



## ARGENTINA

### DELUXE PATAGONIA

An Exclusive Adventure through the Wonders of Patagonia



**DURATION:** 10 days / 11 nights  
**SEASON:** October through March  
**DEPARTURES:** Guaranteed with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 12 participants  
**TRIP RATING:** Moderate Walking Adventure, Grade (II) - This luxury adventure is an active trip, featuring a variety of hikes, based from charming and upscale hotels, lodges or estancias. Hiking days cover distances from a few miles up to 9.5 miles at elevations below 4,000' on established trails in both Fitz Roy and El Calafate areas. Also included are boat/catamaran rides and long but scenic overland drives on mostly paved roads.

**2015/16 DATES:** On request any week throughout the season for a minimum of 4 travelers

#### INTRODUCTION:

Southern Argentina and Chile share an immense, sparsely populated, and mostly flat expanse divided by the Andes Mountains, commonly known as Patagonia. Here, some of the most dramatic granite spires on earth are constantly being transformed by the movement of immense glaciers. These peaks tower over the surrounding plains, creating the most impressive mountain vistas in South America. To the west of the Continental Divide, the mountains are surrounded by dense forests and lush meadows, dotted with wildflowers. To the east of the Andes are the typical, windswept plains of Patagonia. In the magnificent wilderness areas of Los Glaciares National Parks (regions whose spectacular beauty rivals that of Yellowstone and Yosemite), nature rules supreme with wildlife such as the guanaco, ñandú, condor, fox and dozens of bird species.

This exciting itinerary is designed for walkers and nature enthusiasts who would like to experience the Argentine side of the Patagonian Andes in style and comfort, with active days and relaxing nights at chic lodges and hotels. We start with a stimulating tour of the Argentine capital, but the majority of our trip focuses on the wilderness areas. Our adventure begins by exploring Glaciers National Park, from El Calafate overland to El Chaltén, for two days of hiking at the foot of iconic Mount Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre. Returning to El Calafate, we travel by a scenic boat to the exclusive Estancia Cristina for an overnight and explorations in this historic ranch and pristine wilderness. Next, stay at the comfortable Eolo lodge and visit the spectacular and memorable Perito Moreno Glacier.

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### DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

#### DAY 01: HOME

Overnight flight to Argentina's cosmopolitan capital, **Buenos Aires**.

#### DAY 02: BUENOS AIRES

A Southwind representative greets you this morning on arrival at the Ezeiza International Airport and brings you to the elegant [Palacio Duhau Hotel](#) (Deluxe View rooms facing the park). Centrally located in the upscale Recoleta neighborhood, the Palacio Duhau is near shopping centers, art galleries, and is situated just few blocks from the city's landmark, the Obelisk.

After lunch on your own, join your Buenos Aires host and guide for an insider's tour of this vibrant, European-style city. We'll visit Plaza de Mayo (where the city was founded), Metropolitan Cathedral and the neighborhoods of San Telmo and Montserrat. We drive along *9 de Julio* (the world's widest avenue at 22 lanes wide) to see the Obelisk, the splendid Colón Theater, National Congress, Casa Rosada (the president's headquarters – like the US White House except pink!), and other historical buildings in the city. The intriguing and inspiring Evita Peron museum rounds out our tour. This evening, enjoy an escorted Argentine welcome dinner and sultry tango show at one of the best venues in the city, Gala Tango.

(D)

#### DAY 03: BUENOS AIRES / EL CALAFATE / EL CHALTEN

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our 3.5-hour flight to **El Calafate** (610'). Meet your Patagonian guide and drive across the windy *steppe* – expansive terrain typical of Argentine Patagonia – to the base of Mount Fitz Roy. Our route takes us around the southeastern shores of Lago Argentino, and then past the sizeable Lago Viedma. On the drive we watch the granite spires of Mount Fitz Roy rise up behind the turquoise waters of the lakes and will likely spot guanacos (a wild relative of the llama) or ñandú (a flightless bird similar to an ostrich). We arrive at the small rural community of El Chaltén in the late afternoon, conveniently located in the foothills at the base of the massif, and check in at [Don Los Cerros Hotel & Spa](#) (Superior Valley View rooms), which is the top lodge in the area.

Afterwards, (time permitting) we'll stop at the Los Glaciares National Park's visitors center to learn about the natural history of Patagonia and enjoy an optional 1-hour hike up to *Mirador de los Cóndores* before dinner at the gourmet restaurant at Don Los Cerros. If skies are clear this evening, we ponder the thousands of stars that form Southern Hemisphere constellations such as the *Cruz del Sur* (Southern Cross), the *Corona Australis* (Southern Crown), and look for distant galaxies like Andromeda, or star clusters and the Clouds of Magellan. **Driving distance:** 130 miles or 3 hours; **Hotel elevation:** 1,395'

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#### DAY 04: FITZ ROY

Following breakfast this morning we drive about 10 miles up the lovely Las Vueltas River valley along a dirt road to our trailhead for the hike toward Mount Fitz Roy. Following the Río Eléctrico River to its junction with the Río Blanco, we make our way closer to the foot of the peaks. Along the picturesque route through patches of forest, past clearings and low-lying shrubs fields, we enjoy views of the nearly vertical rock walls of Fitz Roy's east face, the impressive spire to the south called the Poincenot Needle (9,960'), and the unusually blue Piedras Blancas glacier. We also identify a variety of colorful flowers and several species of birds in this lovely valley. Hiking gradually uphill on an out-and-back route, we reach the basecamp area, gaining 980' in elevation. We enjoy a well-deserved lunch break in this area.

The return route is along the same trail, making this hike's length flexible – we can stop for lunch and turn around at any point. We'll descend on foot to our starting point and then drive back to **El Chaltén** and the familiar [Don Los Cerros Hotel](#), where a visit the Spa is in order (therapeutic massages are available with previous booking and at additional cost). Or unwind with a glass of wine in front of the crackling central fireplace. **Hiking distance:** 9.5 miles or 6.5 hours.

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#### DAY 05: CERRO TORRE / EL CALAFATE

This morning depart from near the lodge to hike along the **Fitz Roy River** valley. The trail is fairly easy as we cross ancient terminal moraines left behind when the glaciers of the last ice age receded. We arrive at the *Mirador* lookout after

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1.5 hours of gentle uphill hiking to enjoy inspiring views of Cerro Torre, Fitz Roy and nearby peaks. With sheer walls topped by a mushroom-shaped ice cap, Cerro Torre's 10,265-foot summit is one of the classic Patagonian peaks. Once in the valley, we follow a trail through patches of Lenga trees, forest and flat terrain, passing through a *mallín* (wet meadow) until we reach a lovely spot in the valley to enjoy a relaxing lunch break.

Afterwards, we start making our way back to El Chaltén. Hiking down the main well-marked trail along the course of the Fitz Roy river valley, look for nice views and photo opportunities. The Cerro Torre summit (one of the most challenging climbs in the world) and its Ventisquero Grande glacier loom over the valley. This afternoon, we drive back to El Calafate to overnight at [Los Sauces Casas Patagónicas Hotel](#), a sophisticated country-inn retreat located at a tranquil area on the skirts of town. This evening dine on your own at the hotel's La Comarca Restaurant, specializing in Patagonian lamb and seafood. **Hiking Distance:** 8 miles or 5.5 hours; **Driving distance:** 145 miles or 3.5 hours.

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### DAY 06: EL CALAFATE / ESTANCIA CRISTINA

Early this morning we transfer to the Puerto Bandera docks with our private guide to board a boat or catamaran at 8:15 am for an exciting 3-hour voyage on Lago Argentino to the exclusive Estancia Cristina. The boat sails towards the western front of the Upsala Glacier. We pass stunning scenery of snow-covered peaks and see ice floats up-close. Cruise along Cristina Channel to the dock at the Estancia. As a secluded and historic estancia founded in the early 1900s by English pioneer and cattle farmer Joseph Percival Masters, Estancia Cristina offers a unique and pristine natural environment. Sitting next to Glaciers National Park, this lakeside property serves as an ideal home base for exploring the region. Learn about the history of the sheep and cattle ranch on a visit to the small museum and old shearing shed. Take a short guided walk up to Caterina River to visit the estancia's chapel and other historic buildings. A traditional lunch at the estancia is served by its friendly staff.

This afternoon, hike to Cascada del Rio de los Perros (total duration: 2.5 hours), an easy walk along the east bank of Estancia Cristina Valley. Admire the flora and fauna of National Park Los Glaciares. Arriving at the waterfall of the Rio de los Perros, you will be surprised by the outstanding views of Lake Anita, hanging glaciers, and the Estancia valley. Back at [Estancia Cristina](#) (Superior Rooms) make yourself at home and join the estancia's other guests for dinner this evening. The Estancia meticulously selects the products they use for their signature cuisine. Patagonian lamb, fresh vegetables and homemade breads are favorites among the Estancia guests.

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### DAY 07: ESTANCIA CRISTINA / EOLO

Today you may join other Estancia Cristina guests for an excursion with the lodge's expert resident guides. The evening prior, you'll decide as a group on activity. Options include:

**a) Morning horseback riding** to Laguna de la Pesca, approximate duration 2.5 hours. Trot through the vegetated valley to the north, then cool off with a splash in the Laguna de la Pesca wading streams and rivers. Ideal for relaxing and contemplating nature. Appropriate for beginners on horseback.

**b) Moderate hike** to Upsala Viewpoint, approximate duration 2.5 hours. The trip begins by ascending the northwest Feruglio Gordon. Reaching up to 1,800 feet in elevation gain, we can observe the majestic view reserved exclusively for Estancia Cristina guests of the Upsala Glacier from the eastern front. Meander through a landscape that until recently was covered by glaciers and has a great geological interest. Condors, the world's largest flying birds, may be seen soaring silently above these valleys on their impressive 10-foot wingspan.

**c) 4x4 exploration**, approximate duration 4 hours. Ascend in all-terrain vehicles in a north-westerly direction crossing the Cordon Feruglio 6 miles through mountainous road. Reaching 1,800 feet in elevation gain, we can observe the Upsala Glacier from the eastern front, a view exclusive to Estancia Cristina. We also see the Andes Mountains, the Bertrand hills cone and wall and part of the southern Patagonian ice field. Walk on a unique terrain eroded by glaciers.

At 5:30pm we catch our boat for the direct 1.5 hour ride back to Puerto Bandera. On arrival a 35 minute drive brings us to [Eolo Lodge](#) (Superior Suites). Eolo is a prestigious Relais & Chateaux property situated in the wide open expanses of the majestic Patagonian pampa and inside the grounds of the Estancia Anita. Dinner is included for a chance to try the delicious cuisine and excellent selection of Argentine wines at the Lodge's restaurant.

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### DAY 08: PERITO MORENO GLACIER / EOLO

We drive early this morning into Los Glaciares National Park, which was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1981. We embark on an hour-long catamaran ride on the Brazo Rico section of Lago Argentino to appreciate close-up views of the spectacular **Perito Moreno Glacier**, one of three Patagonian glaciers that are not retreating, with a surface area of 97 square miles (three miles wide, 19 miles in length and 195 feet high). Perito Moreno truly is one of South America's natural wonders.

Later, we drive to the narrowest point on this arm of the lake, stopping at a lookout where we observe and photograph the massive sheet of ice from various angles, and walk along the newly built network of observation paths that wind along the lake bank, directly in front of the glacier and across from its snout. It's possible that we'll witness the detachment of ice blocks from a safe distance, hear the roaring they produce, and see how they turn into ice floats. We'll savor a picnic lunch. Afterwards, we drive back toward El Calafate with a stop at the Glaciarium Museum, a modern center devoted to the Patagonian ice field, its glaciers and conservation. It's one of few glaciological interpretative centers in the world. We continue to the comfortable and relaxing [Eolo Lodge](#) for the night. **Driving distance:** 100 miles or 3 hours.

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### DAY 09: EL CALAFATE / BUENOS AIRES

This morning, pursue individual guided activities to explore Eolo and the Anita valley, taking in the sweeping Patagonian vistas. According to interest and how you feel, choose from short nature walks or hiking, mountain biking or bird watching/wildlife observation – all included with onsite guides from Eolo who helps to interpret the natural and cultural history of the ranch. Horseback riding, fishing or 4x4 activities can be arranged at an extra cost.

After a half day of guided outdoor exploration, return to the lodge to relax among the serenity of the grounds. Indoor activities at the lodge include swimming pool and sauna, discussions on glaciology, regional flora and fauna, tales of local and indigenous legends, customs and traditions, Patagonia reading material in the library, thematic films and documentaries. Lunch is at the Lodge's restaurant overlooking Lago Argentino. Leaving the lodge afterwards, we drive toward **El Calafate**. We continue to the airport and check in for the flight to the Aeroparque Airport in **Buenos Aires**. Reception upon arrival and 1-hour private transfer to the Ezeiza International Airport for an overnight flight back to US.

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### DAY 10: HOME

Arrive back to US this morning and make connections home.

**NOTES ON THE ITINERARY:** Although we do our best to follow the schedule listed above, due to the extremely changeable and unpredictable nature of the weather in Patagonia, as well as other factors beyond our control, including group members' abilities, pace, interest, weather, and road/river/lake/trail conditions as well as local flight and catamaran schedule changes, any itinerary in these regions is subject to change at any time. A flexible attitude is recommended. Participants are encouraged to have prior hiking experience. This program uses a variety of hotels, lodges and estancias, and is suitable for physically fit participants accustomed to outdoor activities, age 12 and up. Hiking distances and altitudes are approximate, and times indicated are NET. They do not include lunch breaks, rest stops, time to explore the area, photo stops, etc.

One important factor to consider when visiting Patagonia is the tremendous distances that must be covered. This is a vast region, comparable to the combined territory of western states like Texas, California and Montana. The area still has many unpaved roads and there is only sporadic local flight service, other than the flights into El Calafate. We have designed this adventure to minimize the amount of driving time, but we are still covering approx. 450 miles total during the trip.

**2015 LAND COST:**           \$7,425 p.p.d. (4-5 participants)  
                                      \$6,825 p.p.d. (6-9 participants)  
                                      \$6,325 p.p.d. (10-12 participants)  
                                      \$2,795 Single Supplement

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2015 Land Costs are valid for departures through March 2016.  
p.p.d= per person based on double or triple occupancy.

**OPTIONAL TRIP EXTENSIONS:** Those with extra days might want to extend their vacation and visit some of the country's other impressive destinations. We suggest a 3 day/2 night pre-extension to Ushuaia and Tierra del Fuego, a 4 day/3 night tour of Mendoza wine region or a 3 day/2 night Iguazú Falls extension. We also recommend a 5 day/4 night excursion to Easter Island or a visit to the Atacama Desert in Chile. These add-ons require a minimum of 2 participants. See our [trip extensions page](#) for more details.

### SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- All **in-country transfers** as scheduled (transfers on different days are additional). Ground transportation in spacious and comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers.
- Boat and/or Catamaran transportation where applicable on a seat-in-boat basis.
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance** (Luggage handlers' tips are included).
- All **accommodations in First-class (5 star) hotels and the best available Lodges** in remote locations as listed (or at similar hotels or lodges) on a shared basis with private bath. Advanced bookings are recommended if you plan to arrive early or extend your stay. Double beds for couples (primarily king/queen-sized) can be requested in advance, but cannot be guaranteed, as most hotels offer few rooms with double beds.
- Single Supplement provides single room accommodations in all hotels. Due to the small size of most lodges in Patagonia, there is a maximum of 2 singles allowed per group. If you require single accommodations, making reservations well in advance is recommended.
- All **meals** indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast; L=lunch or picnic/packed lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request (advance notification required). For other diets, consult your travel specialist before making a reservation.
- All **guided tours & excursions** (as listed) conducted on a private basis by knowledgeable, English-speaking local guides in each region (includes applicable entrance fees), except the Perito Moreno catamaran excursion and the boat rides to Estancia Cristina, which are operated on a seat-in-boat basis. There will be other travelers aboard, although our group will be privately escorted. There will be one main guide from El Calafate (Day 03) to Eolo (Day 08), onsite guides at Estancia Cristina and Eolo, and a different resident guide for Buenos Aires. Southwind's travel style is to utilize guides who are experts in each region in an effort to enhance your overall learning experience and adhere to principles of Ecotourism.
- **First-class Hiking service** including:
  - Experienced, knowledgeable, English-speaking, Patagonian guide and assistant guide (assistants are provided for groups with 9 or more participants).
  - Packed or picnic gourmet lunch.
  - First-aid kit.
  - Entrance fees.

### NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, International flights, nor local flights within Argentina.
- The entry fee into Argentina for US citizens is \$160 (valid for 10 years and multiple entries) and for Canadian citizens is \$75 (valid for single entry only). Fees must be paid online before arrival.
- Four (4) meals at about \$25-40 each per person.
- Tours or other services not listed on the itinerary.
- Alcoholic beverages nor items of a personal nature; such as clothing, equipment, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips to the local staff.
- Expenses incurred in preparing for this program such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets or traveler's insurance, nor additional expenses resulting from flight delays, schedule changes, cancellations, or missed connections.



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**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend purchasing coverage to protect your trip investment. Travel insurance is important in case of unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates. Weather, geologic events, local strikes, personal injury/illness for you, your traveling companion or family members, etc., could require itinerary interruption or changes. Missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage or the need for medical attention or evacuation are also reasons why coverage is important. Southwind offers several plans through Travel Insured International (TII) to fit your budget and coverage amount. We recommend TII's *Worldwide Trip Protector* which offers a good value and free coverage for kids 17/under traveling with a related adult. See our [Travel Insurance](#) page to learn more.

**WEATHER:** **Buenos Aires** can be expected to be hot and humid during the months of December, January, and February with daytime temperatures of 85-95°F and up to 70-75% humidity. Nighttime lows in the summer average 65-70° F. The **Patagonia** region has a reputation for changeable, windy and/or rainy weather with mild temperatures. Daytime highs during the summer in Río Gallegos, El Calafate, El Chaltén will be between 60-72°F, with nighttime temperatures ranging between 40-45°F. Paine National Park and areas on the western slope of the Andes typically have more wind and rain than destinations on the eastern side, but rain can be expected in Patagonia at any time, on any departure. The best policy for enjoying this trip is to be prepared for all possibilities ranging from intense sunshine to rain, cold, and/or wind.

**ESTIMATED AIRFARE:** The Land Cost DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY FLIGHTS. Round-trip **international** air from US gateway cities is approximately \$900-1,500 per person. Dec 15-Jan 15 is a peak travel time so higher fares may apply. Local **in-country** flights ARE NOT INCLUDED; budget on approx \$450 per person for the round-trip Buenos Aires-Calafate. International carriers offering non-stop service from US gateways include; **American** (JFK, Dallas, Miami), **Delta** (Atlanta) and **LAN** (Miami). **United** (Houston or Newark) offers non-stop to/from Buenos Aires (connect Santiago-Buenos Aires-US on return). Airfares are subject to change at any time before tickets are issued. Upon receipt of your deposit, Southwind will send you recommended air arrangements to match your land itinerary. Airfares are subject to change at any time before tickets are issued.

**HOW TO SIGN UP:** Submit Southwind's [Trip Reservation Form](#) along with a \$1,500 per person per trip deposit by credit card via our secure [Online Payment Form](#). If you prefer, you can also call us at 1-800-377-9463 to make payment arrangements or send a check. **Your deposit will be charged and your reservation confirmed once we receive your Trip Reservation Form.** Once your trip is guaranteed to operate, you will receive comprehensive pre-departure planning documents by email.

Due to the popularity of Patagonia and the small size of the lodges and estancias, we recommend making reservations 4 to 6 months in advance. Once your trip is guaranteed to operate, you will receive a comprehensive pre-departure planning packet.

**Cancellation Fees:** The following fees are valid for all Deluxe Patagonia programs (fees are per person and notification must be in writing):

Minimum fee	\$500
120 – 91 days in advance	\$1,000
90 – 61 days in advance	75% of the LC
60 days or less	100% of the LC

LC=Total Land Cost per person including extensions and extra services per your invoice. Excludes discounts.

**Land Balance:** Final payment for this custom trip is due at 120 days before departure by Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express or check. You will receive a trip invoice indicating your balance due. Provided services and space are available, new reservations can be accepted up to 30 days before departure.

Other policies are outlined under the [Terms & Conditions](#) on Southwind's website.

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