Inca Trail or Lares Trek is US$30 per trekker. This amount will be collected from each trekker by the tour leader and distributed amongst the Inca Trail team usually at the last dinner.

Tips are also appreciated by your tour leader at the end of your tour. This, however, is this is only if you feel that their service was up to standard and is completely at your own discretion. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture.

Spending Money

Spending money – allow approximately US$25–$30 per day to cover meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras.

Style of Tour

Our South America tours are designed to suit travellers who love being able to travel on many different forms of transport with local people. There is a certain amount of involvement needed, which will mean carrying your own bags to the bus or train station or even helping the driver throw everyone’s packs onto the roof. If you enjoy meeting and interacting with local people and don’t mind roughing it occasionally, then these tours will be just right for you.

It is important that you are open to travelling with a range of different age groups. You must also satisfy yourself that you are fit enough to complete the itinerary as there are no refunds if you choose to leave the tour. Based on the nature of this travel style, our adventurous South America tours are generally suitable for people aged between 18 and 60 years old. If you have any questions about this, please contact us or speak to your travel consultant.

Our South America tours suit people who are fit and active. On all of our tours, (with the exception of our Patagonia, Amazon & Argentina tours) there are many walks between bus/train terminals and hotels and travellers must be able to carry their own luggage over various terrains as well as lift luggage onto the tops of buses so do not pack more than you can comfortably carry.

The average group size is 8 to 12 passengers with a maximum of 18, however on some included excursions group sizes may occasionally be larger.

Our Patagonia, Amazon & Argentina tours offer a higher standard of accommodation and transportation. Our hotels are rated as comfortable and are generally of a 3 star standard. Some nights are also spent at jungle lodges, homestays and tented camps. Transportation for road journeys on these tours is offered aboard our custom-designed, comfortable Mercedes Benz vehicles. Our travellers enjoy the fact that the same vehicle that drops them off of an evening is the same vehicle that is ready and waiting for them at the hotel in the morning.

On average there are between 15 and 20 people on our these tours, with a maximum of 34. In Cuzco, there are many options this number may be larger. Our expedition vehicles are designed to comfortably suit these maximum numbers with plenty of leg room and storage space. Many Tucan Travel tours form part of a modular system, therefore group numbers may fluctuate at times. This is a great opportunity to meet an even more diverse range of people.

Meals

On our South America tours meals are included in remote areas such as the Amazon Jungle excursion and on the Inca Trail or Lares treks. Most other meals are not included which gives you the flexibility to choose when and where you eat. Our tour leaders have a wealth of knowledge regarding local restaurants and can advise you of the best places to try the delicious and varied local cuisine.

Transportation & Travel

On all of our South America tours we use a variety of transportation. Vehicles can range from buses filled with local people and their many possessions (N/A for Patagonia Discovered and Incas, Amazon & Argentina tours) to our private minibuses and comfortable air-conditioned coaches. Sometimes you could be travelling on boats, trains, aircraft, ferries, colectivos, pick up, private shuttles trucks, buses, dugout canoes, and taxis. Most bus transport is very comfortable, often with reclining seats.

Our aim is not simply to get you from A to B, but to help you to experience each destination as a genuine traveller, not as a first class tourist. A word of warning - please remember that travelling can sometimes be cramped.

Due to the vast distances covered on many of our South America Tours, please be prepared for occasional long travelling days. This time spent travelling is unavoidable but you will not be disappointed once you arrive! On the positive side there are also many short travel days and days which involve no travelling leaving you free to explore at your leisure.

Accommodation

Our ‘simple’ accommodation is generally the equivalent in comfort and amenities of a 2 star hotel. We stay in small hotels, hostels and guest houses which are usually situated close to the main sights and town centres. They are chosen for their local ambience rather than star rating and we look for attributes like character, location, atmosphere, cleanliness and security. Although sometimes quite basic, you will find clean comfortable rooms with ensuite facilities (occasionally bathrooms may be shared but this is rare), friendly staff and often a bar and restaurant attached or nearby. Please be aware that accommodation in South America sometimes has erratic services like lack of hot water or no central heating, staff members don’t always speak English and sometimes our reservations are ‘lost’! In general, facilities are very good but please be prepared for the occasional mishap, which is all part of the travelling experience.

When staying in the Amazon Jungle or on Amantani Island accommodation is rustic and offered on a shared basis. Whilst treking the Inca trail or Lares Trek we sleep in tents, which also are offered on a shared basis.

All accommodation is included from the arrival day until check out time on the final day of the tour. Travellers will share rooms with other group members of the same gender. Mosty this will be in twin rooms although sometimes in triples depending on the group composition and hotel rooming structure.

On our Patagonia, Amazon & Argentina tours accommodation comprises of small friendly hotels and guest houses which are usually conveniently located near the town centres and sights. We try to ensure that each hotel has plenty of local character to give you a taste of life in the country in which we are travelling. They are usually family run and are chosen for their location, cleanliness, security and accessibility for our vehicles.

Comfort hotels are generally the equivalent of a 3 star hotel and may include amenities such as cable television, swimming pools, restaurants, elevators, internet access, room service, hair dryers and English-speaking reception staff. These hotels may also take the form of a lodge or tented accommodation.

Standards may vary due to local conditions but our preference is mid-range comfortable rooms with ensuite facilities. Please be aware that hotels sometimes have occasional erratic services such as a lack of hot water or no central heating, and staff members don’t always speak English.

Travellers will share rooms with other group members of the same gender. Mostly this will
be in twin rooms although sometimes in triples depending on the group composition and hotel rooming structure. When staying in the Amazon jungle in Peru, accommodation will be in rustic ensuite cabins with cold water only and mosquito nets will be provided. On Amantani Island we stay in mud-brick houses and we stay in two-person tents on the Inca Trail Trek. In the Torres del Paine National Park we stay in campsites where your tent is erected for you. All accommodation is included from the arrival day until checkout time on the final day of the tour.

Electricity Supply
The power supply varies from country to country and can also vary from region to region within a country. If bringing electrical equipment, make sure that it can be switched over from 110 volts to 220 volts and vice versa. If your equipment is 220 volts it will work on a 110 volt system (albeit slower), but if you use 110 volt equipment in a 220 volt system, it will blow the equipment! Bring a voltage converter and travel plug adaptor (most countries either have 2 pin flat as in USA or 2 round pins).

Argentina Country Guide
Argentina - Fact File
- Official Name: Argentine Republic
- Capital: Buenos Aires
- Population: 38 million
- Total Area: 2.8 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholic 92% (less than 20% practicing), Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, other 4%
- Voltage: 220 volts. Argentina has European type two-pinned round sockets in most old buildings and the Australian style three-pin flat sockets in most new buildings.
- Dialling Code: +54
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -3
- Airport Departure Tax: US$18

Argentina - Visas
Since 28 December 2010, Australian, Canadian and USA nationals have been required to pay a reciprocity fee on entry into Argentina. This fee is set at the same amount Argentine nationals are required to pay for visas into these countries. The fees are as follows: Canadian nationals: US$70* (single entry), USA nationals: US$50*, Australian nationals: US$100* or its equivalent in Argentine pesos.

The amounts listed above may change according to the reciprocal visa fee amounts set by the other countries. The reciprocity fee can be paid by Argentine pesos, US dollars, credit cards or travellers’ cheques.

Argentina - Climate
The Argentine climate ranges from hot and humid in the north to cold and windy in the south. In northern Argentina, summer is hot and winter fairly mild while in contrast, Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of Argentina, is quite often cold with continual winds, rain at times and freezing winter temperatures.

Buenos Aires, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with well-defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees in the lush parks. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot and winter can be cold. It usually begins to rain in April and reaches its highest level during June and July, then decreases gradually to almost nothing in November.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Argentina - Money
Important
In Latin America you will have problems changing the US$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not bring them. In some countries banks won't even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President’s face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency
The monetary unit in Argentina is the Argentine peso. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs
We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies.

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Argentina, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins.

Argentina - Local Transport
Much of Buenos Aires can be visited on foot. Most sightseeing in Buenos Aires can be reached on foot from our hotel, with La Boca being the furthest at about an hour’s walk. There is also a good, if rather dated, underground metro system (called the “subte”) which has 5 lines and is very cheap at approx $0.30 per journey.

There are local buses called “colectivos”, which are also inexpensive, but you MUST have the right change (ask hotel reception for prices) as you have to drop the money into a machine. We recommend you use taxis (black & yellow) at night as they are inexpensive, but you MUST have the right change (ask hotel reception for prices) as you have to drop the money into a machine. We recommend you use taxis (black & yellow) at night as they are fairly cheap and usually have meters fitted. Just make sure that the driver turns it on when you get in. Remember that you will pay more for taxis at night.

Argentina - Food & Drink
As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US$1, a light meal will cost around $5-$6, and even a meal in one of the better restaurants in Buenos Aires costs very little in comparison to what you would expect to pay at home. Obviously this depends on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks, which will certainly increase the bill. If you eat in Puerto Madero or Recoleta in Buenos Aires you are likely to pay quite a bit more, however there is a huge choice of good reasonably-priced restaurants in the city centre where you can get a good meal (and great steaks).

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street.

Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:
- 1 litre of water US$0.70
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer US$0.70
- 50cl bottle of beer US$1.00
- Food

Food
In Argentina the basic diet focuses around meat mostly with fresh frys (papas fritas), mashed potatoes (pure) or ‘papas sufie’ (local typical deep fried potatoes that blow up like little balloons and are delicious). As there is a large Italian population you’ll have no problem getting pasta dishes or pizzas fact, in the larger cities, you’ll have no problem getting all types of food.

For breakfast it’s normal to eat croissants (media lunas) with a good strong coffee. Most Argentines would have a large lunch at around 1pm then at around 5pm, they all head to the ‘confiterías’ for tea, sandwiches and cakes. Dinner is usually eaten around 10pm and is often grilled beef (asado) in different forms. Other dishes include ‘lomo ala pimente’ (pepper steak), giant ribs (asado de tira) and mixed grills (parrillada) which include beef, intestines, offal, blood sausage (morcilla) and spicy sausage (chorizos) or thick grilled steak (churrasco). ‘Bife de chorizo’ is a rump steak (nothing to do with the sausage of the same name) and ‘bife a caballo’ is steak topped with a fried egg.

Although seafood is not so common you can get fish (pescado) which can be served grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs (aparnado) or with a sauce. There are also plenty of chicken (pollo) dishes available. ‘Milanesa de pollo’ (boneless chicken cooked with breadcrumbs) is a favourite.

For a cheap and hearty meal ‘tender Libre’ restaurants offer a fixed price buffet. These are usually very good value and you can eat as much as you like.

Vegetarians
If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian
alternatives are becoming more popular particularly in south Argentina. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink
You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer, Argentina also has some of the best coffee in the world.

In Argentina some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. Imported beers and spirits are available but local spirits tend to be cheaper. There is an array of rums, gins and brandy and the fabulous Argentine wines can be extremely cheap (from US $1 a bottle) There are also various brands of beers including Quilmes, Rubia, Negra Ahumada, and Negra Extra XXX.

Chile Country Guide

Chile - Fact File
- Official Name: Republic of Chile
- Capital: Santiago
- Population: 15.5 million
- Total Area: 756,950 square kilometres, including Easter Island (Isla de Pascua) and Isla Sala y Gomez. Chile stretches over 4,300 kilometres from north to south, a distance roughly the same as that from San Francisco to New York, or Edinburgh to Baghdad.
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 11%
- Voltage: 220 volts. Chilean outlets use three round pins in a line, with the middle one being an earth. Two-pronged European style plugs can also be used.
- Dialling Code: +56
- * Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4. For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- * Airport Departure Tax: $26

Chile - Visas
Most nationals, including citizens of the EU, North American and Australasia do not need to acquire a visa in advance to enter Chile. However some nationalities must pay an entry fee on arrival by air (e.g. United States $100, Canada $55 and Australia $34). Entry is granted on production of a passport with a minimum validity of 180 days and a return ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. Most nationalities can enter for 90 days. However some travel agents may charge a small fee. Three-pronged European style plugs can also be used.

- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4.
- Dials Code: +56.

Chile - Climate
Chile is very long and narrow (it is no more than 180 km wide at any point) and the Andes Mountains are a dominant feature running down the entire length of the country. Because of its length, Chile encompasses a variety of climates (the country contains both arid deserts and icebergs). There’s no one time that’s perfect to visit every part of the country, but it seldom rains during October to March, humidity is low, midday temperatures reach about 32°C and the nights are cool. It is colder and rains a lot in Santiago and in the south in May to August. A sweater (and, in the south, a heavy waterproof jacket) is advisable if you go, as nights can be cool-to-cold nearly everywhere.

Santiago, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot although at night it cools down slightly, and on the coast this temperature drop can be much more extreme. Autumn is between March and May, and temperatures decrease gradually. Daytime temperatures are reasonable but mornings can be very cold.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Chile - Money
Important
In Latin America you will have problems changing the US$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not bring them. In some countries banks won’t even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President’s face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency
The monetary unit in Chile is the Chilean peso, which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs
We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies. Travellers cheques must be changed before 12pm except at ‘casas de cambio’ (which do tend to offer better rates than banks anyway).

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Chile, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins. When arriving at the Santiago International Airport we suggest that you get some Pesos at one of the little banks just inside the luggage hall or use one of the ATMs outside the terminal. Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your trip – particularly if it is a weekend.

Chile - Food & Drink
All meals are included when camping and lunch is included on travelling days in the truck. When staying in hotels all meals are at your own expense.

As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US$1.50, a light meal will cost around US$5-8, and a meal in one of the better restaurants in Santiago will compare with developed countries in the west. Obviously this does depend on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. In cheaper restaurants where Chileans and backpackers eat, you can get meals for as little as US$3 if you shop around.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

Food
In Chile the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and sometimes salad. Compared to countries further north, Chile’s cuisine is quite creative and tasty. ‘Cazuela de ave’ is a stew of large chunks of chicken, potatoes, rice, onions with green peppers and ‘pastel de choclo’ is a casserole of beef, onions and olives topped with a mazeash baked in an earthenware bowl. ‘Parrilla’, a mixed grill of meats, offal and intestines served at your table in a charcoal brazier (miniature barbecue) is popular here as in all the southern countries. Other favourite dishes include ‘lomo a la pimienta’ (pepper steak) and ‘humitas’ (mashed corn mixed with spices and butter baked in a maize leaf).

Seafood is the basis for many of Chile’s favourite dishes and the ‘congrio’ is their national fish. One of the most popular ways to serve it is ‘callidillo de congro’ (a soup with large pieces of the fish with onions and potato balls). Other delicious fish include ‘corvina’ (bass), ‘albacore’ (swordfish) and ‘cojinoa’ (no translation). Try a ‘paila choncha’ (a seafood platter) and ‘pastel de choclo’ a casserole of chicken, rice, vegetables, potatoes, and ‘pelicano de maricos’ a mixed seafood grill. There is a whole host of other seafood available including clams (almejas), mussels (choritos/cholgas), sea-urchin (eriño), barnacles (picrocos) and seaweed.

Patagonia Discovered Northbound - 21 days
updated as of 09/02/2012

This Go Guide has been compiled with care and good faith. It gives us accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Occasions depend on weather conditions, weather conditions or other reasons could force us to make changes in this itinerary. The written description does not form part of a contract between the tour operator and the person taking the tour. Any costs which are subject to change (e.g. an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing). Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not us who can only try
Typical snacks are ‘emanadas de pino’ (pasties with onions, raisins, olives meat and peppers) and ‘prieta’, a blood sausage (black pudding) stuffed with cabbage.

Vegetarians
If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular you will just have to search a little harder for the restaurants that cater to your tastes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink
All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water US$1.50
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US$1
- 30cl bottle of beer US$1.50
- 50cl bottle of beer US$3

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water (especially outside of Santiago). Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. However fruit juices are sometimes made from unboiled tap water, so could upset your stomach. An easy way around this is to order the juice ‘con leche’ with milk instead. For decent coffee try one of the cafe chains: Cafe Haiti, Tio Pepe or Cafe Brasil.

In Chile some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available, but tend to be expensive. Alternatively there is an array of local rums, gins, brandy available and the fabulous Chilean wines which can be extremely cheap (from US $1.50 a bottle). There are various brands of beers including Cristal, Escudo, Austral, Heineken and Royal Guard (light), there is also a brown ale type beer from the south called Malta. Please note that many places will charge a refundable deposit for the bottles.