



ARGENTINA & CHILE

HIKING THE PATAGONIAN ANDES

An upscale low elevation walking adventure through the national parks of Patagonia



DURATION:	12 days / 11 nights
SEASON:	October through March
DEPARTURES:	Guaranteed with a minimum of 4 participants
TRIP RATING:	Moderate/Strenuous Walking Adventure, Grade (III) - This is an active trip, featuring a variety of hikes, based from charming hotels or local lodges. Hiking days average 8.5 miles (at elevations below 5,000 ft) on established trails in both Fitz Roy and Torres del Paine areas. Also included are long yet scenic overland drives on mostly unpaved roads.

2026/27 DATES: On request any week throughout the season.

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 Torres del Paine and 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. Further south, Tierra del Fuego ("Land of Fire"), the beautiful landscapes are reminiscent of the Alaskan wildlands.

This exciting itinerary is designed for hikers and nature enthusiasts to experience the full range of the Patagonian Andes with active days and relaxing nights at cozy lodges and hotels. We begin with a tour of the Argentine capital, but the focus of the trip is in wilderness areas. We explore Argentina's Glaciers National Park, from El Calafate overland to El Chaltén for 2 days of hiking at the foot of Mt Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre. Returning to El Calafate, we visit the spectacular Perito Moreno Glacier and stop in at the Glaciarum Museum to learn about the vast Patagonian ice field. An international drive brings us across the Argentine steppe to the highlight of our adventure - Torres del Paine National Park in Chile. The final 4 days are spent hiking to view the scenic Lake Nordenskjold and Lake Grey. The French River Valley presents close-up views of impressive peaks with vertical granite walls. After a shorter drive to Puerto Natales, we fly north to Santiago before returning home. Pre or post extensions are available to experience Tierra del Fuego National Park or to cruise the fiords of the Beagle Channel.

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01	<p>TO ARGENTINA Depart home on an overnight flight to Argentina's cosmopolitan capital, Buenos Aires.</p>
DAY 02	<p>BUENOS AIRES A Southwind representative greets you this morning at the Ezeiza International Airport and brings you to the elegant Emperador Hotel. Centrally located in the exclusive Recoleta neighborhood, the Emperador is near shopping centers, art galleries, and is a few blocks from the city's landmark, the Obelisk. After lunch on your own, join your private guide for a tour of this active, 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 <i>9 de Julio</i> (the world's widest avenue at 22 lanes wide) to see the Obelisk landmark, the splendid Colón Theater, National Congress, Casa Rosada (Government house), and other historical buildings in the city. We walk by the Parque de las Rosas and stop at the distinctive Floralis Generica flower sculpture. Our visit of the renowned Recoleta Cemetery rounds out our tour. This evening, enjoy an Argentine welcome dinner and sultry tango show at one of the best venues in the city, Gala Tango.</p> <p>Emperador Hotel - 1 night (D)</p>
DAY 03	<p>BUENOS AIRES / EL CALAFATE / EL CHALTEN After breakfast we transfer to the airport for a local flight from Buenos Aires (AEP or EZE) to El Calafate (FTE) (3 hr 15 min). On arrival in Patagonia (610 ft), meet your mountain 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). En route, we'll stop at the Los Glaciares National Park visitor's center (time permitting) to learn about the natural history of Patagonia and enjoy an optional short hike to <i>Mirador de los Cóndores</i>. Afterwards, we arrive to the small outdoorsy community of El Chaltén in the foothills at the base of the massif. Check-in to the lodge with dinner on your own to walk into town to dine out along the main street. If skies are clear this evening, ponder the Southern Hemisphere constellations such as the <i>Cruz del Sur</i> (Southern Cross), the <i>Corona Australis</i> (Southern Crown), and look for distant galaxies like Andromeda and the Clouds of Magellan. Driving: 130 miles/3 hours; Hotel elevation: 1,315 ft</p> <p>Hotel Destino Sur - 2 nights (B)</p>
DAY 04	<p>FITZ ROY After a hearty breakfast, we drive 11 miles up the picturesque Las Vueltas River Valley along a level dirt road to our trailhead. From here, we embark on an unforgettable hike toward the legendary Mt. Fitz Roy. Following the Río Eléctrico to its confluence with the Río Blanco, we gradually approach the base of the dramatic peaks. Along the way, we meander through enchanting forests of lenga and ñirre trees, pausing to admire vibrant wildflowers and spot native bird species. A highlight today is a viewpoint overlooking the Piedras Blancas Glacier and its shimmering lagoon. As the valley opens into a wide, sweeping field, we catch our first glimpse of the awe-inspiring Cerro Fitz Roy with a summit rising to 11,290 ft. Continuing our ascent and after gaining 980 ft in elevation, we make our way to the climbers' basecamp—where daring mountaineers prepare for their ambitious summit attempts. We pause to enjoy a well-earned picnic lunch, surrounded by the raw beauty of Patagonia. Our return trek retraces the trail through the Río Blanco Valley. Back at the lodge, unwind in the cozy lounge, savoring a glass of wine by the warmth of a crackling fireplace while reflecting on the day's exhilarating adventure. Hiking: 9.5 miles/6.5 hours.</p> <p>Hotel Destino Sur (B,BL)</p>

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

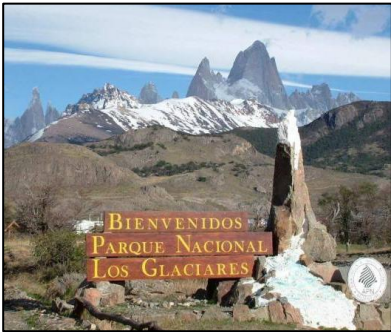
DAY 05	<p>CERRO TORRE / EL CALAFATE</p> <p>This morning we depart from the outskirts of town, where our trail takes us toward the southwest as we hike along the Fitz Roy River valley. The trail is fairly easy as we cross ancient terminal moraines left behind when the glaciers of the last ice age receded. We arrive at the <i>Mirador</i> lookout after 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 ft summit is one of mountaineering's most sought-after prizes. Once in the valley, we follow a scenic trail through patches of Lenga trees, forest and flat terrain, passing through a <i>mallín</i> (wet meadow) until we reach a lovely spot in the valley to enjoy a relaxing picnic lunch. 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 to El Calafate near the shore of Lago Argentino, the largest lake in the country. The town is named for the abundant bushes that dot the countryside. The hotel's Mora Restaurant serves delicious local dishes. Hiking: 8 miles/5.5 hours; Driving: 145 miles/3.5 hours</p> <p>Xelena Hotel & Spa – 2 nights (B,BL)</p>
DAY 06	<p>PERITO MORENO GLACIER</p> <p>We drive early this morning into Los Glaciares National Park, which was created in 1937 and declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1981. We embark on a catamaran ride on the Brazo Rico section of Lago Argentino to enjoy 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 ft high). Perito Moreno is one of South America's natural wonders. Later, we drive to the narrowest point on this arm of the lake, stop at a lookout where we observe and photograph the massive sheet of ice from various angles, and walk along the network of 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 floating icebergs. Lunch is at the Nativos Restaurant in the park. Afterwards, we drive back to El Calafate, if time allows, we may 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. Back at the hotel, the evening is at leisure to explore and dine out in town or to relax at the hotel with an excellent selection of Argentine wines. Driving: 100 miles/3 hours.</p> <p>Xelena Hotel & Spa (B,L)</p>
DAY 07	<p>EL CALAFATE / PAINE NATIONAL PARK (CHILE)</p> <p>After an early breakfast, we drive overland on paved and dirt roads across the Patagonian plains to Paine National Park in Chile. Established in 1970 and declared Biosphere reserve by UNESCO in 1978, it's name (pronounced pie-knee) translates to "blue" in the Mapuche Indian language. After passing Cerro Castillo, a small village near the border, we get our first views of the Paine massif, towering above the plains in the distance. Drawing closer to the deep blue waters of Sarmiento Lake, the impressive granite towers come into view.</p> <p>Entering the park, small herds of guanacos may greet us. At the Sarmiento Park Station, we'll stretch the legs hiking along steppe-covered foothills, gaining about 650 ft in elevation, past small ponds and meadows down to the Laguna Amarga ranger station. Photo ops abound of noisy <i>bandurrias</i>, buff-necked ibis, red foxes, hares, flamingos and upland geese. The final leg of the day is a short drive along a dirt road to the lodge beneath the Paine Towers near the Ascencio River. The boutique spa features hydro-massage, reflexology and a sauna to help unwind.</p> <p>Driving: 230 miles/5.5 hours; Hiking: 4.5 miles/2.5 hours; Hotel elevation: 650 ft</p> <p>Hotel Las Torres Patagonia – 2 nights (B,BL,D)</p>

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

DAY 08	<p>NORDENSKJOLD LAKE HIKE</p> <p>Our route today takes us past a few small lakes, including Laguna Inge. We skirt the foot of Mount Almirante Nieto (8,755 ft), then continue along the base of the Paine peaks, following a rolling trail along the northern shores of turquoise-colored Lake Nordenskjold. We pass through brushy areas, negotiate boggy sections and tackle stream crossings, stepping from boulder to boulder, as we make our way through the foothills up and down to a lookout point where we can get a glimpse of the impressive Paine Horns. There are 25 species of mammals recorded in the park including huemul, a type of deer found only in Chile, and puma, both of which are seen on occasion. Following our lunch break we can cool off in the clear waters of the nearby babbling creek, then return to our hotel on the same trail. In December and January, fields of daisies and other wildflowers fill the meadows. Time permitting, this afternoon we might look for flocks of <i>cachanas</i>, or Austral parakeets, or simply watch the afternoon light and clouds play across the mountains. Dinner is served in the lovely Coiron lodge restaurant featuring produce grown in their own organic orchard and greenhouse. Hiking: 9 miles/6.5 hours; Hotel elevation: 650 ft</p> <p>Hotel Las Torres Patagonia (B,BL,D)</p>
DAY 09	<p>GREY LAKE</p> <p>This morning, we drive to Laguna Amarga for a brief walk on the lakeshore where we may be able to photograph the Towers reflected on the lake. We continue driving along the scenic dirt road south of the Paine massif and pass by lakes Nordenskjold and Pehoé. We may stop at the park's Administration Center for an overview of the region and the geological forces that created the dramatic Paine formations. Then, we cross the Paine River and arrive to the ranger station at Lago Grey. We walk along the lakeshore looking for the best views and some small icebergs. At noon the Grey III catamaran excursion takes us on an hour-long trip around this lovely lake surrounded by peaks. As we get closer to our destination, we view from a distance, the spectacular 4-mile-wide glacier, one of three that originate at the Continental Ice Cap. We may observe the drift of turquoise-colored icebergs, blown to the opposite end of the lake by the unrelenting winds. We disembark at the Refugio Grey and enjoy a picnic lunch in this forested area. In the afternoon we hike to Pehoé Lake, contouring the lower slopes of Cerro Paine Grande (the highest peak in the park at 10,007 ft). Views of Cerro Zapata (5,020 ft) and several waterfalls cascading down the mountainsides make this an impressive hike. This area is also excellent for photography and for watching condors, which sometimes pass within 100 ft of us as they soar across the ridges. The trail passes a small, secluded lake before reaching a final ridge with fabulous views of Pehoé Lake. We catch one of the last catamarans for the picturesque ride to Pudeto. We'll visit the Salto Grande waterfall, formed where Lake Nordenskjold flows into Lake Pehoé, and then drive to the comfortable lodge with a modern design and eco-chic features, a superb restaurant and a wine bar featuring the work of local vintners. Hiking: 7 miles/4 hours; Hotel elevation: 435 ft</p> <p>Hotel Rio Serrano – 2 nights (B,BL,D)</p>
DAY 10	<p>PEHOE LAKE / FRENCH VALLEY</p> <p>Rising early, as this is a longer day of activities, we drive through the park to the Pudeto boat docks on Pehoé Lake. Here we board the first catamaran at 9:30am for the 20 min ride across the lake. The vessel is covered, but with clear weather most passengers stand outside to take views of the impressive peaks above the Caribbean-turquoise waters. From the docks we follow a trail leading through the rolling foothills at the base of Paine Grande peak. Dotted with scattered scrub forests, in November and December these hillsides are a brilliant red, covered with the blossoms of the firebush. There are 200 species of plants found in Paine, including Calafate bushes and the lovely yellow Lady's Slippers, or <i>Calceolaria</i>. We cross the French River on a foot bridge to reach the Italian Camp area. From here we marvel at the geology of these incredible rock formations as we watch patches of snow break loose and thunder down Cerro Paine Grande's rock and ice face in the distance. We continue a steeper uphill trail section through forests to a first lookout point. With luck we can witness condors floating up and down along the dramatic granite mountain faces. With</p>

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

	<p>105 species of birds in the park, birdwatchers also have an opportunity to see the grebe, coot, upland goose, torrent duck, and oyster catcher, among others. Returning along the same trail to the Pehoé Lake area, we catch the catamaran and return across the lake and drive to the lodge. Hiking: 9.5 miles/6.5 hours.</p> <p>Hotel Rio Serrano (B,BL,D)</p>
DAY 11	<p>PAINE NATIONAL PARK / PUERTO NATALES / DEPART SANTIAGO After breakfast, we depart the park and drive 1.5 hours to Puerto Natales, enjoying some final views of Lago del Toro Lake, the Horns and Towers. As we cross the Patagonian steppe, small herds of guanaco roam freely providing nice photo ops with their young, or chulengos. We'll make a stop to stretch our legs with a short visit to the Milodón Cave, named for the mythic prehistoric mammal thought to have lived here. At the nearby airport, we check-in for an afternoon flight from Puerto Natales (PNT) to Santiago (SCL) (3 hr 25 min).</p> <p>Upon arrival in Santiago, walk on your own into the International Terminal and check-in for your overnight flight to the USA. There are cafes and VIP lounges inside security to relax prior to your flight. Driving: 55 miles/1.5 hours (B,BL)</p>
DAY 12	<p>ARRIVE HOME Arrive in your gateway city this morning to clear customs and make an onward connection home.</p>



NOTES ON THE ITINERARY: Although we do our best to follow the schedule listed above, due to the changeable and unpredictable nature of the weather in Patagonia and other factors beyond our control (traveler abilities, pace, interest, weather, road/river/lake/trail conditions, local flights/catamaran schedules), any itinerary in this region 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 or lodges and is suitable for physically fit participants accustomed to outdoor activities, age 12 and up.

In the shoulder season, the catamaran service in Paine Park, crossing Pehoé Lake, is provided only 2 times a day (noon is the earliest navigation/latest return is 6:30pm). This can limit the hiking time. During high season (Nov 16-Mar 15), a third catamaran service is provided at 9:30am. To coincide with the itinerary indicated above, travel should take place Nov 09, 2026 to Mar 06, 2027. We can still operate the trip earlier than Nov 09 or later than Mar 06, but the Day 10 hike will be shorter to accommodate the Pehoé Lake catamaran schedule. Due to seasonal restrictions, instead of the Hotel Rio Serrano at Paine we may stay at the comfortable and nearby Pampa Lodge or at the cozy Patagonia Camp. 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).

An important factor to consider in Patagonia are the long distances to cover. This vast region is comparable to the

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

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 Puerto Natales, Punta Arenas or El Calafate. This adventure is designed to minimize drive time, but we still need to cover approx. 675 miles.

2026 LAND COST:	4-5 participants:	from \$9,700 p.p.d.
	6-9 participants:	from \$8,900 p.p.d.
	10-12 participants:	from \$8,200 p.p.d.
	Single Supplement:	from \$2,200

p.p.d= per person based on double or triple occupancy not including airfare.

2026 Land Costs are valid for departures through March 2027.

Holiday travel dates could have a Land Cost surcharge of 10-20%.

FLIGHTS:

International and in-country airfare is not included in the land cost. You can arrange any of the flights yourself or redeem award travel directly through your airline program. Tickets should only be purchased after Southwind advises that your trip is confirmed. Southwind can help coordinate all your flights (or just the in-country flights) with our ticketing partner to match your tour itinerary. You'll benefit from having a personal agent to arrange seats/cabin preference, monitor schedule changes and work directly with the airline on your behalf, if adjustments are needed after ticketing. Airlines request that your tickets match your full name in your passport (including middle name if shown). If connecting, a 2-hour minimum buffer is important between flights. Round-trip **international** air from US gateway cities is approx. \$900-1,100/person. During peak dates (Dec 15-Jan 15) higher fares may apply. Carriers offering non-stop service from US gateways include; **American** (Dallas, Miami), **United** (Houston), **Delta** (JFK & Atlanta) and **LATAM** (Miami). **In-country** fares are approx \$400-\$600 per person for the two local flights (Buenos Aires-El Calafate with Aerolineas Argentinas and Puerto Natales-Santiago with Latam. Both Latam and Aerolineas have a partnership with Delta to redeem or accrue miles.

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning information** and expert travel advice.
- All **in-country transfers** as scheduled. Ground transportation in spacious and comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers. Boat and Catamaran transportation where applicable on a seat-in-boat basis (other travelers will be aboard, but our group will be privately escorted).
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance**.
- All **accommodations in Superior-class (4 star) hotels and the best available lodges** as listed (or at similar hotels or lodges) on a shared basis with private bath. Advanced bookings are recommended if you require double beds (king/queen) for couples, or plan to arrive early or extend your stay.
- Single Supplement provides single room accommodations in all hotels. Due to the small size of most hotels in Patagonia, if you require single accommodations, making reservations well in advance is recommended.
- All **meals** indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast; BL=box lunch; L=lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian and gluten-free diets are 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 catamaran rides in Paine, 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 Puerto Natales airport (Day 11), and a different tour 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 support Sustainable Tourism efforts.
- **First-class Hiking service** including:
 - Experienced, knowledgeable, English-speaking, Andean guide and assistant guide (assistants, one in El Chalten and one at Paine, provided for groups with 8 or more participants).
 - Packed or picnic lunch.

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

First-aid kit. Entrance fees.

NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, international flights, nor local flights within Argentina or Chile.
- Tours, meals (at about \$35-50 each per person) or other services not listed on the itinerary.
- Early arrivals, dayrooms or late check-outs at hotels.
- 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.

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

WEATHER: **Santiago and Buenos Aires** can be expected to be hot and humid Dec-Feb with daytime temps of 85-95°F and up to 70-75% humidity (Buenos Aires is generally hotter than Santiago). Nighttime lows in 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 plan for enjoyment is being prepared for all possibilities ranging from intense sunshine to rain, cold, and/or wind.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing coverage to protect your trip investment. Having coverage provides peace of mind and is important in case of unexpected trip cancellation due to illness or health/medical condition/injury requiring medical treatment by a physician. Other benefits can include tour delay/interruption from flight issues, weather events, strikes, medical quarantine or emergency accident/illness with evacuation to nearest treatment by US standards. Southwind recommends the **Worldwide Trip Protector Deluxe** from [Travel Insured International](#). We can provide an eQuote on request tailored to your trip or a policy can be purchased directly from TII online or by phone at 800-243-3174. Coverage can also be done through any provider of your choice.

NEXT STEPS: Please contact Southwind to speak with a personal Travel Consultant to help fine tune your travel plans and to receive a custom itinerary with a land cost quote based on your travel dates. You can reach us by filling out our [Private Trip Request form](#), by email at info@southwindadventures.com, by phone at 800-377-9463 or by text to 303-972-0701.

Reservations can be made up to 60 days before departure, provided tour services and hotels are available. Due to the popularity of Patagonia, we recommend making reservations at least 4-5 months in advance for non-holiday or about 1 year prior for holiday departures. Once your trip is confirmed to operate, you will receive pre-departure planning materials, flight booking assistance and advice to help prepare for your exciting South America vacation.

We look forward to having you travel with us in Argentina & Chile!

Southwind Adventures, Inc

Your Latin America Travel Specialist since 1990

Tel: 303-972-0701 or 800-377-9463 • info@southwindadventures.com

www.southwindadventures.com • [Southwind Destinations](#)

2627-HpaVersion:Jan26