



**Argentinian
Explorer**

NORTHERN PATAGONIA IN 14 DAYS

Puerto Madryn + Esquel + Bariloche + San Martin de los Andes

We discover the best of the Northern Patagonia in 2 weeks, we travel from East to West, beginning in Madryn with the Southern Right Whales watching and the sea fauna which Península Valdés offers, to go towards Los Alerces National Park ending up our route in Bariloche and San Martín de los Andes.



14 days - 13 nights

- ✓ Accommodation and breakfast - Double Room
- ✓ Transfer IN OUT APT/HTL/APT
- ✓ Regular Tours with Spanish & English Guide
- ✓ Permanent Coordination
- ✓ Tickets to National Park included

Itinerary



Puerto Madryn

Reception and transfer from Trelew Airport to the hotel.

Opción en bus

This program can be done by bus, leaving Buenos Aires to Puerto Madryn on a 1,450km distance lasting around 18 hours. In this case you must set off the previous day near 20 pm so as to arrive at 15 pm the following day.



Península Valdés

Breakfast at the hired accommodation. We travel around the Protected Natural Area of Península Valdés located 50km away from Puerto Madryn, declared as World Heritage by the UNESCO, considered as one of the most interesting ecosystems in the world, we can find the Southern Right whales as well as killer whales (orca whales), sea lions, sea elephants and Magellan penguins, choiques (kind of rhea), etc.

Our first stop is at the Interpretation Centre watching the Birds Island, a reserve created in 1967 with the aim to protect the big bird groups that live in the place. After that we will head to Puerto Piramides, located some 28km away from the city. Between July and November there is a dinghy voyage to watch the Southern Right whale. In June and December the probability is notoriously less. If it is the watching season, we embark during a little more than an hour protected with life jackets. From Puerto Piramides, we arrive at the sea elephant station at Caleta Valdés going through the Great Saltpetre Bed with a 35km surface. Finally we go to Punta Norte at the North-East of the peninsula if it is summer or to Punta Delgada the rest of the year

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so as to watch sea lions and sea elephants and luckily we could see killer whales (orca whales) in Punta Norte.

Note about the whale watching

It is performed between July and November. Waterproof clothes and windbreakers are recommended. Before the trip, elemental advice is provided. This adventure is available for adults as well as for children.

day
3

Punta Tombo Penguin colony with Valle Inferior

Breakfast at hotel. Today we visit the most important Magellan penguin colony in South America: Punta Tombo, located in the south of the Valle Inferior of the Chubut River. At the beginning (more than 50 years ago), it was a natural reserve, 20 years later it was considered protected area. Punta Tombo has an expanse of almost 3,000m per 500m wide along the Atlantic Ocean. This natural accident is produced by crystalline rocky structures appearance before the Jurassic era which have beared the erosion produced by the ravages of the sea. Key factors for nest creation are the existence of boulder and compact sand. The season is from the beginning of September until April, when penguins emigrate to nest and protect their young.

Depending on the season, all their productive cycle can be observed. First males appear so as to build their nests or rebuild the previous year one, they take advantage of the natural caves for that. One month later, females lay their eggs to sit on them during 40 to 45 days. During that gestation period, males go for food. At the beginning of April, chicks are already good swimmers and feed alone. In the past, this zone was an indigenous cemetery where many Tehuelches also lived and hunted. When walking around the reserve we recommend not to divert the route. When returning from this adventure with penguins, we go towards the lower valley, to know the industrial and commercial center of the region: Trelew. Then we continue towards Gaiman, the most important Welsh colony in Argentina. There are still traditions and customs such as the Welsh tea with Welsh Black cake, as well as the walnut cake with fruit and homemade bread. If we go back the chacras (eateries), we will observe the different Welsh Chapels and observe the farming-tourist ventures.

day
4

City Tour in Puerto Madryn & Sea Lions watching at Punta Loma – Esquel

Breakfast at hotel. We begin our day visiting one of the prettiest atlantic cities in Argentina: Puerto Madryn. The principal attraction in the region is the Southern Right whale watching. We continue our excursion setting off some 17km to the south of the city, where we arrive at the Punta Loma Protected Natural Reserve. This station stands out for being the one hair sea lions chosen place for their habitat, not mentioning that many other whole communities of birds, reptiles and mammals live together, such is the case of cormorants, seagulls, etc. At night we go to the bus station at Puerto Madryn to take a bus to Esquel and arrive in the early morning the following day.

day
5

Los Alerces National Park

We depart towards the principal gate of the National Park in a journey where we will be able to distinguish the ecosystems of the region, with a dense vegetation thanks to the continuous rains. The lakes as in the Percy River that we can observe during the trip are due to the movements of the glaciers that we find in the mountains. We rest for the first time in Villa Futalaufquen knowing the Interpretative Center so as to understand its autochthonous flora and fauna. We then arrive at Puerto Limonao, bathed by the Futalaufquen Lake waters, 4km near. We can take a ship from that harbour to sail the waters of the lakes Futalaufquen, Verde and Menéndez so as to arrive at the northern part of the park, actually to enter the jungle area to discover the Alerzal Milenario. This voyage on a catamaran (double hulled vessel) is not included, please check before travelling because it is offered only in high season months. In case of not performing the navigation, we return to Esquel.



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Optional in high season:

Navigation along the Futalaufquen, the Verde and the Menéndez Lakes & Alerces Milenarios Forest
In Summer there is an optional navigation along the Futalaufquen Lake from Puerto Limonao to Puerto Mermoud. From here we do a small trek to reach Puerto Chucao at the shore of the Menéndez Lake, from where we will start the second maritime stage towards the Alerzal Milenario. Another path takes us to the lake and river Cisne with its rapids until we meet the oldest alerce in the park.

day
6

Piedra Parada

We set off to a very different journey which crosses the Chubut River to enter the Piedra Parada Protected Natural Area, where we can see a gigantic stone of more than 200 meters tall, originated by the volcanic movements produced in all that zone. We will also go to the Cañadón de la Buitrera (Vulture's Canyon) of more than 6 kilometers, reaching it through the footbridge over the river and where we will find cave paintings as testimony of the natives who inhabited these lands. The landscape here display tall walls on both sides of the canyon full of Patagonic chinchillas' caves built in the cracks of the rock faces, the rock structures and the silence give calm and peace to this pure environment. There are 3 paths to climb the stone, the Sueño Lento (Slow Dream) path reaching 240 meters, then the Big Band to reach 250 meters and finally a path called Un Largo Camino a Casa (A Long Way Home), steeper and thus more complicated where more previous experience is demanded.

day
7

Patagonian Express "La Trochita" - Bariloche

We start a fantastic journey of 25 kilometers in the vintage Patagonic Express La Trochita, which was declared National Heritage Patrimony. It is an old steam train whose narrow gauge has less than a meter, it goes across the Patagonic steppe, with its wagons, whose heating are iron salamander stoves with firewood as fuel, were built in 1922 together with its engines Baldwin and Henschel. The first trip was inaugurated in 1945 up to Esquel. The train offers a dining-room with delicious cakes that can be served together with chocolate and coffee. The route begins at the Esquel station, going through the Esquel stream, then the way changes so as to go parallel to the mountain range and the route towards a town called Tecka. It crosses the steppe, we can see aquatic birds such as ducks, cauquenes and flamingos in low lands called mallines in indigenous language. The route ends in Nahuel Pan station (name of the highest mountain of the zone) where there is a place with craftsmen. While we visit a small handcraft center, the steam engine performs the maneuvers to get ready to go back. During the return, the train crosses the valley. The journey lasts nearly 3 hours and it isn't cancelled for bad weather, unless an excess of snow provokes blockages. Today there are two stretches, the touristic stretch which joins Esquel with Nahuel Pan and the passenger's stretch which goes up to El Maitén. In the afternoon we go to the bus station to travel to the city of Bariloche.

day
8

Otto Mount

We leave Bariloche towards the Otto Mount, near 4km away we find the winter center Piedras Blancas after going through a dirt road. We continue until we reach the base of the cable cars resort of the mount, where some unique awe-inspiring sights of the Lakes Nahuel Huapi, Gutiérrez and Moreno as well as of the Tronador, Campanario and Catedral Mountains can be seen. The San Pedro peninsula can also be seen from there. The Otto Mount cable car touristic resort is renowned for its revolving restaurant, performing a 360° radius in just 20 minutes. This means of elevation goes from the base station at 800 meters (over sea level) to the summit station at some 1,400 meters (over sea level) at a height of over 2,000 meters.

day
9

Visit to Victoria Island and to the legendary Arrayanes Forest

We go to Pañuelo harbour to embark towards the island. We set off to navigate almost half an hour some 10km up to Puerto Anchorena (Anchorena harbour) on Victoria Island. We will trek around the island visiting



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the ancient coniferous nursery. The Cerro Bella Vista can be climbed to the top by chairlift. A small path covered with autochthonous Coihues and Cypresses is crossed. Then we return from the mount enjoying impressive natural lookout points. We continue our tour embarking again to arrive at Puerto Quettrihué at the Quettrihué peninsula, to discover the legendary Arrayanes Forest (myrtle forest) in the Valdivian jungle, inside Los Arrayanes National Park.

It is a natural reserve of almost 2,000 hectares located in a Patagonic Andean forest. The climate is cold and damp due to the influence of the lakes and there are also Western winds. We can find Coihues, Ñires, Cypresses, Radales and Notros apart from the southern Arrayanes. There is a bush called Rosa Mosqueta which has been brought by the man and it is not autochthonous but can be easily found in the area. The Arrayan is a unique tree, whose bark is cold, smooth and cinnamon-coloured. Its flowers are similar to the lemon or orange blossoms, white-coloured and violet fruit. This forest is an intangible surface and natural monument.

day
10

Llao Llao Peninsula & Campanario Mount through Bustillo Ave.

Breakfast at the hotel. We set off towards the Llao Llao Hotel, discovering one of the most classic routes of San Carlos de Bariloche. We start in the center of the city to the west along Bustillo Ave. winding along the Nahuel Huapi Lake most of the time. Near km 8 is Playa Bonita (Pretty Beach) which is the precise place from where to see Huemul Island. Going on along that avenue, at km 17, we stop to know the Campanario Mount, we climb by chairlift which take us to the summit at 1050 meters (optional). We can try very good pastrymaking and drink hot chocolate (optional). Once at the summit, we will appreciate the probably best sight of all the zone of Bariloche. We continue so as to reach Llao Llao at km 25, leaving behind the San Pedro peninsula. The San Eduardo church and the Puerto Pañuelo (harbour) are located in the zone of the hotel and it is from there that the navigation to the Arrayanes Forest (myrtle forest) and Puerto Blest sets off. From this place you can see the Lopez and Capilla Mounts. We go towards the golf area and the bridge that links the Moreno Lake to the Nahuel Huapi Lake at Lopez Bay.

There is another privileged place from where to enjoy the Llao Llao peninsula and the lakes around it. We cross the bridge over Moreno Lake and go along the edge of El Trébol Lake.

Note: This program can be done early in the morning or after midday. The ascent to Campanario Mount is not included, having to be purchased upon arrival. .

day
11

San Martín de Los Andes

Breakfast at the hotel. Free day to rest or perform optional activities.

Navigation along the Lácar & Nonthué Lakes

We embark at the Lácar Lake pier. In the first stretch of our navigation, we can see the high walls of the Abanico Mount until we reach Quila Quina, our first stop. We can enjoy a small trekking along the Cipresal, a cypress zone on the shore of the lake. We also get to the Arroyo Grande Waterfall. We leave Quila Quina towards the west to disembark at our next destination: the Santa Teresita Island.

Here we find Arrayanes and the chapel. The maritime route takes us through a narrow water path between both lakes. Once on the Nanthué lake, we reach Hua Hum where there is a lodging house with the same name and the source of the homonymous river which flows into the Pacific Ocean. Once on land we begin a short trekking up to the Chachín Waterfall during an hour with a mild but constant ascent. We cross raulíes, oaks and coihues forests which don't allow the sun to go through. Even in the undergrowth we can see a coihue reedbed jungle together with ferns that form a dense vegetation.

The Chachín waterfall is an important fall which impresses; it is a geological fault which makes its water fall from 24 meters high generating a stunning roar when hitting the base. This journey allows us to see in detail



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how the ecosystem where the Patagonic lakes coexist is, in this case in the Lanín National Park. In the afternoon we return sailing towards the beautiful San Martín de los Andes.

day
12

Huechulafquen and Epulafquen Lakes & Lanin Volcano

Breakfast at the hotel. We set off to Junín de los Andes, a town located 40km away from San Martín de los Andes. There, in Junín, we will stroll around to know the church where the Virgen de las Nieves (Snow Virgin) is situated. We continue towards the Huechulafquen and Paimún Lakes to appreciate a first class sight of the Lanín Volcano. We arrive at the gorge of the Río Chimehuín, this river is the most important one for fly fishing in the whole Patagonia. We walk around a transition area appreciating notros, maitenes and geological figures such as the Piedra la Virgen (Virgin Stone). We enter the Andean-Patagonic forest going along the edge of the lake, where we observe a sub-antartctic jungle covered of coihues of more than 25m high, together with antique oaks and lengas (kind of Patagonic trees). The undergrowth is made of reeds, ñires, bushes introduced by the man, such as rosa mosqueta, apart from mutisias, amancay (lilies) and reina mora (a kind of berry). We continue towards the Lanín Volcano of over 3,500m, to approach the south base. We continue towards the Paimún Lake, and we will visit its chapel. When returning we will stop at the Río Rucu Leufú to appreciate another sight of the Lanín. Our last destination is the Saltillo Waterfall, having to walk almost half an hour through the Andean Patagonic forest.

Going back, in Puerto Canoas we can optionally take a ship to navigate along the extense lake. Once on board, on the north bank of the Huechulafquen we will go south to see the face of the Lanín Volcano of almost 3,800m high. The lakes with their frozen water can have over 400m depth and are of glacial origin. The Isla de los Chivos stands out of the lake. Towards the west, we arrive at the joint of the Huechulafquen and the Epulafquen rivers. The latter quite shallow and with legendary forests and snow-covered mountains where there is plenty of fauna due to the fact that man hasn't made incursions nearby. The vessel arrives at the Escorial, a lava river in solid status, because of the eruption of the Achén Ñiyeu Volcano more than 480 years ago. As time went by, the lush vegetation covered this lava soil producing a midget forest or a bonsai forest, which doesn't reach one meter of height.

day
13

Return to Buenos Aires

Breakfast in the hotel. Transfer to Chapelco Airport. End of the excursion

Option by bus:

This program can be done by bus, returning to Buenos Aires from San Martín de los Andes, through a 1,650km distance and lasting 18hs. In this case the depart should be at 1pm to be arriving at 7am the following morning.

END OF THE SERVICES
