

Chile and Argentina: Santiago, Lake District, Buenos Aires

10 days

Tour Description

Stretching hundreds of miles north and south along the two oceans, Chile and Argentina are both countries of great diversity in terrain and culture. Visit each capital city to get the flavor of their cosmopolitan lifestyle and learn their historical significance.

The major highlight of this trip is the scenic lake crossing from Chile to Argentina. The spectacular Andes Mountains and lush forests surround the deep crystal blue waters that make up your route from Puerto Varas, Chile to Bariloche, Argentina. Surrounded by piercing mountain peaks, this area has been compared with Switzerland for its majestic beauty and quaint atmosphere. Visitors make the crossing via a series of boats and coaches through the spectacular scenery of the two bordering countries.

Highlights

- ❖ **Santiago's Museum Chileno de Arte Pre-Columbian – famous for its pre-Columbian art**
- ❖ **Chilean Winery Tour in Cachapoal Valley**
- ❖ **Cruise between the two countries on Todos Los Santos Lake and Lake Frias**
- ❖ **Chocolate tour in the lakeside mountain resort town of Bariloche**
- ❖ **Gauchos on their horses perform over BBQ lunch**
- ❖ **Boat ride down the Tigre & Delta Rivers near Buenos Aires**
- ❖ **Argentine Dinner Show with Tango Lessons**

Sample Tour Itinerary

Santiago – 2 nights

Day 1: Arrive in Santiago

Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport by our local representative who will escort you to your hotel via private coach. We will start our visit of Santiago with a light snack in Providencia, an area popular with Chilean artists, intellectuals. We'll tour Barrio Bellavista and Plaza de Armas, then prepare to be awed by the Museum Chileno de Arte, one of the finest for Pre-Columbian art in the world. Next, enjoy a seafood lunch, followed by a panoramic view of the city from Cerro San Cristobal, site of the 72-foot Virgin Mary. A welcome dinner is the final touch to the day.

Day 2: Wine Tour in Cachapoal Valley

We'll drive south to the paradise that's home to about a dozen of Chile's most important wineries set against the backdrop of the Andes Mountains. A wine guide in the small town of Requinoa explains the culture, people, plantations and wines of the area. In the morning, visit two wineries to see the elaborate processes of different wine production followed by tastings. Enjoy lunch at Casa Porta Winery, followed by a wine lesson from a sommelier.

Peulla – 1 night

Day 3: Flight to Puerto Montt – Lake Cruise to Peulla

Transfer to nearby Puerto Varas, stopping en route for a walking tour in Angelmo. Then we head to Petrohue bordering Lake Lanquihue. Take in stunning views of Osomo and Calbuco volcanoes, as well as Petrohue Falls in the Vicente Perez Rosales National Park. Board your boat for the trip across Todos Los Santos Lake with even more spectacular views of the mountains. The ecological town of Peulla is the setting for nature lovers to explore for the balance of the day and evening. Stay an extra night if you like, and then continue cruising the next day.

Bariloche – 2 nights

Day 4: Coaches and Boats to Bariloche

Your coach takes you through the winding roads of the Andes Mountains, at about 3000 feet above sea level, crossing the border. At Puerto Frias board another boat for the cruise across Lake Frias to Puerto Alegre. Upon arrival, visit the refreshing Cántaros Falls, followed by lunch. Back on the lake again, cruise to Puerto Pañuelo where you'll board the coach that takes you into Bariloche, Argentina.

Day 5: Bariloche Chocolate Tour

Started by Italian immigrants, the tradition of hand-made chocolates thrives in this beautiful mountain town. From a fairytale atmosphere in some shops to a grandmotherly ambience in others, all the merchants strive for a friendly presentation of their tasty wares. We'll see the whole production process in a factory tour at the chocolate museum. You'll get a sense of chocolate's history dating back to the days when the Mayans and Aztecs used the cocoa beans as currency. You'll be both amused and educated.

Buenos Aires – 4 nights

Day 6: Arrive Flight to Buenos Aires

We'll take a short flight to the capital city. Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport by our local representative who will escort you to your hotel via private coach. The balance of the day you are free to explore this vibrant city on your own. Buenos Aires has a strong subway system, and taxis are plentiful and cheap, though you may just want to stroll along the pedestrian promenades and discover how easy it is to feel like a local.

Day 7: Half-day Buenos Aires Orientation Tour

Starting in the sophisticated neighborhood of Recoleta, see the cemetery where Eva Peron is buried and the Church of Our Lady of Pilar. We'll continue on to Palermo, with its elegant residences and Japanese gardens, then on to the colorful neighborhood of La Boca featuring typical cantinas. The oldest area of San Telmo with cobbled streets is also home to many tango houses. Finally, see the modern side of town showing off its port warehouses converted to chic flats in Puerto Madero.

Day 8: Full-day Excursion to El Rosario de Areco Estancia

Our two hour drive into the rural countryside reveals a traditional estancia built in the colonial style of the Pampas region. Gauchos on horseback welcome you to a spread of typical empanadas and wine. The gauchos perform in the ring and cuadreras races, followed by the Argentine BBQ lunch and folklore show. The balance of the afternoon is yours to take advantage of the facilities such as a ride on a sulky, a horseback ride or just relaxing around the pool. Finish the day with a sip of mate (green tea) and delicious home-made pastries.

Day 9: Tour and Cruise of the River Delta

Heading through the San Isidro district, we come to Tigre, situated on the delta of the Parana River. The maze of little rivers and isles harbored smugglers until the end of the 19th century when the upper class favored it as a recreation area. We'll sail along the delta, admiring the grand old residences contrasting with their neighboring wooden houses built over piles. Enjoy lunch on the patio at Gato Blanco overlooking the Rio Capitan.

Dinner Show and Tango Lesson:

This evening's tango lessons might not turn you into a pro, but you can watch the experienced locals put on a show while you enjoy a sumptuous dinner. Tango's origins trace back to 1880 slums inhabited by Italian and Spanish immigrants, Africans and gauchos. By the 1920's the tango came out of the shadows and into the high-class ballrooms and is still on display today.

Day 10 Departure

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home.

INCLUSIONS

- Accommodations: Santiago 2 nights, Peulla 1 night, Bariloche 2 nights, Buenos Aires 4 nights
- Continental breakfast daily
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach and boats
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in the itinerary