

# Argentina Private Tour

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## ARGENTINA

The Republic of Argentina is a large country with a population of around 40 million people, mainly of Spanish and Italian descent. It occupies much of the southern part of South America.

The Spanish conquistadores arrived in the 16th century and virtually wiped out all of the indigenous people through violence, disease and displacement. Slaves from Africa were brought over in the 18th century mainly to work in the fields. The resulting culture is an eclectic mix of indigenous traditions, European influences and African rhythms including art, literature, dance and song. The tango is a classic example of this mix. It was developed in the bars, cafes and brothels of Buenos Aires in the 1880's. It was deemed far too indecent to be mainstream at that time!

The country has had a fairly tumultuous history with Spain, England, France all fighting over territory at some stage. Its modern political history has seen a succession of military and democratic governments. The most tragic era was from the mid 1970's until the early 1980's when a military junta ruled the country. Almost 30,000 citizens "disappeared" during this time and it remains a painful issue to the country's people. The 1982 invasion of the Falkland Islands is well documented. Basically, the military government of the time declared the region part of Argentina. Thatcher's British Government responded by sending troops and just 6 weeks later, the Argentinians surrendered. Civilian governments have since ruled. Physically, it is a diverse country with deserts and sub-tropical forests in the North, and freezing conditions in the South. The South Atlantic Ocean runs down the East coast and the Andes Mountains border Chile in the West. These two factors have a major influence on the climate. It also borders Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia and Paraguay in the North. Its highest point is Aconcagua which rises to 6,960m (22,837 feet), the highest point on the American continent – both north and south!

The capital city Buenos Aires was first established around 500 years ago. Today it has a population of around 3 million and is the administrative and cultural center of the country. It's renowned for its European architecture and rich cultural life. In fact, it has more theatres than any other city in the world. Argentina is famous for many things including Tango, Gauchos (cowboys), its beef industry and subsequent steak restaurants, Iguazu Falls and Ushuaia - the world's most southern populated township. Like many of the neighbouring countries, Argentinians love their sport. They are soccer "mad" and hold Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi as national sporting heroes. They also love rugby, basketball and polo.

Join our inaugural 15 day tour and explore this fabulous, vibrant and sophisticated country!



**Day 1  
USHUAIA – CALAFATE**

At the end of our Antarctica cruise, we'll disembark at the port of Ushuaia. Transfer to Ushuaia airport, for the flight to El Calafate. (flight

schedule to be advised). Transfer to our accommodation at the Calafate Parque (or similar) for 4 night stay. Depending on the arrival time, we'll have some time to rest or explore before dinner at the hotel. *B/D*



**Day 2  
CALAFATE – PERITO MORENO GLACIER**

After breakfast, we'll depart for Perito Moreno, a spectacular glacier and UNESCO World heritage site. From the observation post, we will learn how it forms a natural dam of ice, stopping the water flow from Rico's arm to the Iceberg barrier. Lunch is at a local restaurant with a beautiful view of the glacier. Later in the afternoon, we'll return to Calafate. *B/L/D*



**Option for those wanting to trek the Perito Moreno Glacier:** From the port, Bajo de las Sombras embark to cross Lake Rico, approximately 20 minutes of navigation in front of the south face of the Perito Moreno Glacier. Meet your

mountain guides, who will lead the group to a shelter with facilities. From there, a short walk will begin along the coast of the lake, which includes a talk about glaciology. The guides will place crampons on each trekker. Provide a safety briefing and begin the walk. The hike is of medium-hard degree of difficulty, depending on your stability and fitness level. The route on the glacier lasts approximately 1.5 hours and you will see a variety of typical formations of a glacier such as cracks, sinks, seracs and lagoons. At the end of the hike on the ice, you will return to the shelter by a walkway that crosses the lush Patagonian Andean forest.

**Day 3  
CALAFATE – LAGO ARGENTINO**

Today starts with an early departure to Punta Bandera, to explore Lago Argentino by catamaran. This is a wonderful navigation along the lake's waters and a chance to view three incredible glaciers from the water: Upsala, Onelli and Spegazzini. After sightseeing, we'll enjoy lunch on board, then return to Punta Bandera, then Calafate. *B/L/D*



**Day 4  
CALAFATE – EL CHALTEN**

Founded recently in 1985, El Chalten is the youngest town of Argentina. It attracts people from all over the world looking for adventure and unique experiences. First, we'll visit the Cóndores and Águilas viewpoints, both short walks that lend themselves to spectacular views of the massifs of Torre, Fitz Roy and the Valley of the Vueltas River plus Lake Viedma. We'll depart the centre of El Chalten by

crossing over the bridge of the Fitz Roy River and walking up the path. This is a gentle climb of about forty minutes. Try and spot condors between the valleys of the Vueltas River and admire the impressive granite peaks and glaciers beyond the town of El Chaltén. We will have some leisure time to stroll before returning to Calafate for dinner. **B/D**



### Day 5 CALAFATE – SALTA

Today we'll transfer to Calafate airport and fly to Salta in the north of the country which is located at 1,190 metres above sea level (flight

schedule to be advised) and founded in 1582, there are still many buildings from the Spanish colonial era. Thanks to its excellent geographical location on the road of trade with Peru and Bolivia, Salta experienced a significant development during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We'll explore the city of Salta, including Plaza 9 de Julio, and the church of San Francisco, a beautiful building completed in 1872. We next visit Cerro San Bernardo which dominates the city of Salta and offers a panoramic view. Finally, finish the day at the village of San Lorenzo. Late in the afternoon, we'll head back to Salta for dinner, where we stay for three nights. **B/D**

### Day 6 SALTA – CAFAYATE

Cafayate is an important wine centre in the region. It is a delightful Spanish colonial-style town nestled at the foot of the Andes at an altitude of 1,600 metres. The trip will take a little over three hours. Along the way, we'll discover



landscapes of elusive beauty. La Quebrada de Cafayate is one of the most spectacular natural sites in northwest Argentina. The elements of wind and water have sculpted fantastic shapes in the

mountains with multicoloured strata, and the gigantic backdrop of the Andes as a bonus. Discover several rock forms along the route, including the amphitheatre, Devil's Gorge and panoramic viewpoint "Tres Cruces". We'll enjoy a stop at a local winery for a mandatory tasting of regional wines and lunch. Return to Salta late in the afternoon. Tonight, a regional dinner in a *pena salteña*, an establishment where locals come to share a typical meal accompanied by a show and folk music. **B/L/D**



### Day 7 SALTA – QUEBRADA DE HUMAHUACA

Today starts with an early departure for Humahuaca, a traditional Andean village located at 3,000 metres. After three hours drive, we will arrive in Purmamarca which means "village on the virgin land" in Aymara, at the foot of the famous Mountain of Seven Colours. Stroll through the alleys of this village of 600 inhabitants, renowned for its

local crafts, wooden sculptures, hand-woven rugs and textiles. Then the group will drive towards the "Quebrada de Humahuaca". The astonishing beauty of Quebrada de Humahuaca is not the only reason for its inclusion in 2003 on the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is also for its cultural significance. The valley constituted a commercial way for over 10,000 years, containing traces of that today. We'll stop in Tilcara, a charming village that houses a fortress, the Pucará de Tilcara, a pre-Inca archaeological site established between 1000 and 1480. In addition to this important urban development unearthed by archaeologists, the site's position allows a fabulous panorama as far as the eye can see on Quebrada. Then we'll arrive in Humahuaca. Founded in 1591, it is inhabited by Coyas Indians who keep intact the beliefs and cults of the highlands. Discover this village with its pepper trees and pretty little church. Lunch in a local restaurant before we return to Salta, stopping at Maimará to enjoy "The Painter's Palette". In Indian tongue Maimará means "falling star", and is a small town at the base of the Humahuaca Ravine.



The Painter's Palette is the earthly name given to the magnificent geographical feature of the mountains right opposite the small village, so colourful they appear as if they had been painted on by a divine hand. **B/L/D**

### Day 8 SALTA – MENDOZA

Today we transfer to Salta airport for the flight to Mendoza (flight schedule to be advised). Mendoza was founded in 1561 and was named by the governor of Chile. The provincial capital sits 761 metres above sea level in the Valley of Mendoza River, east of the Andes. Except during its long "siesta" hours, it is a lively city with a population of around 500,000 and the province's most important administrative and commercial centre. Our accommodation here will be for three nights. **B/D**



### Day 9 MENDOZA

After breakfast, the group will depart for a city tour to get acquainted with the history and culture of this city. The tour begins in the historical part where in 1561 Don Pedro del Castillo founded the city. The space is now dedicated to the Foundation Museum and the Jesuit ruins, vestiges of the 1861 earthquake. We will continue visiting the main sights of the city, including Independence Square and the Spanish Steps as well as monuments such as the cathedral, San Francisco Basilica, the civic district and the Governor's house of the Province. Next, we visit the prestigious Emilio Civit Street, a residential area leading to Mendoza City's lungs, and the 370-hectare General San Martín Park, designed by French landscape architect Charle Thays. We will go through the famous porticoes of the park and continue through the Rosedal Garden and the lake before reaching the Cerro de la Gloria (Hill of Glory) where the famous Monument of the Homeland is held in honour of the Andean Army. We will visit a winery for lunch and an olive farm before returning to our hotel in the afternoon. **B/L**



**Day 10**  
**MENDOZA – ALTA MONTANA**

This morning we depart on an all-day excursion in the high mountain area. This circuit is an incursion into the imposing world of the Andean Cordillera. It offers a varied range of colours and reliefs and will take us to the border with Chile. Along the Mendoza River, we will enjoy a magnificent view of the Cordón del Plata mountain range and the colossal Potrerillos hydraulic dyke that produces energy and distributes water for irrigation. We'll arrive at the Uspallata Valley, the southernmost point of the Inca Empire and visit the villages of Picheuta, Polvaredas and Punta de Vacas from where we can see the famous Tupungato volcano, whose snowy summit permanently rises to 6,800 metres. Continue towards the magnificent Puente del Inca natural architectural work and source of thermal water. Legend has it that well before the arrival of Cristobal Colon, the successor to the Incas throne was suffering from paralysis and had to go to the baths at the southern end of his Empire. Further along the route, at 2,750 metres, is the viewpoint for Cerro Aconcagua, the colossus of America standing 6,959 metres above sea level, where you access the Laguna Horcones and the Aconcagua Provincial Park. After that we will arrive at Las Cuevas, located at 3,200 meters. Between Las Cuevas and the international tunnel, the path leads to Christ the Redeemer, a monument located at 4,200m above sea level, symbolising the union between Argentina and Chile. Return to Mendoza late in the day. *B/L/D*

**Day 11**  
**MENDOZA – BUENOS AIRES**

After breakfast, the group will transfer to Mendoza Airport for the flight to Buenos Aires (flight schedule to be advised). Transfer to our hotel where we will spend 4 nights. Dinner at the hotel. *B/D*



**Day 12**  
**BUENOS AIRES**

Today comprises mainly of a Buenos Aires city tour with our private guide and a transfer. We'll drive through the main avenues, including 9 de

Julio and obelisk, Corrientes Avenue with many theatres, cinemas, bookstores and restaurants and Avenue de Mayo, home to magnificent historic buildings. At Place de Mayo, every Thursday brings together mothers who have lost their children under the last dictatorship. Next, we'll discover La Boca. It was the historic port of Buenos Aires and a refuge for immigrants, especially the many Italians who arrived between 1880 and 1930. The district's popularity is due to the street "Caminito," with rows of small humble houses of coloured sheet metal. Then the group will cross San Telmo, a historic district that was originally an alley uniting Plaza Mayor to the port. Over time, artisans or workers in connection with the port activities settled there and the district was enlarged. A bit like Montmartre in Paris, the district is known for being home to artists, writers and

intellectuals and has turned into a gentrified area of antique shops and tango bars. Lunch is at a local restaurant before we continue to the district of Puerto Madero. One of the youngest neighbourhoods in the capital owes its name to architect Eduardo Madero, whose project was retained in 1882. The red brick buildings are characteristic of the neighbourhood from the beginning of the 20th century. It is today one of the city's most important gastronomic and residential centres.

The tour will finally take us to La Recoleta, a residential area of excellence: restaurants, bars, discotheques and other places of entertainment are numerous. The walks are pleasant thanks to its many parks and squares. We will also visit the La Recoleta cemetery, opened in 1822, the most remarkable of the country. More than 70 monumental and luxurious vaults have been declared National Historical Monuments. We'll enjoy a traditional dinner and tango show at a famous cabaret in town tonight. *B/L/D*



**Day 13**  
**ESTANCIA – BUENOS AIRES**

We will depart early today to visit a typical Argentinian Estancia (cattle farm) and discover the life of the "gauchos" (cowboys). The Pampa region (or lowlands) are green grass fields occupying a quarter of the country. Home of the legendary gaucho, all the romantic fantasies about Argentina are concentrated here. Enjoy a local lunch of "asado" and then a folk show with dances and songs of the country. Return to Buenos Aires in the afternoon. Dinner is at the hotel. *B/D*



**Day 14**  
**BUENOS AIRES - TIGRE**

Depart for a day trip that will take us to the northern part of the city. We'll enjoy a sensational panoramic view of the Rio de la Plata, the widest river in the world, Jorge Newbery Airport, River Plate World Stadium and Buenos Aires University. We will go by Panamericana Freeway to make a route of 30 km until arriving at Tigre City, the cradle of rowing. We will take a cruise and enjoy the Paraná Delta. In a quiet, stable and safe route, we will go into the islands and islets labyrinth full of rivers and streams to learn about life on the island, recreation and aquatic sports. Return to BA later in the afternoon for some free time. A special farewell finale dinner is planned tonight. *B/D*

**Day 15**  
**HOMEWARD BOUND**

After breakfast, you'll depart the hotel for Ezeiza Airport for your flight home. (All flight schedules to be advised) *B/Meals in flight*



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.