

## 5. PATAGONIA

The vast, windy, treeless plateau south of the Rio Colorado is called Patagonia. The Atlantic coast is rich in marine life, most easily seen around Puerto Madryn. In the south of the region is the Parque Nacional de los Glaciares, with journeys on lakes full of ice floes and to the Moreno Glacier. In the north of the region is Argentina's Welsh community.

Patagonia is sub-divided into the provinces of Neuquen, Rio Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz and the Territory of Tierra del Fuego. The area covers 780.000 square km. Wide areas have less than one person to the square km, and there are virtually no trees except in the north and the Andean foothills. Temperatures are moderated by the proximity of the sea and are singularly mild, neither rising high during the summer nor falling low during the winter. The land is more or less desert. Deep crevices or canyons intersect the land from east to west. The great sheep estancias are along these canyons, sheltered from the wind. Most of the land is devoted to sheep rising. This land will captivate those who love wide-open spaces, endless roads and infinite skies. The further south one travels the longer the twilight become.

### The Patagonian Atlantic

Impressive mammals and sea birds, half way between real life and fantasy, spend certain seasons on the rough coasts of Patagonia where they complete part of their life cycle. Colonies of seals play on the islets and sandbanks. In The Valdes Peninsula the sea elephants have the only continental enclave in the world, a magical place where the southern whales regularly come to the gulfs to breed. The largest colony of Magellan penguins in the world nests at Punta Tombo.

## 5.1 Province of Chubut

### The Peninsula Valdes



It is a headland of 4000 km<sup>2</sup> that sticks out about a hundred km into the Atlantic Ocean, and that has many gulfs, rocky cliffs and shallow bays with marked differences in tides, sandy beaches, and islands. It is attached to the continent by a 25 km (15,5 mi) long strip of land: the Ameghino Isthmus. Its exceptional value is due to its biodiversity that certainly makes it the main attraction of Patagonian coasts. It is the home of an important school of southern right whales, 50% of this kind of whales around

the world reach those clear and peaceful waters every year. There are colonies of sea-elephants, sea-lions and penguins as well. Orcas (or killer whales) of the area have developed a unique hunting method adapted to the features of the local shores. Birds and land mammals settle down in this protected area, thus turning it into a nature sanctuary. Peninsula Valdes is a protected natural area that has been pronounced World Natural Heritage by UNESCO in 1999.

### Trelew

It is the most active town in the Chubut Valley. This is a modern centre with an active commercial and nightlife. The most important examples of architecture are the old train station, the central square and an old brick chapel. The airport of (REL) is the gateway for a visit of this region.

## **Puerto Madryn**

Puerto Madryn, founded by the Welsh colonist, is a port on the Golfo Nuevo. The town, despite its quite quick growth, has kept an agreeable aspect, especially along the coast, with a wide tree-lined sea front, several good hotels, a casino, restaurants and bars. This important tourist centre is 67 km (42 mi) to the north of Trelew and has beautiful beaches where aquatic sports can be practiced. A colony of more than 800 seals live all the year round on the sandbank of Punta Loma.

## **Puerto Piramide**

This village, with less than 500 permanent inhabitants, is located 100 km (62 mi) from Puerto Madryn. It offers food and lodging services and the most important: it is the only place where you can take a boat to go Souther Right whale-watching!

## **Punta Loma**

Punta Loma (fauna reserve and natural protected area) is located 17 km (10,5 mi) from Puerto Madryn. This is a permanent settlement area of the southern sea lion. Cormorants can also be seen in this area, which is ideal to be visited during the low tide.

## **Gaiman**

Gaiman is well-known mainly by its welsh heritage. Gaiman shows a mixture of culture and history of its own. It is placed at 18 km (11 mi) from Trelew and at 80 km (50 mi) from Puerto Madryn. Gaiman, as well as Trelew, is situated in the Valley of the Chubut River and, for this reason, it can also be thought of as an oasis in the large dry ecosystem of the Northwest of Chubut. It is a small village with less than 10.000 inhabitants who work mainly in farming activities. Gaiman's main attraction stands on both its high number of typical Welsh buildings (firs house built in the village, the Bethel Chapel, the tunnel of the former Patagonian Railway, etc.) and the historic and cultural events that take place in the village. Its inhabitants also take pride on their tea houses.

## **Bahia Bustamante**

Bahia Bustamante is a coastal village entirely surrounded by nature, whose main characteristic is its biodiversity. Very few places in the world house such a number of seabirds and marine mammals. Today some 40 inhabitants live in this bay, all of them devoted to seaweed production. In the visit you can discover a petrified forest, sea birds, sea lions, penguins and much more. Bahia Bustamante, one of the wildest coastal areas in Patagonia, is situated on the northern part of San orge Gulf, between Comodoro Rivadavia and Trelew.

## **Peninsula Valdes - Excursions**

### **Tour to Peninsula Valdes (approx. 10 hours from Puerto Madryn)**

You leave early in the morning to Puerto Pirámide where you will have the first stop. This village is the departing point for the optional whale-watching tour (possible from late May to mid of December). The next stop is Punta Delgada and arriving at the beach you will be close to the sea elephants that visit the cost all year round. From the elephant seal station you leave to Punta Cantor to watch the external coast of the peninsula and you reach the beginning of Caleta Valdés. On the way, you can observe wild fauna, such as huanacos, choiques, foxen, maras, skunks, etc.

**Whale watching** (optional during Peninsula de Valdes Tour)

Drive from Puerto Madryn onto Puerto Piramides, where you stop to get ready for the boat navigation. It is preferred to go to the shore early in the morning waiting for the best climate and in case of bad weather; one can count on the rest of the day to try again. From May to December one can embark to see whales, and from December to March to see sea wolves and cormorants.

**Full Day Peninsula Valdes with Estancia San Lorenzo** (approx. 11 hours from Puerto Madryn)

You set out very early in the morning for Puerto Piramides, first stop for optional whale-watching. Once on land again, you drive to San Lorenzo farm, located at Punta Norte area of the peninsula. Here you find the largest penguin rookery on Peninsula Valdes. At noon you may have the option of barbecue at the estancia. In the afternoon you visit Caleta Valdes and Punta Delgada and you go down the cliffs to the beach to walk close to the elephant seals. On the way back to the city you can see guanacos, rheas, foxes, maras, armadillos, skunks and hares.

**Full Day Punta Tombo** (approx. 10 hours from Puerto Madryn)

The trip to Punta Tombo is one of the most fascinating drives on the Patagonia steppe. In this area you find the largest continental penguin rookery in South America. It is located 180 km from Puerto Madryn in a protected area of more than 200 hectares with soft pebbly beaches. On the rocky peninsula and the neighbouring areas, there are over 200.000 reproductive couples of Magellan penguins. This majestic place is being taken care of by specialized fauna keepers. Visitors can stop at the café-bar and use the sanitary facilities. The trip ends with a visit of the Chubut River Valley and the Gaiman Village.

## Province of Rio Negro

### San Carlos de Bariloche



Located in the Andean foothills, Bariloche rivals the Swiss Alps for sheer beauty. It is the most important town in the region. Bariloche, on the southern shore of Lago Nahuel Huapi, founded 1898, is the best centre for exploring the Nahuel Huapi National Park. The town surrounded by lakes and parks, is a favourite resort for skiers and mountaineers. It's renowned for its chocolate industry and its wooden chalets perched upon a glacial moraine at the foot of Cerro Otto.

Those who want peace and quiet should go to Bariloche during the low season, since tourists and students fill the town over certain periods. Bariloche has an active cultural life. The town has excellent tourist facilities and offers a wide range of services for those who like fishing, hunting, mountaineering, and water sports.

### Nahuel Huapi National Park

Lake Nahuel Huapi with its surroundings, an area of 7850 square km, was set aside in 1903 as a National Park. It contains the most diverse and spectacular natural phenomena: lakes, rivers, glaciers, waterfalls, torrents, rapids, valleys, and forest, bare mountains and snow-clad peaks. Many kinds of wild animals and birds live in the region.

The Nahuel Huapi Lake counts with 531 square km and 460 Mts. deep in places (sixth among Argentine lakes). It is 767 m (2.516 ft) above sea level. Towering over the scene is Cerro Tronador. Some 96 km (60 mi) long, and not more than 12 km (7,5 mi) wide, the lake is very irregular in shape, long arms of water reminiscent of the Norwegian fjords, stretch far into the land. There are many islands: the largest is Isla Victoria, on which stands the forest research station where new species of vegetation are acclimatized. The lake links two provinces: Neuquen and Rio Negro. On its shores is San Carlos de Bariloche a first class tourist centre with the winter resort of Cerro Catedral on its outskirts and offering an active cultural life.

## San Carlos de Bariloche - Excursions

### Small Circuit Bariloche (approx. 3,5 hours)

This excursion gives you the first impression of this nice area. We will drive along the forests, lakes and mountains, which surround Bariloche. This is a trip to the most spectacular views and into the wood's deepest scenes. We start the tour from Bariloche to the southeast along Ezequiel Bustillo Avenue, bordering the Nahuel Huapi Lake on a winding, all paved road. After crossing the residential district Melipal, we arrive at Playa Bonita, located just in front of Huemul Island, at the fifth mile (km 8) of the road. Further on we reach the barracks of the Mounted Engineers Company and the Andean Instruction Department, nearby we will see the Atomic Centre headquarters, where research on nuclear energy is done. Continuing along this road for another 10 km, and after passing through some beautiful scenery, you arrive at Campanario Hill. An optional chair lift takes you to the top of the hill (1050 m / 3.445 ft) from where you can enjoy one of the most impressive views of this region. You will see the lakes Nahuel Huapi and Moreno, the Trebol lagoon, St Peter's Peninsula, Llao Llao, Victoria Island and the surrounding mountains Otto, Lopez, Goye and Catedral, apart from the whole city of Bariloche. Afterwards, you will travel to the Llao Llao Peninsula, where the small and delicate St Edwards Chapel and Llao Llao Hotel, two architectural jewels, will take our fancy.

We cross the bridge over the Angostura River that joins the Nahuel Huapi Lake with the Moreno Lake, and pass by López Bay. Finally you get to the Panoramic Point, a belvedere with a magnificent view of the Moreno Lake and the Llao Llao peninsula. Return to Bariloche.

**Half Day Bariloche Mountain Bike Experience** (approx. 4 hours)

Recommended for all levels of bikers, also with kids, this mountain bike tour combines scenic spots of Nahuel Huapi National Park and Bariloche history. You'll bicycle along low traffic roads overlooking Moreno Lake with sparkling streams, evergreen forest and a lot of fun. Local guides and Van support guarantee a truly great experience for a bicycle adventure. Pick up in the hotel & private transfer to the starting point of the biking tour and preparation of the equipment, as well as a brief description of the itinerary given by the mountain bike guides. The first part of the tour is through single tracks by the shore of streams with view of nice landscape and Patagonian vegetation, then along non paved roads with moderate slopes and some short descents. We will slowly cycle up and we will discover Lake Moreno, going by the side of Bella Vista and Goye hills along the ridge with said lake at our feet. Then you will go through some villages, falls and small streams until we reach the spot known as "Colonia Suiza" in the base of Goye hill and near the lake. There you will find very old houses from the first habitants and there will be time to have relaxing walks along the quiet streets. Once again on our mountain bikes, we will cycle along a gravel road and then paved road up to the "Panoramic Viewpoint", located in the known Small Circuit, where the extraordinary landscape of the Range, lake Nahuel Huapi, Victoria island and Llao Llao hotel makes it worth stopping and taking photos. You will also pass Lopez stream and its bay, Angostura stream, Lake Escondido in Llao Llao Park. Arrive at Llao Llao Hotel.

**Recommended to take for this tour:**

*Daily backpack*

*Wind jacket*

*Mountain bike/cycling shorts*

*Training shoes*

*Woolen hat / gloves*

*Cap / sun screen*

*Rain gear (in case of bad weather)*

**Trip length:** 9:00 – 13:00 / 13:00 – 17:00 (Half day)

**Available:** October to April

**Activity level:** Medium

**Activities:** Mountain biking

**Distance:** 10-20 km / 6,5-13 miles

*Regular tour SIB English speaking guide (shared with more paxs) – reduced groups*

**Full Day Long Circuit (Circuito Grande)** (approx. 10 hours)

You leave the city northwards, along National Route 237, cross the outlet of Nahuel Huapi Lake and the Spring of Limay River, geographical limit between the provinces of Río Negro and Neuquén. Following Limay River, you pass by the Amphitheatre and then go on towards the Valle Encantado (enchanted valley) rock formation until getting Confluencia, a region of transition between the Patagonian steppe and the Patagonian Andean forest. Leaving behind Route 237, take Provincial Route 65 west, towards Villa Traful bordering Traful River until reaching a natural balcony overlooking Traful Lake. The road continues bordering the lake, passes through Villa Traful and head towards Arrayanes Port. From there, go on up, through a shady forest, to El Portezuelo (940 m a.s.l.) where you meet the Seven Lakes Road going southwards and you border lakes Correntoso, Bailey Willis, and Espejo. Finally you drive along National Route 231 towards Villa La Angostura. From here, there is an optional sail to Arrayanes Wood. On the way back to Bariloche, you will reach Nahuel Huapi Lake once again and take National Route 237 that leads us back to the city.



**Full Day Tronador (Thunder Mountain)** (approx. 9 hours)

This tour heads south on Highway 258 and then across the Huenuleo Plain. Ahead and to the right the Catedral ski area becomes visible as well as the granite spires that give the mountain its name. Further along, the road follows the shore of Gutierrez Lake with Ventana Mountain on the left. Next comes Mascardi, the Lake of the Seven Colours which you follow first along its eastern arm and then, turning off the paved road, along its drainage river, the Manso, to lake Los Moscos, with a breath-taking view from above, and the Hess Lake, with banks of reeds and great fishing. You then cross the Manso River, following its western arm into thick forest as far as Pampa Linda, a large clearing with stunted growth due to the rain shadow caused by Tronador Mountain, situated at approximately 3.500 m (11.483 ft) above sea level. Time at leisure for lunch (not included).

**Andean Crossing Experience – Bariloche / Puerto Varas 1 Day** (approx. 13 hours)

Departure early morning to Lake Crossing Terminal and Puerto Panuelo. Embark the catamaran for one hour navigation of the Blest arm of the Nahuel Huapi Lake, until reaching Puerto Blest. Start a bus trip to Puerto Alegre which borders the Frías River during 3 km (2 mi). On board a motor ship you sail Frías Lake for 15 minutes, from where you shall have the first view of Tronador Hill. Upon arrival at Puerto Frías you clear Argentine customs and proceed on a bus through lush Andean vegetation to the Vicente Pérez Rosales pass and then 29 km (18 mi) to the Chilean customs at Peulla. After customs, it is a short ride to Peulla. Optional lunch at Peulla. Then you board the Lagos Andinos Catamaran and set out to cross the waters of the Todos Los Santos Lake. On our trip you will be able to view Mount Puntagudo and the impressive Osorno volcano. You will arrive to Petrohué, from where you continue by bus until our last stop, the Petrohue rapids. Bordering Llanquihue Lake, you get to Puerto Varas.

**Remarks:**

*Full Day Lake crossing operates from 1/September till 30/April.*

## 5.2 Province of Santa Cruz

### Lago Argentino

It has a surface of more than 1550 sq. km while it opens its northern and southern arms within the National Park. Its navigation, among enormous and spectacular icebergs, allows the possibility to come up to the Upsala Glacier front and to land after in Bay Onelli with a dazzling view of Glaciers Onelli, Bolado and Agassiz. Another arm brings you up to the part, 135 m (443 ft) high, of Glacier Spegazzini and Mayo so as to moor in Huh Toro, with its special beach of black sand, its woods and lengas of more than 20 m (66 ft) and Toro Waterfall with a fall of 60 m (197 ft).



### Perito Moreno Glacier



The Perito Moreno Glacier offers an unforgettable and indescribable scenery, with its 195 sq. km, 5 km (3 mi) long on the front part and peaks up to an height of 80 m (263 ft) that tumble down over the “Canal de los Tempanos” (Iceberg’s Channel). Its slow advance, something rare among the glaciers of the world, blocks the canal with ice every four or five years. The waters of the southern extremity of the lake cannot drain, until the pressure becomes such that they finally burst the ice dam, creating a spectacle that over the past few years has started to attract tourists from all over the world

### El Calafate

The pleasant village of El Calafate on Lake Argentino, is an expensive and developing tourist centre. There is a chapel dedicated to Santa Teresa in the centre, behind it Perito Moreno Street gently climbs the large hill south of the town, from which one can see the silhouette of the south end of the Andes, the Redonda Lake and Soledad Island on Argentino Lake. It is the southern gateway to the Los Glaciares National Park, which is 50 km (31 mi) away. On the alluvial plain by the lake there are many interesting birds, and in the other direction there is scope for good hill walking. Colourful cave paintings are also captivating.

### El Chalten

El Chaltén is situated on the northern margin of Lago Viedma, in the confluence of rivers De las Vueltas and Fitz Roy, in the National Reserve Zona Viedma in Parque Nacional Los Glaciares. The area combines the magic of glaciers, hidden lagoons, estancias, Lake Viedma, and the magnetic presence of mount Fitz Roy. The summit of its unmistakable majestic mountain is almost always covered in a cloud that the Tehuelche thought was smoke, mistake that gave origin to the name Chaltén, which means volcano. Two hundred people live in this town, distant 220 km (137 mi) from El Calafate on provincial route N°11, national route 40, and provincial route N° 23. El Chaltén is contiguous to Lake Viedma and its reserve, and has been declared National Hiking Capital for the variety of activities performed by hikers and climbers.

## El Calafate - Excursions

### **Full Day Perito Moreno Glacier Tour** (approx. 8 hours)

A must for all visitors to Argentina is the Glacier Perito Moreno in the Parque Nacional Los Glaciares. From Calafate, it is an 80 km (50 mi) bus ride, making stops along the way to take pictures. After entering the Andean Patagonian forest, you stop at the “Curva de los Suspiros” (Sighs Curve), to enjoy the first panoramic view of the Perito Moreno Glacier, then continue the way to the platforms and balconies in front of the glacier, having free time to admire it. The Perito Moreno Glacier forms part of the Patagonian Continental Ice Field from which 13 glaciers descend on the Atlantic side to flow into the Viedma and Argentino lakes. The Perito Moreno glacier, 5 km wide and 80 Mts. high above Argentino Lake, is one of the few in the world which still advances forming a wall and containing the Brazo Rico waters. Every 4 or 5 years, the water pressure is so strong that it breaks into multiple icicles giving an overwhelming spectacle that is truly impossible to explain. The continuous slides from its frozen walls astonish you at any time throughout the year. Get impressed by the Patagonian Andes lakes, forests and mountains stretching for 500 beautiful kilometers and massive glaciers falling into the world’s southernmost seas.

### **Full Day Moreno Glacier with Minitrekking** (approx. 9 hours)

One of the most interesting activities in the Glacier is the tour starting around 10:00 am in the Bay “ Bajo de las Sombras “, 8 km (5 mi) before reaching the Glacier itself and 73 km (45 mi) away from Calafate. There you board a boat to cross Brazo Rico, sailing for approximately 30 minutes in front of the Glacier. Landing on the opposite coast, it takes a 30 minutes’ walk to reach the Glacier. With adequate crampons, the participants set off and walk on the ice for 1:40 minutes, ending with a toast with glacier ice. This walk is especially attractive because of the contact with glacial ice, its peaks and interior lakes of a unique blue colour. It also provides a spectacular view of the glacier walls and the lake.

Afterwards there is a 30 minute walk through the exuberant Magellanic forest before reaching the shelter on time for lunch (not included).

*Difficulty: medium.*

**Note:** *this tour is only valid for fit passengers between 10 / 65 years old.*

### **Rios de Hielo – Full Day Navigation Tour** (approx. 10 hours)

Departure from your hotel to Punta Bandera port, 50 km (31 mi) away from Calafate. During the tour you navigate among huge icebergs, beginning navigation along the Northern side of the Lago Argentino up to Herminita Peninsula, from where you will see the Upsala Glacier, continue through Spegazzini Channel in order to see Spegazzini Glacier. Upon arrival at Punta Bandera return back to El Calafate.

#### **Remarks:**

*Embarkation doesn’t sail through the Tempanos channel and the face of Moreno glacier; this is the only difference with the classic “Todo Glaciares navigation tour”.*

*This is a full day navigation tour (passengers do not disembark).*

*The ship has a basic bar service on board, therefore we recommend carrying box lunch purchased at El Calafate in advance.*

*Once the ticket is purchased, there is not refund at all in case of cancellation.*



**Full Day Estancia Cristina** (approx. 12,5 hours)

The Upsala Glacier is one of the largest in Los Glaciares National Park. Sailing through the Argentino Lake among icebergs and mountains and then visit Estancia Cristina is an interesting combination of nature, adventure, history and pleasure. Estancia Cristina offers 3 different alternatives for those who prefer a quiet day of touring and history as well as those who look forward to activities with adventure like trekking and riding a four wheel drive. All these excursions are surrounded by the Andes Mountains, glaciers and Argentino Lake leads us to get in touch with a natural, unique, remote environment, with culture and lifestyle of the pioneers and the interesting relationship of them with famous explorers of past century.

**Remarks:** *guests should define in advance which option they prefer if A / B / C.*

**All program includes:**

*08:15 AM Boarding and departure at port Punta Bandera*

*Sailing among icebergs and stunning scenery overlooking the western front of the Upsala glacier and then through Cristina Canal to the point of disembark at the Estancia.*

*11:30 AM Arrival Estancia Cristina & Stay at the Estancia for 6 hours.*

*17:30 PM Return to the boat*

*19:00 PM Return to Punta Bandera*

*Guides from National Parks Bilingual: Spanish- English.*

*Lunch is not included in the tour (OPTIONAL supplement for lunch drinks not included) or you can take your own lunch box – Estancia Cristina has a dining hall (you can bring your own lunch box from Calafate or buy it at the estancia bar).*

**OPTION A Classic: Upsala Glacier + Estancia Cristina Museum & historic tour.**

Includes guided walk up to Caterina River and Chapel and tour around the Estancia.

**OPTION B Discovery: Upsala Glacier + Estancia Cristina + 4x4 Upsala Viewpoint & Museum.**

Level of demand Low

Duration of 4 wheel drive: 3 hours

Drop: 550 m.s.n.m.

Includes guided visit to the Costumbrista museum (old shearing shed).

Ascent in all-terrain vehicles, travelling 9,5 km (6 mi) through mountainous roads. Arrival to the Continental ice shelter & 30 minute walk.

Visit the oriental front of Upsala Glacier. Lake Guillermo, Southern Patagonian Ice and Andes. Return to the farm house of the Estancia and board at 17:30 hs.

**OPTION C Wild Trek:**

Total length: 5,5 hours (10 km / 6 mi in total)

Level of demand: medium

Drop: 550 m.s.n.m.

This program combines navigation along Lake Argentino, trekking along an almost unexplored area, the rich history of Family Masters (Estancia Cristina founder family and pioneers in the area). Wild Trek includes access to the lookout point Hielo Patagonico (Patanonian Ice), a privileged view of Upsala Glacier front and the ice floe barrier of Upsala channel.

*Tour operates Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays & Saturdays*

**Remarks:**

*In the event the trip coordinator of Estancia Cristina determines that passengers who have chosen this activity are not physically fit or lack of adequate clothing for the trek, will not be able to participate.*

*Lunch is not included on the tour (clients should bring their own lunch box) – if weather conditions allow, lunch time will take place at the lookout point.*

## 5.3 Province of Tierra del Fuego

The island (65.000 km<sup>2</sup>) is located at the extreme south of South America. This area is surrounded by beautiful lakes, woods and mountain scenery. The Magellan Strait bounds Tierra del Fuego to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Beagle Channel to the south. The Ona Indians are now extinct. Tierra del Fuego counts with a population of 70.000 inhabitants, which are mainly concentrated around Ushuaia and Rio Grande. This province is the perfect place to look at seabirds, to have tea at the last tea house before the South Pole, to search for insectivorous plants, to explore the lakes on kayaks, to watch beavers or to read at ten o'clock at night, without turning the light on. The Tierra del Fuego National Park offers you a diverse species of flora and fauna. The park is home to red foxes, guanacos, beavers, condors and ducks. In excursions along the Beagle Channel you can see seals, Magellan penguins and cormorants.

### Ushuaia



It's the capital of the territory and the southernmost city in the world. Like Rio Grande Ushuaia has grown fast in the last few years, thanks to immigration and the electronics industry in the area. You should not miss the End of the World Museum, the old prison and to explore some restaurants to try the excellent spider crabs. A walk around the harbor is interesting too, where some old boats can be seen. Ushuaia and its scenery inspired the research and fantasies of Jules Verne, Fitz Roy, Charles Darwin and Emilio Salgari.

### Ushuaia - Excursions

**Ushuaia City Tour** (approx. 1 hour) plus visit to 1 museum (30-45 minutes extra)

Ushuaia, capital of Tierra del Fuego, is located at the coast of the Beagle Channel surrounded by Le Martial Mountains that offers this unique combination of mountains, sea, glaciers and forest in Argentina.

Departing from Maipú avenue, towards the Footbridge Luis Pedro Figue, you will cross this narrow pas that ends at La Mission neighbourhood, area chosen by the first white men settled down in Ushuaia. Other districts to visit will be the Brown and Solier, built by the first immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century. During the tour you will be able to observe old houses pertaining to the first fuegian families like Bebans, Pastorizas, Cangas, Fiques, Salomons, Ramos and the Provincial Legislature, old Government's house. Also you will be able to observe the contrast of the incredible growth produced by the arrival of new settlers during the 80's.

After the city tour, enjoy a visit to the End of the World Museum. It was built in 1903 with to be Manuel Fernandez Valdes's residence, who was governor later on. In 1911 it was taken by the National Bank for its subsidiary, which operated there until 1978, when the building was transferred to the museum. There are several rooms to visit with testimonies of the natives, ancient shipwrecks, prisoners and a collection of birds.

Alternatively (instead of the End of the World Museum), we can include the visit to the Penitentiary of the End of the World Museum: The idea of colonizing with penitentiaries was taken from the English and the French. As there was to set up a penal colony, the first prisoners, 25 men and 9 women, arrived in Ushuaia in 1898. In 1902 begins the construction of the "National Prison". The place chosen was situated at the east of the small town of Ushuaia, which at that time consisted of about 40 houses. The construction of the prison – built by the first convicts – went on 1920.

Although it started as a “second offenders” prison, the most brutal criminals came here. Fortunately, such a mistake did not last long. Convicts that behaved well were awarded a job outside the prison, in the camp of Susana Woodland as woodsmen or in the workshops. The stories about tortures and punishment cells are part of the legend of the place, but not a real practice, except in the case of some isolated periods. The central hall was used as a conference room, cinema and auditorium for all kind of events. From this place it is possible to enter the different pavilions. In the “Historical Wing” the originals mezzanine and wooden banisters are kept. In Pavilion 4 works the “Maritime Museum of Ushuaia” where you can learn about the history of Tierra del Fuego, through its navigators and vessels.

**Tierra del Fuego National Park including Lapataia Bay** (approx. 4 hours)

Located only 11 km (7 mi) away from Ushuaia city, you will be able to appreciate lakes, lagoons and rivers within Tierra del Fuego National Park limits and its exit towards the Beagle Channel.

Depart from Maipu Avenue towards the southwest by the National Route # 3, you will drive out of the city passing by the slope of Susana Mount, witness of the work of the prisoners from the old prison, where now the Southern Fuegian Railway is located. Here there will be a stop for (optional) train ride (not included in the tour). Continuing through the valley to a deviation will take you to the Ensenada Bay, where you will be able to contemplate the Redonda and Estorbo Islands and on the other coast of the Beagle Channel, the snow-white Mountains of the Sampaio Chain (Chile). Back again on the National Route # 3 with the fuegian forest and its flora close to the road you will go to Lago Roca in order to do a trek by the lake coast and by Lapataia River, originated in the lake. From this point you can see the Cónдор Hill, natural border with Chile. You will go towards the other end of the Park, where Route # 3 finalizes at Lapataia Bay. On the way to Lapataia Bay you will have the chance to observe the Green Lagoon and the Black Lagoon, large growing peat bog. On the shores of the bay you will have the chance to see steamer ducks, clovers and Cauquenes. The park is flanked by a dense green forest of lengas, ñires and cohiues. Finally you will pass by the beaver dams, whose footpath will lead to Lapataia Bay.

After National Park visit transfer back to the hotel.

**Optional extension during Tierra del Fuego National Park Tour:**

**One way ride – Tren del Fin del Mundo** (End of the World Train, approx. 50 minutes)

Train leaves from Estacion del Fin del Mundo, 8 km (5 mi) away from Ushuaia city, and runs into the National Park of Tierra del Fuego, ending in the Estacion del Parque. A replica of the original train is used to carry visitors and let them experience the same journey that prisoners were forced to make decades ago. Ancient forests of hundreds of years, peat bogs and even a reconstructed Indian settlement can be seen during the ride. Finally, after a brief stop at the Macarena Waterfall, the train will lead you into the limits of the National Park. This train consists of steam locomotives, coaches comfortably heated and fitted with large windows.

**Sea Lion Island and Beagle Channel Navigation Tour** (approx. 2,5 hours)

Leaving the local harbour, navigate in catamaran along the Channel and admire the sight of the mountain range that surrounds the city. Enjoy a beautiful landscape, combined with mountains and sea, admiring the Mounts Olivia and Cinco Hermanos, Figue Ranch, Tunnel, Escarpado Mount and Encajonado River. Isla de los Lobos (Sea Lion Island) and Isla de los Pájaros, on the Bridges Archipelago, are good spots for watching sea lions, cormorants, albatrosses, skuas, petrels and seagulls. Another interesting part of the trip is the famous lighthouse Les Eclaireurs and the Estancia Túnel, an historic site on the northern shore.

**Half Day Escondido Lake** (approx. 4 hours)

During this tour you will be crossing Tierra del Fuego Mountain range, getting to know the Olivia River, Five Brothers Mountains and Mount Olivia, Velo de la Novia Fall, the Carbajal Valley, a peat area of similar origin to Valley Tierra Mayor and Valley Las Cotorras. You will drive 60 kilometres (37 miles) north of Ushuaia along the National Route 3, leaving the main

winter centre behind, you will find the beautiful lake Escondido, at the foot of the Garibaldi Pass. At the Lake Escondido we may stop at a local restaurant (snack on your own basis) and time for trek around the area. It's worthwhile to explore the surrounding; the quiet beauty of the landscape captures eyes and imagination.