



CONTOURS TRAVEL

SINCE 1975

LATIN AMERICA & ANTARCTICA



SOUTH AMERICA • MEXICO • CUBA • CENTRAL AMERICA • ANTARCTICA

We know Latin America by heart™

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Contents of maps are not to scale.

Why choose Contours Travel?



The Contours Commitment



INSPIRATION

We know Latin America by heart and want to share our passion for this fascinating continent! We have plenty of creative ideas to inspire your next Latin American adventure – talk to our expert consultants about making your dream holiday a reality. Careful, our passion is contagious!

“You were without a doubt the only travel agent who went to the trouble of listening to our somewhat undefined needs and came up with a wonderful itinerary and service delivery from your in-country experience and contacts.”

John & Cherie; 2018

EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

The world is a big place, but we focus exclusively on Latin America and Antarctica, allowing our consultants to develop unsurpassed destination knowledge. We’ve travelled it, lived it, worked it and still we long for it. What can we say? We’ve been Latin lovers since 1975 – let us share our passion and specialist knowledge with you!

“Your obvious personal experience and attention to detail made our holiday outstanding: from the carefully planned itinerary, pre-departure information and advice, to the knowledgeable and caring guides and drivers at our various destinations, nothing could be faulted.”

Valda; 2017

CONFIDENCE

We have been working with some of our in-country partners for more than 40 years. During your time in Latin America, you can be confident that our trusted local operators are there 24/7 to look after you. Meticulous planning and excellent support on the ground means you can relax and enjoy the holiday of a lifetime.

“I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciated all your hard work in getting me home with so little hassle. It never is a good thing receiving ‘that’ phone call but with your help you took away all the stress of working out how I would get back to be with the family.”

Mr & Mrs F; 2018

VALUE

Why are there no prices in our brochure? Because things change fast in Latin America! New routes develop daily, great hotels get better and touring options become more diverse every week. We want to ensure you’re getting the best advice and the most competitive price at the moment you make an enquiry. Contact your travel agent for a tailor-made holiday and quote.

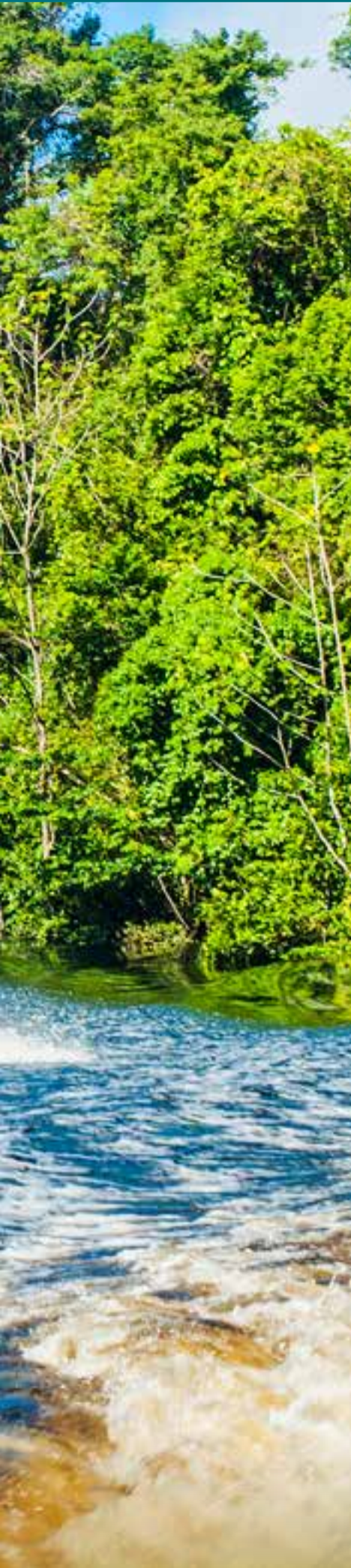
“Before we booked, we did a price comparison with one of the big travel agents and Contours Travel was significantly cheaper while providing better service! We’ll definitely use them again on our next trip to South America.”

Chris B; 2017

How We Travel



The Contours Experience



TAILOR-MADE HOLIDAYS

Why buy an off-the-shelf holiday when we can create a bespoke experience just for you? Everyone is different, and every itinerary we create is designed according to your unique requirements and expectations.

“We left the consultant to suggest an itinerary as we were first-timers to South America and not only was it a fabulous itinerary, it was great value for money and affordable.”

Tania; 2018

EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

We relish the extraordinary: unconventional tours, curious activities, stays of distinctions and offbeat trails. Talk to us about transforming your holiday into a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

“We chose Contours Travel because ... your proposal was more creative. An amazing, faultless and well-organised trip! An experience that will never be forgotten!”

Sharon & Daniel; 2018

THE LOCAL CONNECTION

Travellers returning from Latin America are united in their love and respect for the warm and welcoming people who call this incredible region home. Whether it's swapping stories with your guide, trying out your Spanish in a bustling marketplace or practising salsa moves with encouraging locals, our clients frequently cite these everyday interactions as the highlight of their holidays.

“As promised, our guides were of a very high quality in their subject knowledge, language and communication skills, and passion for their subject. We not only experienced a myriad of activities, sights and cultures, but learned so much about the social, historical and natural environments of the countries and cultures we visited.”

Sue & Norm; 2018

ETHICAL TRAVEL & SUSTAINABILITY

Contours Travel supports a number of initiatives throughout Latin America. Whether through direct loans, importing artisanal products or supporting local development organisations, we are increasing opportunities for the people of this wonderful continent. Check our website for more details of our exclusive Agua Pura water project in partnership with Rotary Travel North Melbourne, or ask us about other ways in which you can contribute.

“It was truly an uplifting and positive experience to see the school working so well and the children so happy. The Agua Pura experience gave us a glimpse of people and children's daily lives. Most definitely ... it was the highlight of our trip.”

Tom & Diane; 2017

South American Dream



Sacsayhuaman Ruins, Cuzco

WHY DREAM?

Always wanted to visit South America but not sure where to start? South American Dream is the perfect itinerary for first-time travellers to South America! Visit the magical ruins of Machu Picchu, stroll along Copacabana Beach, see the majesty of thundering Iguazu Falls, walk on Lake Titicaca's famous floating islands and dance the tango in cosmopolitan Buenos Aires.

This is a fully customisable itinerary that we hope can guide you towards your perfect first-time trip to Latin America. If you love active holidays, there are plenty of great day hikes or cycling tours we can add. If you have a little more time, why not include the Amazon or Andean Lakes District? Check out the Enhance Your Experience box on the opposite page for more ideas!

Depending on the time of year, it may make more sense to start in Peru and finish in Argentina. Talk to our expert consultants about the best way to combine these iconic destinations.

Day 1 Buenos Aires

Your local guide will greet you on arrival and transfer you to your hotel. The districts of Recoleta, San Telmo and Palermo all offer wonderful accommodation options.

Day 2 Buenos Aires

Today's tour will take you to the city's southern districts. Explore vibrant 'microcentro' with its historic buildings and monuments. Visit the famous Plaza 25 de Mayo and see the Casa Rosada. You will then continue to the bohemian district of San Telmo and visit Caminito in La Boca for some great photo opportunities, finishing in Puerto Madero. This modern waterfront district is well-known for its restaurants. For the rest of the day you're free to continue exploring on your own. *B*

Day 3 Buenos Aires

Tour the northern districts, including famous Recoleta Cemetery and the leafy suburb of Palermo, with its elegant mansions, funky cafes and local fashion boutiques. In the evening, learn the basic steps of tango before your dinner and tango show. *BD*

Day 4 Buenos Aires/ Rio de Janeiro

Fly to Rio, arriving in time for a stroll or a sundowner on Copacabana Beach. *B*

Day 5 Rio de Janeiro

A full-day tour of Rio's most beautiful and famous sights. Admire the spectacular views from Mount Corcovado and see the famous statue of Christ the Redeemer. After a traditional BBQ lunch, ride the cable car to the top of iconic Sugarloaf Mountain. *BL*

Day 6 Rio de Janeiro

This day is yours to explore this captivating city on your own. We suggest a guided tour of a favela or a visit to the Museum of Tomorrow. *B*

Day 7 Rio de Janeiro/ Iguazu Falls

After a morning at leisure take an afternoon flight to the mighty Iguazu Falls. Ask us about the special optional tour of a helicopter ride over the falls for the ultimate experience. *B*

Day 8 Iguazu Falls

A full-day tour of the Argentine side of the falls, including the Devil's Throat Lookout, and optional speedboat tour under the falls. *B*

Day 9 Iguazu Falls/ Lima

Free morning. Afternoon tour of the Brazilian side of the falls for the best panoramic view and a visit to the bird park. Fly to Lima and transfer to your hotel. *B*

Day 10 Lima

A half-day sightseeing tour of Lima's historic centre and the seaside suburbs of Miraflores and San Isidro with a guided tour the Larco Museum. Free afternoon. *B*

Day 11 Lima/ Cuzco/ Sacred Valley

Fly to Cuzco and transfer to the Sacred Valley (around 2,700m above sea level), where you can better adjust to the altitude. *B*

Day 12 Sacred Valley

A full-day tour through the Sacred Valley, including Chinchero and its market and Ollantaytambo village and fortress. *BL*



Day 13 Sacred Valley

A free day. Optional Community Project day: visit an Andean village for a more in-depth cultural encounter. Learn about their everyday activities and enjoy a one-on-one weaving lesson. We encourage you to bring along a water filter donation, which will change the life of a family. *B*

Day 14 Sacred Valley/ Machu Picchu

Travel by train to explore the famous ruins of Machu Picchu, with a guided tour of the ruins and buffet lunch included. Consider adding the optional Inca Trail Express: a spectacular six-hour moderate walk to Machu Picchu, arriving through the Sun Gate. *BLD*

Day 15 Machu Picchu/ Cuzco

A second day entry to Machu Picchu is included so you can continue exploring at your own pace. Consider a hike to Huayna Picchu or Machu Picchu Mountain for stunning views. Catch an afternoon train to Cuzco. *B*

Day 16 Cuzco

A half-day walking tour of the main sights of Cuzco, including the Plaza de Armas, cathedral, Koricancha Temple, San Blas Church and handcraft workshops. Finish with a visit to the nearby ruins of Sacsayhuaman. *B*

Day 17 Cuzco

A free day to explore this fascinating city. Your Cuzco Tourist Ticket includes entrance to 16 attractions in and around Cuzco and the Sacred Valley. *B*

Day 18 Cuzco/ Puno

A full-day tour by bus across the Altiplano to Lake Titicaca stopping at Andahuaylillas, Raqchi, and for lunch in Sicuani along the way. *BL*

Day 19 Puno

A morning tour visiting the floating reed islands of Uros on Lake Titicaca. Option to include Taquile or Amantani Islands. *B*

Day 20 Puno/ Sun Island/ La Paz

Travel by coach and catamaran from Puno to La Paz with a visit to Copacabana and Sun Island. Option to stay overnight on Sun Island or on board the catamaran. *BL*

Day 21 La Paz

Enjoy a half-day tour visiting the colonial centre of La Paz and the exotic stalls of the Witches' Market. Continue to the Valley of the Moon to see the otherworldly rock formations shaped by erosion. Later this afternoon, ride a cable car for unforgettable views over the city. *B*

Day 22 La Paz/ Santiago

Fly to Santiago and transfer to your hotel. An afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 23 Santiago

Enjoy a half-day walking tour of modern Santiago. Visit Bellas Artes, San Cristobal and lovely Lastarria before hopping on the metro and exploring the downtown area. *B*

Day 24 Santiago

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. Option to extend your trip to the Atacama Desert or Patagonia. *B*

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- Add a visit to the unique El Zanjón archaeological site in Buenos Aires.
- Active option: ask us about cycling tours of Buenos Aires and Santiago.
- Music lovers can't miss a drumming class in Rio!
- Active option: hike Mount Corcovado to Christ the Redeemer in Rio.
- Ask us about helicopter rides or boat trips at Iguazú Falls.
- Discover the secrets of Peruvian cuisine on a tasting tour of Lima.
- Get involved in one of our Community Projects in the Sacred Valley.
- Active option: hike the Inca Trail Express into Machu Picchu.
- Consider overnighting on Lake Titicaca with an Amantani homestay or ecolodge on Sun Island.
- Experience Bolivia's incredible diversity with a day tour to Las Yungas travelling from the snow-capped Andes to lush cloud forest.
- Visit one of Chile's famous wine regions. Maipo, San Antonio and Colchagua are all accessible from Santiago.

South American Explorer



WHY EXPLORER?

Perfect for those with a little more time, Explorer combines South America's most iconic destinations with a few of our personal favourites on this extended itinerary. The Galapagos Islands, Machu Picchu and Iguazu Falls are sure to be highlights – and we're confident the Salt Plains, Atacama Desert and Ecuador's gorgeous Avenue of the Volcanoes will prove just as impressive. This sample itinerary is a great starting point – check out the Enhance Your Experience box on the opposite page for just a few of the ways we can tailor this holiday for you.

Day 1 Quito

Welcome to Quito. Transfer to your hotel on arrival.

Day 2 Quito

A free morning. Afternoon walking tour of the UNESCO Heritage-listed colonial centre. *B*

Day 3 Quito

A full-day tour of Otavalo to visit the famous indigenous markets with lunch at a local hacienda. *BL*

Day 4 Quito/ Baños

Drive to Cotopaxi National Park where you'll see the conical Cotopaxi Volcano before continuing to one of the region's colourful local markets. After lunch, drive to Baños and stay overnight. *BLD*

Day 5 Baños/ Riobamba

Travel the famous Route of the Waterfalls around Baños and drive to a great lookout point to see the spectacular Tungurahua Volcano. Continue to Riobamba and stay overnight. *BLD*

Day 6 Riobamba/ Cuenca

Ride the train along the series of switchbacks known as the Devil's Nose. Continue by car to Cuenca, visiting Ingapirca Ruins en route. *BLD*

Day 7 Cuenca

A half-day tour of the colonial city centre, including the cathedral, Toquilla Hat Factory (makers of the famous Panama Hats!) and the flower market. Afterwards, take a short drive out of town for picturesque views of the red-tiled roofs and church domes, framed by imposing mountains. *B*

Day 8 Cuenca/ Guayaquil

Travel overland to Guayaquil via El Cajas National Park. In Guayaquil you'll have a short city tour before staying overnight. *BL*

Day 9 Guayaquil/ Galapagos Islands

Fly to the Galapagos Islands to join your cruise. There are dozens of ways you can experience the fabulous Galapagos Islands. Choose from 3- to 14-night itineraries on tourist, first-class or deluxe vessels, or ask us about island-hopping programs. *BLD*

Day 10 Galapagos Islands

Explore the Galapagos Islands – an oasis for many endemic animals and plants – on twice-daily shore excursions. The geography of these islands' volcanic origin is as fascinating as their inhabitants. *BLD*

Day 11 Galapagos Islands

Visit a number of islands to see turtles, iguanas, blue-footed boobies and sea lions at close range in the Galapagos's amazing and unique environment. *BLD*

Day 12 Galapagos Islands/ Guayaquil

Return to Guayaquil. Transfer to your hotel. *B*

Day 13 Guayaquil/ Lima

Fly to Lima and enjoy a half-day city sightseeing tour including Larco Museum. *B*

Day 14 Lima

A free day to explore Lima with an optional Peruvian cooking lesson and market visit. *B*

Day 15 Lima/ Cuzco/ Sacred Valley

Fly to Cuzco and transfer to the Sacred Valley, where you can adjust to the altitude. *B*

Day 16 Sacred Valley of the Incas

A full-day tour through the Sacred Valley, including Chincho and its market, and Ollantaytambo village and fortress. Ask us about alternative tours including Pisac market and ruins or Maras salt terraces. *BL*

Day 17 Machu Picchu

Travel by train to explore the famous ruins of Machu Picchu. A guided tour of the ruins and lunch is included. *BLD*

Day 18 Machu Picchu/ Cuzco

Return to the ruins and explore at your own pace. Return to Cuzco in the afternoon. *B*

Day 19 Cuzco

A half-day city tour of the main sights of Cuzco and nearby ruins. *B*



Uros Islands, Peru

Day 20 Cuzco

A free day. Optional Community Project day: visit an Andean village for a more in-depth cultural encounter. Learn about their everyday activities and enjoy a one-on-one weaving lesson. We encourage you to bring along a water filter donation, which will change the life of a family. *B*

Day 21 Cuzco/ Puno

A full-day tour by bus across the Altiplano to Lake Titicaca stopping at Andahuaylillas, Raqchi, and for lunch at Sicuani along the way. Alternatively, take the iconic Titicaca train. *BL*

Day 22 Puno

A morning tour visiting the floating reed islands of Uros on Lake Titicaca. Option to include Taquile Island. *B*

Day 23 Puno/ Sun Island/ La Paz

Travel by coach and catamaran from Puno to La Paz with a visit to Copacabana and Sun Island. Option to stay overnight on Sun Island. *BL*

Day 24 La Paz

Enjoy a half-day city tour visiting the Valley of the Moon and Witches' Market. *B*

Day 25 La Paz/ Uyuni/ Tahua

Fly to Uyuni and depart by 4WD on one of the most breathtaking overland trips in South America. Discover the Colchani salt mine in the surreal salt desert before travelling onto Tahua. *BLD*

Day 26 Tahua/ Villamar

Drive to Isla Incahuasi, where many cacti grow on the island. Continue across the Altiplano to Alota and Villamar. *BLD*

Day 27 Villamar/ San Pedro de Atacama

Visit the Eduardo Abaroa Andean Fauna National Reserve. Continue through Las Pampas de Dali up to Laguna Verde, before crossing the border into Chile to San Pedro de Atacama. *BL*

Day 28 San Pedro de Atacama

Optional full-day tour of the Tatío Geysers. *B*

Day 29 San Pedro de Atacama/ Salta

A full-day bus ride across wild and remote Andean landscapes will take you to Salta, Argentina. *B*

Day 30 Salta

A day at leisure to relax and explore. Visit the excellent Museum of High Altitude Archaeology and see the brilliantly preserved remains of child sacrifices found more than 6,000m high in the Andean Range. *B*

Day 31 Salta

A full-day tour of the Cafayate wine region. Drive through the stunning Cafayate Gorge with its beautiful colours and iconic rock formations before arriving in the pretty Calchaquí Valleys. Visit a local winery for a tasting. Return to Salta. *B*

Day 32 Salta/ Iguazu Falls

After a morning at leisure, fly to Puerto Iguazu in the afternoon and transfer to your hotel. *B*

Day 33 Iguazu Falls

Enjoy a full tour of the Argentine Iguazu National Park, including Devil's Throat and the Grand Adventure Boat Ride; a thrilling way to experience the power of the falls. *B*

Day 34 Iguazu Falls/ Buenos Aires

Fly to cosmopolitan Buenos Aires. Afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 35 Buenos Aires

A morning sightseeing tour of the city. In the evening, learn the basic steps of tango before your dinner and tango show. *BD*

Day 36 Buenos Aires

A free day. Consider an estancia visit in Areco, famous for the conservation of Creole customs and home to the Guiraldes Museum, or a day trip to charming and historic Colonia del Sacramento in Uruguay. *B*

Day 37 Buenos Aires

Transfer to the airport. Option to extend your trip to the Mendoza or Bariloche. *B*

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- Choose from a range of Galapagos cruises from 3 to 14 nights, or ask your consultant about the divine Galapagos Safari Camp.
- Active option: stay longer on Sun Island and enjoy the network of walking trails that cross the island.
- Reward yourself with a stay in one of Atacama's luxury all-inclusive lodges (see page 44).
- Hire a car and get off the beaten track in Argentina's northwest.
- Travel overland from Iguazu to the Ibera Wetlands for a chance to see jaguars, giant anteaters and more!

Colonial Splendour



WHY SPLENDOUR?

For lovers of history and architecture, Latin America's colonial cities are an endless source of fascination. On this tailored itinerary we have combined three of the continent's most exciting destinations, taking advantage of direct flights linking Panama City and northern Brazil.

Dotted among Colombia's stunning natural landscapes are the colonial beauties of Barichara, Salento and Villa de Leyva. The jewel in Colombia's crown is, of course, Cartagena de Indias, famed for its riches, sacked by pirates and today one of the best-preserved historic cities in South America.

Panama City is renowned for its modern skyline and engineering, but the historic Casco Viejo is unmissable. The charming combination of beautifully restored buildings and crumbling mansions is reminiscent of Old Havana; top-class restaurants and boutique accommodation make this an excellent city stay.

Brazil's colonial heritage is reflected in the streets of picturesque towns all over the country. From the African-influenced culture of Salvador de Bahia to the genteel pace of Paraty and the fabulous wealth of gold rush capital Ouro Preto, this is a fascinating glimpse into Brazil, past and present.

Day 1 **Bogota**

Arrive in Bogota and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 **Bogota**

A half-day city tour includes visits to La Candelaria, Capilla del Sagrario, the Gold Museum and the Botero Museum. Take the cable car to Monserrate lookout for views of the city and the Andes mountain range. *B*

Day 3 **Bogota/ Villa de Leyva**

Depart Bogota, travelling north to Zipaquirá, where you'll visit the famous underground Salt Cathedral. Continue to the pretty colonial village of Villa de Leyva and stay overnight. *BL*

Day 4 **Villa de Leyva**

A full-day tour exploring Villa de Leyva and surrounds, including the Fossil Museum and Dominican Convento del Santo Ecce Homo. *BL*

Day 5 **Villa de Leyva/ Barichara**

After breakfast, transfer by road to the picturesque hamlet of Barichara where you will stay overnight. *B*

Day 6 **Barichara**

Enjoy a gentle 10km walk along El Camino Real to the sleepy village of Guane. Keep your eyes peeled for colourful tanagers, motmots and finches along the way. Return by car to Barichara, with the afternoon at leisure. *BL*

Day 7 **Barichara/ Coffee Region**

Transfer to Bucaramanga Airport with a stop along the way to admire the Chicamocha Canyon. Fly to Pereira and transfer to your traditional hacienda accommodation. *B*

Day 8 **Coffee Region**

Morning at leisure. This afternoon you'll learn about the production of Colombia's delicious coffee with a tour of Hacienda San Alberto. *B*

Day 9 **Coffee Region**

Today's tour of the beautiful Cocora Valley and picturesque town of Salento is bound to be a highlight. See Colombia's enormous national tree, the wax palm, towering over a lush green landscape and explore the colourful streets of Salento. *BL*

Day 10 **Coffee Region/ Cartagena**

Fly to Cartagena and transfer to your hotel in the old city. This evening, take a sunset stroll along the city walls and enjoy a sundowner at Cafe del Mar. *B*

Day 11 **Cartagena**

This morning you'll visit the local markets with a chef to see the extraordinary variety of fresh produce and tropical fruits. Pick up some ingredients for a private cooking class and enjoy a fantastic lunch. *BL*

Day 12 **Cartagena**

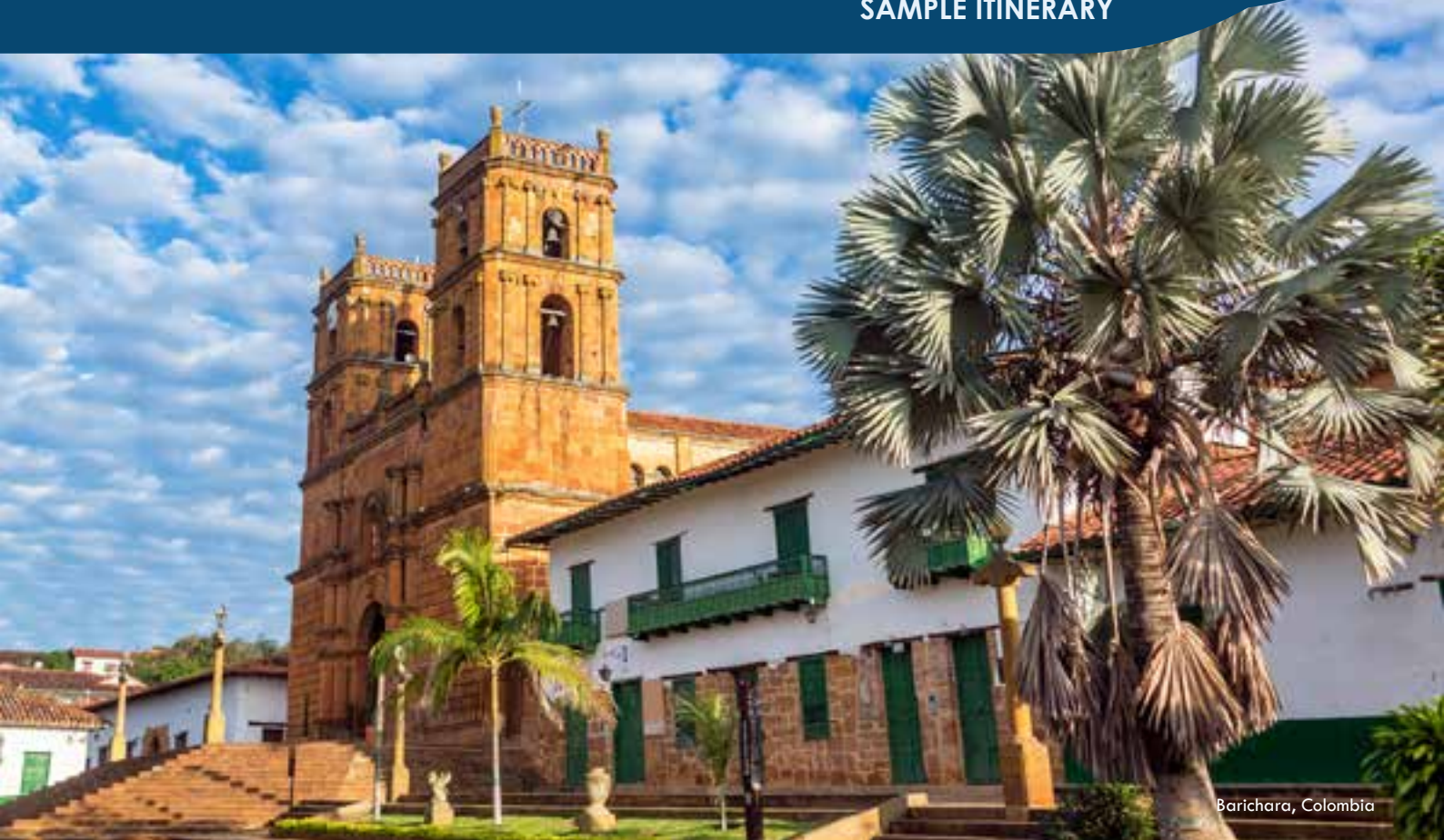
A day at leisure to explore one of the Americas' most beautiful historic centres. *B*

Day 13 **Cartagena/ Panama City**

Take a short flight from Cartagena to Panama City and transfer to your hotel in the old city. Soak up the sights and sounds of beautiful Casco Viejo during a sunset guided walking tour. *B*

Day 14 **Panama City**

Explore greater Panama City, including a visit to the excellent Miraflores Locks Visitor Centre. See the cruise ships passing



Barichara, Colombia

through the famous lock and visit the museum to understand how this amazing feat of engineering was built. *B*

Day 15 Panama City/ Salvador

Fly direct from Panama City to Salvador de Bahia (Tue and Fri only). Transfer to your hotel on arrival. *B*

Day 16 Salvador

Explore Pelourinho, the gorgeous historic centre of Salvador, on this morning's guided tour. This evening you'll experience a fabulous introduction to Brazil's African-influenced dance and music at the Miguel Santana Theatre. *B*

Day 17 Salvador

Today's panoramic city tour will take you to the stunning baroque Bonfim Church, deeply connected with the local candomblé tradition. You will also visit Mercado Modelo, where you can buy some locally made handicrafts. Afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 18 Salvador/ Ouro Preto

Fly to Belo Horizonte and transfer by road to the UNESCO Heritage-listed city of Ouro Preto. Founded in the heady days of Brazil's gold rush, the city is a masterpiece of colonial architecture. *B*

Day 19 Ouro Preto

Enjoy a tour to see nearby Mariana's exemplary colonial architecture. Return to spend the afternoon exploring Ouro Preto, with views of surrounding mountains over red-tiled roofs and baroque church towers. *B*

Day 20 Ouro Preto/ Tiradentes

Transfer to Congonhas, once an important mining centre. Visit the stunning baroque

basilica, constructed in the late 1700s and see the impressive rococo interior. Continue to Tiradentes with lunch en route. *BL*

Day 21 Tiradentes

Enjoy a walking tour of beautiful Tiradentes, with its cobblestone streets, historic houses and the lovely baroque architecture of its numerous churches. Framed by the São Jose Mountain Range, the city is one of Brazil's finest colonial beauties. Spend the afternoon at your leisure exploring hiking trails in the surrounding hills. *B*

Day 22 Tiradentes/ Rio de Janeiro

Transfer to Sao Joao Del Rei this morning and board a bus to Rio; a journey of around five hours. You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel. *B*

Day 23 Rio de Janeiro

Depart this morning for Corcovado Mountain, where you'll see the enormous statue of Christ the Redeemer and enjoy fabulous views over the city. Continue to Santa Teresa for lunch and explore this bohemian district with your guide. *BL*

Day 24 Rio de Janeiro

Morning at leisure. This afternoon take a sunset tour of Sugarloaf Mountain, riding the cable cars for great views over Rio's famous beaches. *B*

Day 25 Rio de Janeiro

Depart this morning for the UNESCO Heritage-listed colonial gem Paraty, located on the stunning Angra dos Reis bay and framed by the Atlantic rainforest. Spend the afternoon exploring its cobbled streets and admiring pastel-hued architecture. *B*

Day 26 Paraty

Experience the beauty of Paraty's surroundings on a half-day tour on board a schooner. Sail through the bay, stopping at local island beaches where you can swim and snorkel. Lunch is served on board. *BL*

Day 27 Paraty

Transfer to Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo for your onward flight. *B*

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- Dine at one of Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants – there are four to choose from in Bogota!
- Take a hot air balloon ride over the lush green hills and picturesque coffee estates of Colombia's Coffee Triangle.
- With just a few extra days you can include a visit to Medellin, one of South America's most liveable cities.
- Indulge with a stay at a gorgeous boutique hotel in Cartagena – from former convents to converted Republican mansions there are plenty of great options in the historic centre.
- Stay longer in Panama City for a partial transit of the Panama Canal.
- Enjoy the fine white sands and rainforest-fringed beaches of Praia do Forte – visit as a day trip, or better yet, stay for a few nights for a bit of R&R.

Latin Flavours



WHY FLAVOURS?

Latin cuisine has gained serious traction over the past few years with Peruvian, Mexican and Argentine restaurants popping up all over the world. South American superfoods such as quinoa and acai can now be found at your neighbourhood cafe, while Chilean chardonnay and Argentine Malbec are challenging old-world European varieties for popularity.

Our tailored itinerary through Chile, Argentina and Uruguay is designed to tantalise your tastebuds and introduce you to the best of the southern cone's excellent food and wine. Marvel at the incredible diversity of produce in Santiago's Mercado Vega, learn how to mix the perfect Pisco sour, enjoy Argentina's world-class beef and sample the elegant Tannat wines of Uruguay on our leisurely exploration of Latin food and culture.

Talk to our expert consultants about other great culinary destinations! From ceviche masterclasses in Lima to tacos and tequila in Mexico City, there are plenty of fantastic options for flavour-filled adventures in Latin America.

Day 1 **Santiago**

Arrive in Santiago de Chile and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 **Santiago**

Get acquainted with Chilean cuisine during a hands-on cooking class. Visit Mercado Vega to pick up some fresh ingredients then take a taxi to Barrio Italia, where your guide will take you through the preparation of some simple but delicious Chilean recipes. Enjoy lunch paired with local Chilean wines and return to your hotel pleasantly sated. *BL*

Day 3 **Santiago**

Enjoy a tour to Santa Rita Winery, located an hour south of Santiago and considered one of the country's oldest and most traditional. After a tour of the vineyard you'll be able to sample some of its award-winning wines and indulge with lunch at Restaurant Doña Paula, a National Monument due to its historical significance. *BL*

Day 4 **Santiago/ Uco Valley**

A short flight over the majestic Andes will bring you to Mendoza, Argentina. Road-trippers may prefer to take the spectacular journey across the Andes by bus. Transfer to the stunning Posada Salentein, located in the Uco Valley. *BD*

Day 5 **Uco Valley**

A free day to relax and explore the surrounding vineyards, sample the local wines and enjoy dramatic views of the Andes. *BD*

Day 6 **Mendoza**

Transfer to the city of Mendoza, with its pleasant tree-lined avenues and vibrant restaurant scene. Afternoon at leisure to explore. *B*

Day 7 **Mendoza**

A full-day tour visiting three iconic wineries in the famous Maipu Valley. Tastings are included at Trapiche, SinFin and Bodega Familia Zuccardi, followed by a three-course lunch at Pan y Oliva. *BL*

Day 8 **Mendoza/ Salta**

Fly to Salta, the best-preserved colonial city in Argentina, and transfer to your hotel. *B*

Day 9 **Salta**

A day at leisure to explore the city's historical centre. Sample some of the region's traditional dishes such as locro, humitas and tamales. *B*

Day 10 **Salta/ Cachi**

Depart this morning for the charming mountain village of Cachi. This spectacular drive takes you through Escopie's gorge to the Piedra del Molino, the highest point of the route at 3,600m, for stunning views. Arrive in Cachi and stay overnight. *B*

Day 11 **Cachi/ Cafayate**

Travel along the famous Route 40, descending through mountain villages and Arrows Gorge to the wine-growing region of Cafayate, where you will stay overnight. *B*

Winery Tour, Chile



Day 12 Cafayate

Spend the day exploring sleepy Cafayate. Head to Heladeria Miranda to sample the famous wine-flavoured ice-cream, including Torrontés, Malbec and cabernet sauvignon. Afterwards, rent a bicycle and taste the real thing at one of the many vineyards surrounding the town. *B*

Day 13 Cafayate/ Iguazu Falls

Transfer to Salta Airport for a direct flight to Puerto Iguazu. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. *B*

Day 14 Iguazu Falls

A full-day tour of the Argentine side of the falls, including the Devil's Throat Lookout, and an optional speedboat tour under the falls. This evening, the excellent Argentine Experience – a hands-on cooking class and dinner with matching wines – offers a fun and informative exploration of local cuisine. *BD*

Day 15 Iguazu Falls/ Buenos Aires

Fly to Buenos Aires and transfer to your hotel in the gastronomic district of Palermo. *B*

Day 16 Buenos Aires

Get the real taste of Buenos Aires on this morning's cycling tour. Your expert guide will introduce you to some of the city's culinary institutions, including a much-loved pizzeria and an ice-cream parlour renowned for its dulce de leche flavour! This evening you'll be treated to an in-depth exploration of Argentina's wine regions from Salta to Patagonia with a tasting and tapas at a local restaurant. *B*

Day 17 Buenos Aires

This morning's tour will take you to the southern districts. Visit the famous Plaza 25 de Mayo and see the Casa Rosada. Continue to the bohemian district of San Telmo and visit Caminito in La Boca before finishing in Puerto Madero. *B*

Day 18 Buenos Aires

A day at leisure to continue exploring the sights, sounds and tastes of Argentina's capital. *B*

Day 19 Buenos Aires/ Colonia

Catch the ferry across the Rio de la Plata this morning to the Uruguayan city of Colonia del Sacramento. Enjoy an afternoon walking tour, followed by a wine tasting at local bodega El Buen Suspiro. *B*

Day 20 Colonia del Sacramento

A half-day tour to Los Cerros de San Juan Winery. After a tour of the vineyard, sample a selection of wine, accompanied by homemade bread, cheese and salumi. *B*

Day 21 Colonia/ Montevideo

Travel by bus to Uruguay's capital, Montevideo. *B*

Day 22 Montevideo

A full-day tour exploring some of the city's most iconic markets and cafes. Start with the former agricultural market, MAM, now a popular spot for local cuisine, craft beer and produce. Continue to the Port Market, famous for seafood. You'll finish with a visit to Bar Facal, one of the oldest bars in the city, for lunch. *BL*

Day 23 Montevideo

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- Experience the best of Santiago's wine regions with a stay at Vik Chile or Lapostolle Residence.
- Active option: hop on a bicycle and explore the Maipo Valley vineyards on two wheels.
- Visit Mendoza during the Vendimia Harvest Festival (late February and early March) and see the processions, parades, live music and celebrations of local wine.
- Extend your stay in Cafayate and visit Quilmes Ruins and the beautiful Pachamama Museum in nearby Amaicha del Valle.
- Combine your stay in Iguazu Falls with the full moon and take a special moonlit tour of the falls at night.
- Buenos Aires is paradise for foodies. Why not include a parrilla tour and discover some of the city's most authentic steakhouses!
- Spend a few extra days in Uruguay and stay at the stunning Finca Narbona in Carmelo.

Mundo Maya



WHY MUNDO?

The Maya civilisation was one of the most advanced of its time, renowned for its art, architecture, writing and mathematical systems and astronomical calendar.

This sample itinerary explores the remnants of this fascinating culture. Meet the descendants of Maya people with their distinctive traditions and beliefs, discover the many spectacular UNESCO World Heritage-listed ruins of ancient Maya cities and soak up the local culture through the wonderful food, art and music.

Explore the jungle-clad ruins of Palenque and Bonampak, listen to the sounds of howler monkeys as you wander the ancient city of Tikal, and discover the region's colonial history in the picturesque towns of San Cristobal de las Casas and Antigua. This is a fantastic itinerary for lovers of culture, adventure and history!

Day 1 Mexico City

Arrive in Mexico City and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Mexico City

Depart early for Teotihuacan to see the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon and enjoy the ruins in the cooler part of the day. Return to Mexico City to explore the highlights, including the Zocalo, cathedral, National Palace, Tenochtitlan and the Museum of Anthropology. *B*

Day 3 Mexico City

A free day to relax and explore. Consider a visit to the Frida Kahlo Museum in Coyoacan or the floating gardens of Xochimilco. *B*

Day 4 Villahermosa/ Palenque

Fly to Villahermosa and transfer overland to Palenque. Enjoy a swim amid lush jungle surrounds and relax in the afternoon. *B*

Day 5 Palenque

A half-day tour of the Maya ruins of Palenque, built on the fringe of the Chiapas jungle. *B*

Day 6 Palenque

This full-day tour visits the Maya sites of Yaxchilan and Bonampak located in the Lacandon jungle. *BL*

Day 7 Agua Azul/ San Cristobal

Drive to Agua Azul waterfalls in the morning and enjoy a refreshing swim. In the afternoon continue to San Cristobal and stay overnight. *B*

Day 8 San Cristobal

Visit the colourful market and the native villages of Chamula and Zinacantan. These living Maya communities still preserve ancient traditions. *B*

Day 9 San Cristobal

A full day to explore this beautiful city at your own pace. *B*

Day 10 San Cristobal/ Lake Atitlan

Transfer to La Mesilla, where you'll meet your Guatemalan driver. Continue to the shores of beautiful Lake Atitlan, surrounded by dramatic volcanic peaks. *B*

Day 11 Lake Atitlan

Tour famous Chichicastenango, one of the most colourful markets in Latin America (available Thu and Sun – ask our consultants about options for other days). *BL*

Day 12 Lake Atitlan

A day at leisure. Ask us about optional kayaking or hiking tours or simply relax in a hammock and enjoy the views. *B*



Palenque, Mexico

Day 13 Lake Atitlan/ Antigua

Transfer to the stunning colonial city of Antigua. Enjoy a walking tour of the city's most important sites, including the cathedral, National Palace and San Francisco Church. *B*

Day 14 Antigua

A day at leisure to relax or explore. Consider an easy hike up Pacaya Volcano or visit a local coffee cooperative. *B*

Day 15 Antigua/ Flores

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Flores. On arrival, transfer to your hotel before enjoying a sunset tour of Yaxha Ruins, set in lush jungle. *B*

Day 16 Flores

A full-day tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre Tikal National Park, where Maya temples rise above the jungle canopy. *BL*

Day 17 Flores/ San Ignacio

A private transfer across the border into Belize and your hotel in San Ignacio. *B*

Day 18 San Ignacio

Enjoy a private half-day tour of the largest archaeological site in Belize, Caracol. Visit the five main plazas, the astronomical observatory and the enormous pyramid of Caana, rising more than 40m above the rainforest floor. After a picnic lunch, return to your hotel, with a stop at the Rio Frio caves and pools for a refreshing dip. *BL*

Day 19 San Ignacio

Ask us about optional activities including hikes, horseriding, underground river boat tours and cave tubing. A visit to nearby Xunantunich Ruins is highly recommended. *B*

Day 20 San Ignacio/ Ambergris Caye

Transfer to Belize City where you'll take a water taxi to the stunning Ambergris Caye, your jumping-off point for the magnificent Belize Barrier Reef. Transfer to your hotel on arrival. *B*

Day 21 Ambergris Caye

This morning's snorkelling tour begins at Hol Chan Marine Reserve, the first marine reserve in Central America, to explore the coloured reefs. Continue to Shark Ray Alley, where you'll encounter friendly stingrays, inquisitive brown nurse sharks, turtles and an abundance of colourful reef fish, including snappers and jacks. *B*

Day 22 Ambergris Caye

A free day to dive, snorkel, explore the island or simply swing in a hammock and relax. *B*

Day 23 Belize City

After breakfast take the water taxi back to the mainland and transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- There is no better way to see Teotihuacan than from a hot air balloon at dawn. Ask your consultant for details.
- Discover the secrets of Mexican cuisine with a cooking class and market tour in Mexico City.
- Splash out with a special boutique stay on the stunning Lake Atitlan, surrounded by volcanoes and gorgeous scenery.
- Include an exhilarating hike up the active Pacaya Volcano just outside Antigua. Keep your eyes peeled for lava when you reach the top!
- Visit the coffee cooperative As Green as it Gets just outside Antigua to sample some excellent coffee and support a sustainable development initiative.
- For those passionate about diving, Belize is the place to do it. Speak to us about an excursion to the Great Blue Hole from Ambergris Caye – named one of the top ten dive sites in the world!
- Why not extend your trip and continue to Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, where you can enjoy some time relaxing on the beaches and visit Tulum and Chichen Itza.

Central American Explorer



WHY EXPLORER?

Central America is perfectly proportioned to combine several countries in a reasonably short trip.

On this sample itinerary through the southern half of the isthmus you'll experience a partial transit of the Panama Canal and explore the Panamanian highlands, see some of Costa Rica's famous wildlife as you hike through cloud forest and paddle the canals of Tortuguero, and enjoy some of Central America's finest colonial architecture in beautiful Granada, Nicaragua.

From the Pacific to the Caribbean coast, coffee-covered highlands, tropical archipelagos, cloud forest and jungle-covered volcanoes – with such a diversity of ecosystems and landscapes, this is a fabulous itinerary for nature-lovers!

Travel between November to May and enjoy sunny days and dry conditions. June to October is the 'green season' with lush foliage and abundant bird life more than making up for short bursts of rainfall.

Day 1 Panama City

Arrive in Panama City and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Panama City

After breakfast depart on a half-day walking tour exploring Panama City. Visit a local market where you can try sugarcane juice or fresh coconut before continuing to Casco Viejo and its beautiful colonial buildings. Visit the fish market where fishermen bring their daily catch. Later, take the bus to Old Panama, where the city was originally constructed before being sacked by pirates in 1671. *B*

Day 3 Panama City

Today's partial transit of the Panama Canal is sure to be a highlight! Experience one of the man-made wonders of the world as you sail from Gamboa to the Pacific Ocean, travelling through the Pedro Miguel and Miraflores Locks. Lunch is included on board. *BL*

Day 4 Panama City/ Boquete

Fly to David and transfer by road to the charming town of Boquete. The temperate climate makes this the perfect place for growing coffee – treat yourself to a local brew and enjoy the stunning scenery. *B*

Day 5 Boquete

Depart with your guide for a tour of one of the region's coffee plantations. Discover the process of growing, picking, drying and roasting delicious Panamanian coffee before enjoying a sample of different locally grown beans. *B*

Day 6 Boquete/ Bocas del Toro

Transfer to Almirante and board a shared service boat for the Bocas del Toro Archipelago. Spend the afternoon exploring

the laid-back town of Bocas on the main island of Isla Colon at your leisure. *B*

Day 7 Bocas del Toro

Enjoy a full-day tour of some of the archipelago's prettiest spots, including dolphin-spotting at Dolphin Bay, snorkelling at Coral Cay and some time to relax at Red Frog Beach. *B*

Day 8 Bocas del Toro/ Cahuita

Take the boat back to Almirante this morning and continue by private vehicle to the Costa Rican border. You'll meet your Costa Rican driver and continue along the coast to Cahuita. Afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 9 Cahuita

A day at leisure. We highly recommend a visit to Cahuita National Park, located at the southern end of town with easy-to-follow self-guided trails. The best time to visit is early morning when sightings of monkeys, sloths and other mammals are common. Ask at the park office if you want to enlist the help of a local guide. *B*

Day 10 Cahuita/ Tortuguero

Transfer to Guapiles this morning where a boat will be waiting to transport you to Tortuguero National Park. A two-hour boat ride through rainforest-fringed canals is a great start to your adventure – keep your eyes peeled for monkeys in the treetops and turtles basking on logs. *BLD*

Day 11 Tortuguero

Depending on local conditions your day may start with a canoe ride or a hike through the national park. From July to September, the nesting of sea turtles is a must-see event. *BLD*



Granada, Nicaragua

Day 12 Tortuguero/ Arenal

Transfer by boat back to Guapiles and have lunch in a local restaurant. Afterwards, take a shuttle transfer to La Fortuna village, dominated by the mighty Arenal Volcano. *BL*

Day 13 Arenal

A full-day tour starts with a visit to Arenal's Hanging Bridges for a walk through the rainforest canopy. Next, head to La Fortuna Waterfall for an inviting dip in the cool waters. Continue to Arenal Volcano for a hike to a lava lookout point. Finally, drive to Tabacon Hot Springs to soak in the natural pools and enjoy dinner in this beautiful setting. *BLD*

Day 14 Arenal

A day at leisure to relax and explore. Optional excursions include kayaking, birdwatching, horseriding and hiking. *B*

Day 15 Arenal/ Monteverde

Sail across Lake Arenal and continue up a steep mountain road, arriving into Monteverde in time for lunch. Enjoy a night tour of the region's famous cloud forest. *B*

Day 16 Monteverde

Today's half-day tour will take you above the canopy, travelling on the Sky Tram to one of the highest mountains in Costa Rica. Enjoy wonderful views of surrounding volcanoes all the way to the Gulf of Nicoya on clear days. From the top you can take the Sky Trek along a series of ziplines and cables, and visit five observation towers with sweeping views. A specialised canopy guide will be with you the whole way to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable tour. Alternative options are available for those who like to keep their feet on the ground. *B*

Day 17 Monteverde/ Ometepe Island

Depart Monteverde by private vehicle for the Nicaraguan border and continue to San Jorge. From here it's a short ferry ride to the twin volcanic island of Ometepe. *B*

Day 18 Ometepe Island

A full-day tour of Ometepe includes visits to Altigracia Church and Museum, Santo Domingo's beach petroglyphs and the verdant hiking trails of Charco Verde. Enjoy impressive views of Concepcion and Maderas Volcanoes as you make your way around this stunning island. *BL*

Day 19 Ometepe Island/ Granada

After breakfast, take the ferry back to the mainland and continue by private vehicle to one of the America's oldest and best-preserved colonial cities, Granada. *B*

Day 20 Granada

Explore Granada's charming colonial centre on this morning's walking tour, including the leafy Parque Central, San Francisco Convent and the pedestrianised Calle la Calzada. Afterwards, board a boat and explore Las Isletas, a group of around 365 tiny islands formed when Mombacho Volcano exploded more than 20,000 years ago. *B*

Day 21 Granada

A day at leisure to relax and continue exploring the city. Ask us about optional tours to visit Mombacho Volcano, just 10km from Granada and covered in dense cloud forest. *B*

Day 22 Granada/ Leon

Depart for Masaya Volcano, where you can peek over the edge of the crater and

see clouds of sulphurous gases. Continue to Masaya Craft Market, a fantastic place to purchase one of Nicaragua's famous handmade hammocks. After lunch, travel to Nicaragua's cultural capital, Leon. *BL*

Day 23 Leon

Explore the rich history of this important city. Climb to the top of Central America's largest cathedral and enjoy stunning views across the city. Visit San Francisco Convent and the indigenous neighbourhood of Sutiaba. Along the way you can see some striking political murals. *B*

Day 24 Managua

Transfer to the airport in Managua for your onward flight. *B*

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- Add a rustic and remote beach break with a side trip to the San Blas Islands.
- Stay in a divine over-water bungalow in beautiful Bocas del Toro.
- Coincide your trip with the sea turtles' nesting season for an unforgettable experience (Feb to Apr and Jul to Sep).
- Active option: ask us about adventure activities in Arenal and Monteverde.
- Indulge yourself with a stay in one of Nicaragua's luxury eco-resorts. See page 95 for luxury options throughout Central America.



When to Go?

The dry season in the Peruvian Highlands is from April to November, and the shoulder season including April, May, September and October is optimal for fair weather and fewer people.

The summer months of December to March are warmer but wetter, with the Inca Trail closed in February.

Inti Raymi celebrates the Sun God every 24 June in Cuzco. Early bookings are recommended for this important Inca festival.



Machu Picchu Citadel

Highlights

Machu Picchu remains Peru's most alluring destination; a magical mountain citadel shrouded in mystery and romance.

The **Sacred Valley of the Incas** contains some of Peru's most beautiful mountain scenery, fascinating cultural traditions and a wealth of Inca ruins.

Lake Titicaca, straddling the border with Bolivia, is the highest navigable lake in the world at 3,820m above sea level. Visit the famous Uros floating islands, or overnight with a homestay on Amantani or Taquile islands.

One of Peru's loveliest city's, **Arequipa** is surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes and the world's deepest canyons, which are home to the Andean condor.

The exotic **Peruvian Amazon** is easily accessible, with direct flights from Lima to Iquitos and Puerto Maldonado.

Our Expert's Choice

Hike through the forest to discover one of the world's highest single-drop waterfalls, the magnificent **Gocta Falls**.

The Royal Tombs of Sipan Museum in Chiclayo is a must for history buffs, with an unsurpassed collection of Moche artefacts.

Ride a cable car to the extraordinary ruins of **Kuelap**, constructed by the fierce Chachapoya civilisation.

Choquequirao is a fantastic trekking alternative to the Inca Trail with stunning scenery and a fraction of the visitors that Machu Picchu receives.

Experience the best of Peruvian cuisine in **Lima** – visit a local market, try a cooking class or indulge at one of the world's top restaurants.



Machu Picchu Citadel

LIMA CULINARY EXPERIENCE

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Lima

Welcome to Lima. Transfer to your hotel in Miraflores or Barranco. Celebrate your first night in Lima with a fantastic tasting tour. Start with a Pisco sour, enjoying views over the Pacific Ocean. Next, you'll help prepare a classic ceviche dish. Continue to Huaca Pucllana, where you'll enjoy a delicious dinner in front of one of the most important pre-Hispanic archaeological sites in Lima. Finish in Barranco for a traditional dessert. *D*

Day 2 Lima

Visit one of Lima's produce markets this morning to learn about the typical ingredients of Peruvian cuisine. Afterwards you'll have a cooking demonstration with a local chef before tucking into a delicious traditional lunch. *BL*

Day 3 Lima

Continue your exploration of Peruvian gastronomy on a cycling tour of Miraflores. Visit some of the district's most traditional cafes, markets and restaurants while sampling authentic dishes along the way. *BL*

Day 4 Lima

Day at leisure. Why not ask your consultant to make a reservation at one of Lima's fantastic restaurants, which frequently feature on 'World's Best' lists! *B*

Day 5 Lima

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or continue your culinary adventures in Cuzco. *B*

CLASSIC MACHU PICCHU

Sample Itinerary

Our classic seven-night itinerary starts in the Sacred Valley, where you can better acclimatise before reaching the higher altitude of Cuzco. Accommodation ranges from three-star guesthouses to the luxurious Belmond properties and everything in between.

Day 1 Cuzco/ Sacred Valley

Arrive at Cuzco Airport and transfer to your accommodation in the Sacred Valley (2,700m above sea level) where you can begin acclimatising to the altitude.

Day 2 Sacred Valley

A full-day tour exploring the ruins of Pisac and the famous fortress and town of Ollantaytambo. *BL*

Day 3 Sacred Valley

Day at leisure. Touring options include the village of Chinchero, the archaeological site of Moray and the salt terraces of Maras, or spend a truly memorable afternoon with a remote Andean community getting involved with one of our community projects. *B*

Day 4 Sacred Valley/ Machu Picchu

Travel by Vistadome train to Machu Picchu for a guided tour of the iconic Citadel and enjoy a buffet lunch at nearby Sanctuary Lodge. Stay overnight in Aguas Calientes. *BLD*

Day 5 Machu Picchu/ Cuzco

Enjoy a second, unguided visit to Machu Picchu. Book early to secure an entry to climb Huayna Picchu or Machu Picchu Mountain for stunning views. Travel to Cuzco by train in the afternoon. *B*

Day 6 Cuzco

A half-day city tour of the main sights of Cuzco includes the Plaza de Armas, cathedral, Koricancha Temple, and handcraft workshops. Continue the day with a visit to the nearby ruins of Sacsayhuaman. *B*

Day 7 Cuzco

A day at leisure to continue exploring beautiful Cuzco at your own pace. *B*

Day 8 Cuzco

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or ask us about continuing overland to Lake Titicaca. *B*

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- Upgrade to the luxurious Belmond Hiram Bingham train.
- Hike the final section of the Inca Trail arriving through the Sun Gate to Machu Picchu.
- Indulge in cooking classes or chocolate-making tours in Cuzco.
- Coincide your stay with Inti Raymi (24 June) to experience the colour and excitement of one of South America's biggest festivals.
- Extend your stay – see pages 24 and 25 for more immersive itineraries and treks.



Rail journeys of Peru



BELMOND HIRAM BINGHAM

Cuzco – Machu Picchu

The most luxurious way to travel to Machu Picchu, the exclusive Hiram Bingham is modelled on the Pullman cars of the 1920s and features an elegant dining car and open-air observatory from which to enjoy the stunning scenery. Sip on a traditional Peruvian cocktail and enjoy live local music as the train winds through the Urubamba Valley. *Schedule and departure times vary according to season.*



BELMOND ANDEAN EXPLORER

Cuzco – Puno – Arequipa

South America's first overnight sleeper train accommodates 68 guests in refined ensuite cabins. The Belmond Andean Explorer journeys between the fascinating cities of Cuzco and Arequipa via Puno on Lake Titicaca. Travel over one of the highest train routes in the world while discovering the natural wonders and ancient kingdoms of Peru over one or two nights. Enjoy seasonal cuisine in the elegant dining cars and watch the landscape unfold from the open-deck observation car.



PERURAIL VISTADOME

Cuzco – Sacred Valley – Machu Picchu

With panoramic windows offering scenic views, comfortable seating and onboard services including live dances, snacks and drinks, the Vistadome is a great way to start your trip to Machu Picchu. PeruRail offers several services per day, allowing you greater flexibility to tailor your Machu Picchu experience. *Schedule and departure times vary according to season.*



PERURAIL TITICACA TRAIN

Cuzco – Puno

Featuring an open-air observatory car, this iconic ten-hour journey takes you through some of the most spectacular landscapes in South America. Enjoy panoramic views of the Andean mountains, the high plateau dotted with llama and alpaca, and highland villages. Once aboard, you'll be served a delicious lunch in the two elegant dining cars while enjoying the typical music and dances. The train departs Cuzco Wednesday, Friday and Sunday and returns from Puno on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.



Colca Canyon

NAZCA, ICA & BALLESTAS ISLANDS

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Lima/ Paracas

Transfer to the bus terminal for the coastal service to Pisco. From here you'll be taken to the airport for a flight over the incredible Nazca Lines; a truly remarkable feat of human engineering. Continue to your hotel in Paracas after the tour. *L*

Day 2 Paracas/ Ica

Enjoy a morning boat tour of the Ballestas Islands, home to penguins, sea lions, fur seals and blue-footed boobies. Following your transfer to Ica, experience an afternoon tour of the extraordinary desert oasis of Huacachina and a dune buggy ride across the sand dunes. Overnight in Ica. *B*

Day 3 Ica

This morning you'll head off along the famous Pisco Route for a tasting of this traditional Peruvian spirit, followed by lunch at the stunning Viñas Queirolo Winery. Afternoon at leisure. *BL*

Day 4 Ica/ Lima

Transfer to the bus terminal for the service back to Lima. *B*

LAKE TITICACA & COLCA CANYON

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Arequipa

Arrive in Arequipa, known as the White City for the pale volcanic stone used to construct the main buildings. Transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Arequipa

Explore the beautiful historic centre on today's walking tour, finishing at the photogenic Santa Catalina Convent, with its quiet courtyards and cloisters. *B*

Day 3 Arequipa/ Colca Canyon

Travel through the Salinas y Aguada Blanca National Reserve to the Colca Canyon and view its dramatic valleys and Andean terraces. Overnight at your selected lodge. *BLD*

Day 4 Colca Canyon/ Puno

Depart to Condor Cross to watch the majestic Andean condor rise with thermal currents. After lunch take the bus to Puno. Transfer to your hotel on arrival. *BL*

Day 5 Puno/ Isla Suasi

Depart by boat this morning to visit the unique floating islands of Uros, and the quieter and more authentic Taquile Island. Continue to the private island of Suasi, where you can relax and admire the stunning views over Lake Titicaca. *BLD*

Day 6 Isla Suasi/ Puno

A morning at leisure. Take the afternoon boat back to Puno and stay overnight. *B*

Day 7 Puno

Depart Puno and transfer overland to Cuzco or La Paz, or fly from Juliaca. *B*

THE TITILAKA EXPERIENCE



Located on its own private peninsula, the Relais & Châteaux luxury experience Titilaka Lodge offers a taste of the lake dwellers' traditions and way of life. The 18 rooms, each with a splendid lake view, are decorated in a contemporary style with touches of local heritage, in symbiosis with the luxuriant natural setting.

Responsible, sustainable development is at the heart of Titilaka's philosophy; more than 90% of staff are locals and the property sources food locally as much as possible, while its business model focuses on conserving Andean traditions. Activities range from exploring Inca and pre-Inca ruins to visiting the floating reed islands of the Uros people to leisurely hiking or biking through stunning Andean scenery.



Kuelap Ruins, Chachapoyas

THE MOCHE ROUTE

Sample Itinerary

The Moche and Chimú civilisations created their own unique cities, artwork and culture which rivals that of the Inca Empire. The Northern Kingdoms are a must for history buffs – continue to Chachapoyas for a more in-depth understanding of Peru's ancient cultures.

Day 1 Chiclayo

Arrive in Chiclayo and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Chiclayo

Enjoy a full-day tour visiting the Lord of Sipán archaeological site and the wonderful Royal Tombs Museum. The discovery of this tomb astonished the archaeological community as it was one of the few never to have been raided. After visiting the museum, enjoy lunch and then visit the Tucume Valley of the Pyramids. *BL*

Day 3 Chiclayo/ Trujillo

Transfer to Trujillo, with a stop at the El Brujo archaeological site en route. This afternoon you'll visit the Huacas del Sol y la Luna and the Huacas de Moche Museum. *B*

Day 4 Trujillo

After a half-day tour of the impressive Chan Chan Ruins, the largest adobe citadel in the Americas, drive to nearby Huanchaco for lunch by the Pacific Ocean. *BL*

Day 5 Trujillo

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*

CHACHAPOYAS: WARRIORS OF THE CLOUDS

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Jaen/ Chachapoyas

Fly from Lima to Jaen and transfer by road to Chachapoyas. This four-hour journey will transport you through pristine rainforest into the Upper Amazon Basin. Stay overnight in Chachapoyas.

Day 2 Chachapoyas

Hike through the forest with your guide to discover one of the world's highest single-drop waterfalls, the magnificent Gocta Falls. Spend some time enjoying the refreshing mist of the falls and keep your eyes peeled for hummingbirds, toucanets, or maybe even a troop of capuchin monkeys. *BL*

Day 3 Chachapoyas

Today you will visit the extraordinary ruins of Kuelap, constructed by the fierce Chachapoya tribe. These 'Warriors of the Clouds' fought for many years against the expansion of the Inca Empire. The fort is located at the top of a mountain and can be reached via an impressive 4km cable car, which also affords fabulous views of the surrounding countryside. *BL*

Day 4 Chachapoyas

A day at leisure to relax or deepen your knowledge of the Chachapoya people with a visit to the Karajia sarcophagi or the Revash tombs and nearby museum. *B*

Day 5 Chachapoyas

Transfer to Jaen or Tarapoto Airport for your onward flight; or consider travelling overland through Cajamarca to the Pacific Coast. *B*

A TWITCHER'S PARADISE



Birdwatching enthusiasts should look no further than the incredibly diverse region of Northern Peru, home to more than 1,600 species of birds. The famous Northern Peru Birding Route stretches from the Pacific Coast to the Amazon Basin and traverses a multitude of stunning landscapes, including desert, mountains and forests. Avid and amateur birdwatchers alike will be astonished by the diversity of fauna and flora, with many endemic species found in the region. Search for the elusive Andean cock-of-the-rock (above) with your expert local guide, while enjoying spectacular scenery and some of South America's most fascinating archaeological sites.



Machu Picchu Citadel

Trekking to Machu Picchu is a dream for many travellers – but there's more than one way to get there.

Whether you're looking for the ultimate trekking challenge or an easy amble, rugged camping expeditions or luxury lodges, we've got the hike for you. Looking for an off-the-beaten-track alternative? Talk to your travel consultant about treks to Choquequirao, or the Cordillera Blanca in Peru's north.

CLASSIC INCA TRAIL

Classification: Moderate
Maximum elevation: 4,200m
Total distance: 42km

This is one of the world's most iconic treks and a classic bucket-list item for many travellers: a four-day adventure that takes you through some of Peru's most captivating scenery to arrive at the mountain citadel of Machu Picchu.

Strictly limited to 500 people per day (including guides and porters), it's essential that you plan and book well in advance, particularly during the peak season of June to September. Campsites are simple but comfortable with thermarest mattresses and cosy sleeping bags to keep out the mountain chill.

The trek is moderate to challenging, with a lot of steep uphill and downhill sections and uneven steps. The highest point of the trek is Warmiwañusca Pass at 4,200m, which you will reach on the second day. The most difficult day is generally considered to be day three, when you will cover 16km and hike over two high passes.

Deluxe trekking options with camping cot, hot showers and daily massage are available.

INCA TRAIL EXPRESS

Classification: Easy to Moderate
Maximum elevation: 2,650m
Total distance: 12km

If you lack the time (or the stamina) for the Classic Inca Trail, the Inca Trail Express is a great compromise. Travel by train to Km 104 where you disembark with your guide and visit the ruins of Chachabamba before beginning the three-hour ascent to Wiñay Wayna, an important spiritual site for the Inca.

From here, the hike takes you across the ridge above Machu Picchu and then down to the famous Intipunku (Sun Gate), where you will have the incomparable experience of seeing Machu Picchu laid out before you. Take some time to soak up this classic vista before heading down to Aguas Calientes to overnight. Return to Machu Picchu in the morning, fully refreshed and ready for a guided tour of the ruins.

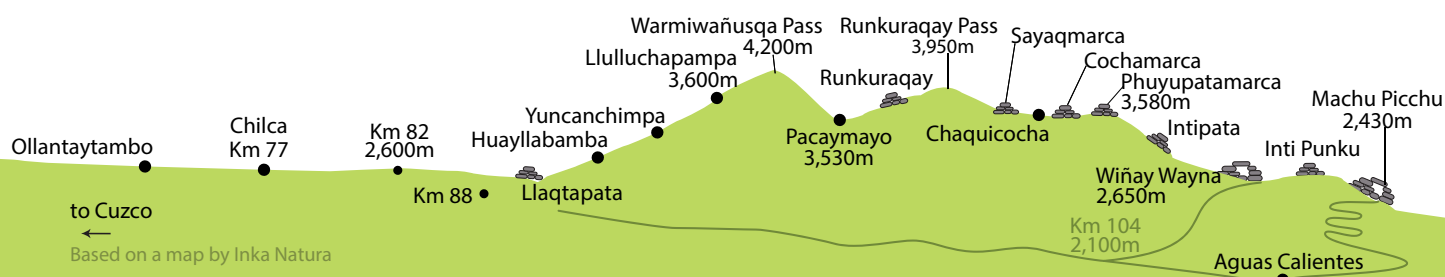
An additional 200 permits per day are issued for the Inca Trail Express, so this is a good alternative if you have missed out on the four-day option.

SALKANTAY TREK

Classification: Challenging
Maximum elevation: 4,640m
Total distance: 74km

Salkantay is a challenging trek suited to more experienced hikers due to the distance and the elevation reached. As one of the lesser-known treks, it attracts fewer crowds than the Inca Trail, increasing your chances of seeing wildlife and experiencing the vast Andean landscape in solitude. You will trek from 3,900m to 2,100m across magnificent mountain passes, observing towering snow-capped peaks and traversing more than 15 different ecosystems.

For those who wish to combine adventure and comfort, there are some fabulous accommodation options along the Salkantay route. A six-night lodge-to-lodge program allows you to unwind each evening in a beautifully appointed mountain lodge, offering hot showers, fine gourmet meals, massages and outdoor jacuzzis. The newly opened Peru Ecocamp boasts ecologically sustainable domes equipped with private bathrooms and wood-burning stoves. Meals are served in the cosy dining dome with the focus on typical Andean food prepared using local, fresh and organic ingredients.





SACRED VALLEY & LARES ADVENTURE TO MACHU PICCHU

5 Days/ 4 Nights

Choose your own adventure on this truly immersive journey through the living culture and magnificent landscape of the Sacred Valley. Expert guides will tailor your individual experience with a choice of adventure activities and cultural encounters. Seven-day itineraries are also available for more in-depth explorations.

Day 1 Sacred Valley of the Incas

Early morning departure from Cuzco. Option to visit to the celebrated market at Pisac or take a moderate hike in the hills and mountains over the Sacred Valley. Later, enjoy exclusive access to the isolated community of Viacha, where you will learn about its unique farming practices. After lunch, enjoy an afternoon excursion to the archaeological complex at Pisac, with the sun setting behind the peaks (2,958m). *LD*

Day 2 Lares Region

A road journey into the mountains will take you through remote archaeological sites. After lunch, choose between visiting a traditional weavers' village or a scenic drive and hike amid turquoise blue lakes and towering peaks to the remote village of Huacahuasi (3,835m). *BLD*

Day 3 Sacred Valley of the Incas

Take a scenic drive to the community of Huilloc to visit a trout farm and enjoy a ceviche cooking lesson. Afterwards, tour the Maracocha Ruins with local sheep herders and participate in a traditional Andean ceremony before driving to Pumamarca Ruins. A more active option is a three-hour

hike from Huilloc to Pumamarca Ruins. After lunch in the countryside, you may choose to hike or drive from Pumamarca to Ollantaytambo (2,830m). *BLD*

Day 4 Sacred Valley of the Incas

A short early-morning hike to Inca storage structures high above Ollantaytambo reveals magnificent views of the town and the fortress. Enjoy a guided tour of the fortress; one of the best examples of Inca architecture. At midday, embark on a scenic train ride along the Urubamba River Valley to Aguas Calientes, a bustling town below the Machu Picchu Sanctuary (1,900m). *BLD*

Day 5 Machu Picchu

Begin your visit to Machu Picchu with a bus ride up the mountain at dawn. As you enter the sanctuary, the morning sun rises over the iconic Sun Gate and washes the structures and terraces with light. Learn about the history of Machu Picchu and its mysterious origins during a guided tour. The day also offers an optional uphill hike on Huayna Picchu. After lunch in Aguas Calientes, return to Cuzco by train and private coach (3,400m). *BL*

MOUNTAIN LODGES OF PERU



The four beautifully appointed mountain lodges used for this trek serve as a luxurious reward at the end of each day, offering all the comforts of home and top-notch service.

These intimate six-room lodges are the perfect places to unwind with hot showers, goose-down bedding, massages and highly personalised service from local staff. Enjoy gourmet cuisine with traditional recipes and a focus on locally sourced ingredients. After dinner, relax by the firepit or in an outdoor hot tub under the star-studded Andean skies.

Amazon Cruises



M/V DELFIN I, II & III

The first cruise company to join Relais & Châteaux's iconic portfolio, the Delfin fleet of three vessels offers three- and four-night itineraries departing from Iquitos and exploring the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve. Delfin I sleeps just eight passengers in four suites, all with private terraces and two with private whirlpool baths. Excursions are with a maximum of eight guests per guide. Delfin II sleeps 28 guests, with ten suites and four master suites with enormous panoramic windows. Excursions are with a maximum of ten guests per guide. The newest addition to the fleet, the Delfin III, sleeps 42 passengers and features a more contemporary design. Excursions are with a maximum of 15 guests per guide.



R&F AMAZONAS

Built in 2016, this first-class river cruise can accommodate 26 passengers in spacious suites with panoramic windows. Common areas include a lounge bar, dining room on the upper deck with stunning views, a jacuzzi and an observation deck. Three-, four- and six-night itineraries offer guests the chance to interact with local communities, visit the Monkey Island rescue centre and enjoy the sights and sounds of the rainforest both on foot and by skiff with expert bilingual guides.



ARIA AMAZON CRUISE

Refurbished in 2015, the 45m Aria Amazon offers superb accommodation for 32 guests, plus an outdoor jacuzzi and exercise room. Sixteen oversized designer suites feature sitting areas and generous outward-facing picture windows with panoramic river views. Ensuite bathrooms come equipped with eco-friendly organic products. Enjoy delicious and innovative Amazon-influenced cuisine on board, with much of the produce sourced from the river and surrounding rainforest. Activities have been expanded to include cycling, kayaking, swimming, fishing and more. Passengers can enjoy a more diverse, multidimensional experience with a maximum of just eight guests per guide.



LA PERLA

Expedition cruise vessel La Perla operates four- and seven-day itineraries to Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, allowing you to explore deep into the heart of the rainforest. Exciting activities include piranha fishing, swimming with pink river dolphins, visits to local communities and encounters with Amazonian manatees. Between excursions you can relax in the social areas including an observation deck with sunbeds and hammocks, and a choice of interior and exterior lounges. With capacity for 32 guests, cabins are air-conditioned and have private facilities.



Amazon Lodges



REFUGIO AMAZONAS

Puerto Maldonado
Recommended 3-Night packages

Refugio Amazonas is set deep in the Amazon Rainforest, a four-hour journey upriver from Puerto Maldonado. This rustic but comfortable 32-room lodge offers attractions such as macaw clay licks, guided forest walks and the impressive 30m canopy tower. For shorter stays, we suggest Posada Amazonas as an alternative – two hours from Puerto Maldonado and a more accessible option.



RESERVA AMAZONICA

Puerto Maldonado
2 & 3-Night packages

The lodge is just 45 minutes from Puerto Maldonado and offers the best tourist infrastructure in the region, combining comfort with adventure. Choose from a range of daily a la carte excursions exploring the surrounding private ecological reserve. The lodge offers family, romantic and high-end packages, including the Inkaterra Canopy Treehouse on the Madre de Dios River.



HACIENDA CONCEPCION

Puerto Maldonado
2 & 3-Night packages

Owned by Inkaterra, the Hacienda sits on the shores of a private lake and is just 20 minutes downriver from Puerto Maldonado. Guests can enjoy Hacienda Concepcion's rustic chic design, private facilities with hot water, and a varied menu. A wide range of land and river excursions for all ages and abilities is offered.



MUYUNA LODGE

Iquitos
Recommended 3-Night packages

Located 140km upriver from Iquitos, Muyuna is one of the best-located Peruvian Amazon lodges for wildlife experiences. Guests rave about encounters with pink river dolphins, sloths, monkeys and caimans. Simple rooms are fully screened and each has a private balcony with hammock. There is no electricity at the lodge, but a generator is available to charge electronic devices. With direct flights between Iquitos and Cuzco, Muyuna is now closer than ever!



MANU WILDLIFE CENTRE & TENTED CAMP

Puerto Maldonado
Recommended minimum 4 Nights

For the truly adventurous, a trip to the remote Manu Wildlife Centre offers one of the most intense Amazon experiences in Peru. The overland Bio Trip, travelling from Cuzco to Manu, is a wonderful way to experience Peru's diverse ecosystems. Delve deeper into the forest and spend a few nights at the Manu Tented Camp for the ultimate jungle trip!



TAMBOPATA RESEARCH CENTRE

Puerto Maldonado
Minimum 4 Nights

The most remote lodge in Tambopata National Reserve is perfect for in-depth explorations of Amazonian nature and wildlife. Bedrooms open out onto the surrounding rainforest, with wild animals, including monkeys, often visible from the lodge. After a 2018 renovation, all 24 rooms now have private facilities with hot water, while deluxe suites include an outdoor tub and shower. One quarter of guests to the lodge have been lucky enough to sight jaguars.



When to Go?

The dry season runs from April to October.

Travel during the wet season when the Uyuni Salt Flats become the largest natural mirror in the world, creating stunning optical illusions.

Highlights

Explore the dizzying heights of **La Paz**, one of South America's most fascinating cities.

Visit **Sun Island**, steeped in Inca myths and legends, for stunning views of Lake Titicaca and the Cordillera de los Andes.

Visit the southwestern corner of Bolivia and experience the surreal landscape of the **Uyuni Salt Flats**.

Our Expert's Choice

Take a city tour of La Paz with a local shoeshine for an authentic experience that helps support these young workers.

Discover the incredible diversity of Madidi National Park with a stay at community-owned **Chalalan Ec lodge**.

Explore the pretty whitewashed colonial centre of **Sucre** and visit nearby Tarabuco market.

A TASTE OF LA PAZ

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 La Paz

Arrive in La Paz and transfer to your hotel. Take it easy as you adjust to the altitude in this literally breathtaking city (3,640m).

Day 2 La Paz

Enjoy a half-day tour visiting the colonial centre of La Paz and the exotic stalls of the Witches' Market. Continue to the Valley of the Moon to see the otherworldly rock formations shaped by erosion. Later this afternoon, ride a cable car for unforgettable views over the city. *B*

Day 3 La Paz

Today's tour will take you across the Altiplano to the ancient city of Tiwanaku, one of South America's largest archaeological sites. Estimated to have peaked between 500 and 1000 CE, the city once supported around 10,000 inhabitants. *BL*

Day 4 La Paz

Enjoy a day of stunning contrasts on a full-day tour to Las Yungas. Travel to the high pass at La Cumbre (4,496m) before descending to the tropical lowlands and visiting the pretty town of Coroico. The town is just 96km from La Paz but feels like a world away. After lunch, return to La Paz. *BL*

Day 5 La Paz

Depart La Paz this morning. Visit Lake Titicaca on your way to Peru or travel south to the spectacular Uyuni Salt Flats. *B*

COLONIAL HEARTLAND

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Sucre

Arrive in Sucre, located at just 2,800m and with an agreeable springtime climate. Take an afternoon tour of the city, with its picturesque whitewashed colonial buildings and finish with a trip to Recoleta for views over the city and surrounding valleys.

Day 2 Sucre

A half-day tour to the incredible Dinosaur Park just outside the city is a rare chance to see 65 million-year-old dinosaur footprints preserved in stone. For market-lovers, ensure you are in Sucre on a Sunday and we'll arrange a visit to the traditional Tarabuco markets. *B*

Day 3 Sucre/ Potosi

After breakfast, transfer by road to Potosi: a spectacular trip that takes you from Sucre to the staggering heights of one of the world's highest cities at 4,090m. Take an afternoon city tour exploring what was once the richest city of the New World. *B*

Day 4 Potosi

A day at leisure. An optional visit to the Cerro Rico Mine is worthwhile but is not for everyone due to the cramped and claustrophobic nature of the excursion. Discuss whether this is right for you with your consultant. *B*

Day 5 Potosi

We recommend continuing your exploration of Bolivia with an overland transfer to Uyuni, gateway to the country's incredible southwest. *B*

UYUNI SALT FLATS

Sample Itinerary

The southwestern corner of Bolivia contains unforgettable and truly unique landscapes. Private overland trips can be designed to finish in the Chilean city of San Pedro de Atacama, or in Salta, Argentina.

Day 1 Uyuni/ Tahua

Depart Uyuni by 4WD on one of the most surreal and breathtaking overland trips in South America. See how locals traditionally extract the salt during a visit to the Colchani salt mine before you travel onto Tahua and overnight in a hotel constructed entirely from salt. *LD*

Day 2 Tahua/ Villamar

Drive to Isla Incahuasi, famous for the enormous cacti growing on the island and its stunning 360-degree views of the salt plains. Continue across the Altiplano to Alota and Villamar. *BLD*

Day 3 Villamar/ San Pedro de Atacama

Today's highlights include a visit to Laguna Colorada with a population of pink flamingos, and the Geysers Sol de Mañana around the rim of Laguna Chalviri with natural hot springs. Continue through Las Pampas de Dali and on to Laguna Verde, located at the base of the Licancabur Volcano. From here you cross the border into Chile and continue to San Pedro de Atacama. *BL*



JESUIT RUINS



The UNESCO World Heritage-listed Jesuit Missions Circuit of Eastern Bolivia is one of the country's most surprising secrets with baroque architecture, stunning churches and a distinctive artistic legacy, all tucked away in Bolivia's remote eastern province. The seven towns which make up the circuit offer visitors a unique synthesis of Jesuit and native Chiquitano culture. Located around 20km from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the complete circuit can be visited in four days, but shorter routes are also available.

CRADLE OF THE INCA EMPIRE

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Puno/ Sun Island

Depart Puno (Peru) by road for the Bolivian town of Copacabana. Visit the famous church and Virgin of Copacabana, the patron saint of Bolivia. Take a motorboat to Sun Island, cradle of the Inca creation myth. At Huacani, enjoy a traditional aptapi lunch then continue to Pilkokaina Inca Temple. From here it's a gentle one-hour walk to the Ecologue La Estancia where you'll stay overnight. *LD*

Day 2 Sun Island

Don't miss a spectacular sunrise over Lake Titicaca. After breakfast, hike down through Yumani, visiting the Inca Stairs and the Water of Eternal Youth. From Yumani, travel by boat to the north of the island to visit La Chincana Ruins and the Sacred Rock. A short hike will bring you to the pretty village of Challapampa. From here you can either hike or take the boat back to the lodge. *BLD*

Day 3 Sun Island/ La Paz

Hike back down to Yumani in the morning and travel by the boat to the Island of the Moon to visit the Iñak Uyu Inca temple. Continue by boat to Copacabana and then by road to La Paz, or return to Puno. *BL*

Ask us about alternative accommodation options for Sun Island, including cosy catamarans with lake view cabins.

CHALALAN ECOLOGE

Sample Itinerary

Located in Madidi National Park, Chalalan is owned and run by the indigenous community of San José de Uchupiamonas. With just 15 rustic cabins, a stay at Chalalan is an intimate experience and recommended for more adventurous travellers due to the remoteness of the lodge.

Day 1 La Paz/ Chalalan Ecologue

Fly to Rurrenabaque, on the shores of the Beni River. From here, take a long boat five to six hours upriver to Chalalan. A 30-minute walk through the forest brings you to the lodge. After lunch, head out along the Chichilo and Mirador trails for your first chance to spot wildlife. After dinner take a night hike to see nocturnal creatures. *LD*

Day 2 Chalalan Ecologue

Take a guided hike along the Silbador and Anta trails to see medicinal and exotic plants. Return for lunch and time to swim in the lagoon. Enjoy some birdwatching on an afternoon trek along the Wichi and Jaguar trails. After dinner community members share local histories, myths and legends. *BLD*

Day 3 Chalalan Ecologue

There are good opportunities to spot wildlife this morning as you trek the Wabucuru and Marimono trails. After lunch take a short walk along the Paraba path for views across Lake Chalalan, the mountains and the Madidi rainforest. *BLD*

Day 4 Chalalan/ La Paz

Take the three-hour boat ride back to Rurrenabaque for your flight to La Paz. *B*





When to Go?

April to November is the dry season in Ecuador's highlands and the best time for travelling along the Avenue of the Volcanoes.

The Galapagos Islands can be visited all year round. December to June is warm and humid, while July to November is cooler with fresher winds.

The driest period in Ecuador's Amazon begins in December and ends around February. The wettest months tend to be May and June, but rainfall is common throughout the year.

Highlights

Quito was the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in Latin America and boasts a stunning colonial centre, fascinating museums and is just a short drive from the famous Middle of the World Monument.

One of the most remarkable destinations in the world, the **Galapagos Islands** are a must for wildlife enthusiasts. Choose from stunning luxury lodges, safari-style camps or laid-back island-hopping itineraries, as well as a diverse range of cruises to suit every budget.

The **Amazon** basin is just a 30-minute flight from the capital; leave Quito in the morning, and you can be swinging in a hammock at your chosen lodge by lunchtime.

Our Expert's Choice

Experience the wonders and diversity of Ecuador aboard the sensational **Tren Crucero** as you travel between the highlands and the lush coastal region.

Ecuador has a wealth of historic haciendas which have been converted into beautiful hotels – the ultimate way to experience the country's sublime landscapes in style.

Enjoy the laid-back small-town atmosphere of UNESCO World Heritage-listed **Cuenca**, with cobblestone streets, graceful balconies and religious art treasures.



CLASSIC ECUADOR

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Quito

On arrival transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Quito

Discover Quito's beautiful colonial centre on this morning's half-day tour. Visit Plaza de la Independencia and San Francisco Convent before heading to Panecillo Hill for great views over the city. Afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 3 Quito/ Otavalo

Travel to Otavalo to visit the famous indigenous markets. After some time to browse, you'll enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before continuing to the beautiful crater lake of Cuicocha. Have dinner and overnight in a traditional hacienda. *BLD*

Day 4 Otavalo/ Papallacta

Enjoy a scenic drive to Termas de Papallacta, where you overnight. After dinner, relax in the hot springs as you gaze up at the Andean sky. *BLD*

Day 5 Papallacta/ Cotopaxi

Drive to Cotopaxi National Park and see the world's highest active volcano (5,897m). Lunch is included at Tambopaxi. Stay overnight at Hacienda La Cienaga. *BLD*

Day 6 Cotopaxi/ Patate

Visit a colourful local market before continuing to Patate. Overnight at Hacienda Leito, with stunning views of Tungurahua Volcano. *BLD*

Day 7 Patate/ Baños/ Riobamba

This morning travel to Baños and explore the famous Route of the Waterfalls. Lunch near the fantastic Pailon del Diablo Waterfall. Continue to Riobamba and stay overnight. *BLD*

Day 8 Riobamba/ Cuenca

Enjoy a train ride along the iconic Devil's Nose, one of the continent's most impressive rail journeys. This zigzag section of railroad climbs more than 500m in less than 12.5km with steep ascents and descents and is a remarkable piece of engineering. Continue by car to Cuenca, visiting the Ingapirca Ruins en route. *BLD*

Day 9 Cuenca/ Guayaquil

A morning tour of Cuenca's colonial city centre, including the cathedral and flower market. After lunch, continue to Guayaquil with a short city tour on arrival. *BL*

Day 10 Guayaquil

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*

MASHPI LODGE



Located just three hours from Quito, Mashpi Lodge is one of South America's most breathtaking properties, designed to completely immerse you in the world of the surrounding cloud forest. The lodge's 22 guest rooms are simple, stylish and spacious, with panoramic windows which open to the sound of the rainforest.

The drive from the capital will take you from 2,800m to 1,000m above sea level as you journey through Ecuador's incredible biodiversity. During your stay at the lodge, expert naturalist guides will share this magical world with you through guided walks, early-morning birdwatching expeditions and forays to pristine waterfalls. Take a night hike through the forest, marvel at the 19 different species of hummingbirds found right at the lodge's own garden or indulge in a personalised spa treatment at the Samay Wellness Centre. The award-winning Mashpi is one of National Geographic's Unique Lodges of the World.



TREN CRUCERO

4 Days/ 3 Nights

Experience the wonders of Ecuador on board Tren Crucero, recognised as the Leading Luxury Train in South America for five consecutive years. Lovingly restored antique steam locomotives pull a convoy of two luxury Colonial and Republican-style themed passenger cars carrying a maximum of 50 passengers, to ensure personalised service for all.

Day 1 Quito/ Ibarra

Depart Quito early this morning and drive one and a half hours north to Otavalo, where a carefully restored steam engine awaits you. Discover the many wonders hidden in this part of the country: musicians, painters, weavers and the skilful woodcarvers who keep the renowned Quito School style alive. After a traditional Andean lunch and visit to a rose plantation, return to Quito. *LD*

Day 2 Quito/ Riobamba

Board the train at Chimbacalle Station and begin your journey south along the Avenue of Volcanoes. If the weather permits, you can spot up to 20 volcanoes from the train – most have been extinct or dormant for centuries. The vegetation and landscape changes as the train slowly climbs the Andean highlands to Urbina; the highest point in the itinerary at 3,500m above sea level. In the skirts of Mount Chimborazo you can meet the last ice merchant and learn the story of his ancestral trade. *BLD*

Day 3 Riobamba/ Devil's Nose/ Bucay

Depart Riobamba towards Colta, crossing colourful quinoa fields swathed in purples, yellows and reds, alternating with endemic species of flora and wildlife, indigenous settlements and the remains of ancient cultures. Visit the traditional Guamote Market, before continuing south towards the famous Devil's Nose pass. Descend 450m along switchbacks from the Andean highlands to the coastal plains. Continue along the narrow Chanchan River gorge and journey through lush cloud forest to reach Bucay. *BLD*

Day 4 Bucay/ Guayaquil

The landscape changes again as the train leaves the tropical forest behind, revealing rice, sugar cane, pineapple and banana plantations. Have lunch at a traditional hacienda, where you can learn how the best cocoa beans in the world are grown and harvested. Later, the steam engine winds its way across the fields towards the shores of the Pacific Ocean and the end of your trip in Guayaquil. *BL*

HACIENDAS OF ECUADOR



Discover Ecuador's colonial past through a visit to an historic hacienda. These glorious, grandiose homesteads are the perfect way to experience Ecuador's sublime landscapes in comfort, whether you stop for lunch or indulge in a longer stay.

Around two hours north of Quito, the 17th-century Hacienda Zuleta features beautiful antique rooms, delicious home-grown Andean cuisine and a wealth of activities to choose from. Particularly noteworthy are its conservation programs for the endangered Andean condor and spectacled bear.

Another highly recommended option is Hacienda La Danesa, located around 90 minutes from Guayaquil. The family-owned six-bedroom farmhouse is the epitome of discrete luxury, with farm-to-table cuisine, cooking classes and cacao experiences to complement their more active excursion options. Ask your travel consultant for more options.

by Jeffrey Cremer

Amazon Cruises



ANAKONDA AMAZON CRUISE

M/V Anakonda accommodates 40 guests in 18 ample suites, allowing guests from all over the world to explore the remote ecosystems of the Ecuadorian Amazon while enjoying the comforts, amenities and services of a deluxe boutique river hotel. Common areas include a dining room, bar, observation deck with jacuzzi, and the al fresco lounge.

Discover Yasuni National Park, a wild and untamed realm in the heart of the Ecuadorian rainforest. Climb observation towers to enjoy unique perspectives of the forest and explore black water rivers escorted by otters and turtles. Hike trails while learning about the wonderful flora that creates the eternal green of Ecuadorian Amazonia. The Anakonda offers kayaks, hammocks, optional glamorous camping or 'glamping', naturalist tour leaders, and a travel concierge who will go out of his way to personalise your experience.



MANATEE AMAZON EXPLORER

Completely refurbished in 2017, the M/V Manatee now offers a more luxurious experience for up to 30 guests at a time, accommodated in ten air-conditioned cabins and four suites.

Seven-night itineraries explore magical flooded forests at the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, the Yasuni National Park's natural wilderness, and Limoncocha Lagoon's peaceful waters. Activities include the canopy observation tower, Butterfly House and optional glamorous camping or 'glamping'!

Journey down freshwater rivers and encounter different Amazonian ecosystems, including the possibility to observe fascinating animals such as pink river dolphins, manatees, caimans and piranhas, as well as hundreds of native bird and primate species.



Amazon Lodges



NAPO WILDLIFE CENTRE

Rio Napo, Coca

A leader in community development and sustainable tourism, Napo Wildlife Centre is 100% owned by the indigenous Kichwa Añangu and is the only lodge within Yasuni National Park. It offers 16 luxury cabins complete with private facilities and hot water. The 40m observation tower offers one of the best panoramic views of the Ecuadorian Amazon. Other activities include visits to the nearby parrot clay lick, forest trails and canoe rides to search for wildlife.



SACHA LODGE

Rio Napo, Coca

Located 80km downriver from Coca within its own private 5,000-acre reserve, Sacha Lodge is constructed from traditional materials and contains 26 cabins, all with private facilities and hot water. Enjoy cooling dips in Pilchicocha Lake and exclusive attractions such as the Canopy Walk, Kapok Tower and Butterfly House.



LA SELVA

Rio Napo, Coca

The award-winning La Selva Ecolodge has 19 spacious suites. The lodge is on Lake Garzacocha, about 2.5 hours downriver from Coca. Facilities include eco-suites, a 35m observation tower and an organic restaurant. In addition to jungle activities, night walks and canoe trips, La Selva offers massage therapy and yoga retreats.



SANI LODGE

Rio Napo, Coca

Located on 42,000 hectares of untouched rainforest, Sani Lodge is 100% owned and operated by the indigenous Kichwa community of Sani Isla. Its 13 cabins are built with local materials, with large opening windows protected by mosquito nets and traditional thatched roofs. Adventurers can opt for a unique camping experience in the rainforest and be immersed in the magic of the forest at night.



When to Go?

The islands are a fabulous year-round destination. December to June is warm and humid, while July to November is cooler with fresher winds.

Highlights

One of the richest central islands in terms of birdlife, **North Seymour** has a large population of frigate birds, blue-footed boobies and gulls.

Famous for Pinnacle Rock, **Bartolome** is home to the best-known landmark in the Galapagos Islands.

The largest of all the islands, **Isabela** is home to the highest point in the archipelago, Wolf Volcano at 1,707m.

Our Expert's Choice

Espanola is the only place where the iconic waved albatross can be seen. Visit between April and December for a chance to see their courtship display.

San Cristobal is a wonderful option for time-poor travellers, with direct flights to the mainland, a huge diversity of wildlife and some of the best snorkelling in the archipelago.

DIVING GALAPAGOS



The Galapagos Islands offer some of the best diving sites in the world. Here you can experience an immense variety of marine life, including hammerhead sharks, giant whale sharks, rays, turtles, huge schools of fish and Galapagos fur seals. The most renowned dive sites are at the remote Wolf and Darwin islands. All dedicated dive cruises are eight-day itineraries.

Casual divers should look to one of our land-based options and make daily dive trips. Experienced divers (Advanced Open Water certification required) can opt for one of the fantastic dive/cruise options on board the Galapagos Sky. Two dive masters and up to four dives a day ensure you will have ample time underwater.

This 16-passenger live-aboard diving yacht features eight private ensuite cabins with bathrobes, hairdryer and biodegradable toiletries.

ISLAND HOPPING

Sample Itinerary

Perfect for those wanting to spend most of their time on land, island-hopping itineraries offer a fantastic alternative to traditional cruises. Land-based excursions typically visit different sites than ships, offering a unique Galapagos experience. The itinerary below is a sample only – many different options exist with varying standards of accommodation available.

Day 1 Santa Cruz

On arrival, transfer to the Santa Cruz Highlands where you'll search for the iconic Galapagos tortoise. Continue to Puerto Ayora for lunch and spend the afternoon at leisure, with an optional afternoon excursion to Tortuga Bay. *L*

Day 2 Santa Cruz/ Floreana

Take the speedboat to Floreana Island and hike to La Loberia where sea lions breed. Enjoy your first snorkelling excursion with the chance to swim with sea lions, marine turtles, manta rays and a variety of colourful coral fish. Afternoon at leisure to relax. *B*

Day 3 Floreana/ Isabela

After breakfast, head to the highlands of Floreana for a gentle hike exploring historic pirate caves. You'll also have the chance to see more giant tortoises. Afterwards, you'll take a speedboat to Isabela for lunch. Afternoon at leisure, or take an optional bike tour to the Wall of Tears. *BL*

Day 4 Isabela

A morning excursion hiking up Sierra Negra Volcano for great views over the crater. Enjoy a boxed lunch and visit El Chico Volcano. Afternoon at leisure to relax on the beach. Optional excursion to

Tintoreras Islets where you can see reef sharks and Galapagos penguins. *BL*

Day 5 Isabela/ Santa Cruz

A morning visit to Flamingo Lagoon to see the brightly coloured birds feeding on the lagoon's algae. This afternoon, visit the Tortoise Breeding Centre. Take a speedboat to Santa Cruz and evening at leisure. *B*

Day 6 Santa Cruz

Enjoy a full-day tour to Bartolome Island to see the iconic Pinnacle Rock. A short hike will bring you to a spectacular viewpoint. Afternoon snorkelling provides the chance to see marine turtles and penguins. *BL*

Day 7 Santa Cruz

Take a full-day tour of North Seymour Island where you can see land iguanas, the magnificent frigate bird and sea lions surfing the waves. After lunch enjoy snorkelling at Las Bachas beach. *BL*

Day 8 Santa Cruz

After breakfast, visit the Charles Darwin Research Station and the Tortoise Breeding Centre, where you can walk freely among the tortoises. Transfer to Baltra Airport for your flight back to the mainland. *B*



Galapagos Lodges



GALAPAGOS HABITAT

Santa Cruz

Situated on the oceanfront in Puerto Ayora, Galapagos Habitat blends in naturally with a surrounding mangrove forest and has beautiful views of Academy Bay. Seventeen guest rooms are divided between ocean and mangrove view, have all been recently refurbished and are equipped with air-conditioning. Enjoy day trips on Santa Cruz and neighbouring islands or consider an island-hopping program with stays at Habitat's sister properties on San Cristobal and Isabela.



GALAPAGOS SAFARI CAMP

Santa Cruz

Nestled in the wild highlands of Santa Cruz Island with stunning views of the Pacific Ocean and national park, this stylish camp offers nine exclusive tents, a family suite and an infinity pool under a canopy of endemic trees. The family-friendly camp is an excellent base from which to explore the islands. Full-day excursions to other islands, inland walks, horseriding, snorkelling, diving and kayaking can all be organised from the camp.



FINCH BAY

Santa Cruz

One of National Geographic's Unique Lodges of the World, Finch Bay features 27 rooms and suites, as well as a pool and beachfront access. The hotel's central location means you can easily enjoy a short stroll to Las Grietas or explore the town of Puerto Ayora. Activities are organised by exploration, relaxation and adventure – a trip to one of the nearby islands aboard the M/Y Sea Lion is a must. You'll be part of a small group of up to 20 guests enjoying fully personalised service aboard with four crew members, a delicious buffet lunch, air-conditioned interiors, and viewing decks. Combine with Scalesia Lodge for the ultimate land-based Galapagos experience.



SCALESIA LODGE

Isabela

Situated in the highlands of Isabela Island on the slopes of a volcano, this modern, luxurious, safari-style tent resort has spectacular views of the coast of Isabela Island and the Pacific Ocean. The lodge features 16 beautiful and comfortable tents, as well as a main lodge with plenty of common areas in which to relax between excursions. Explore the largest island in the Galapagos archipelago on Scalesia's hiking and snorkelling tours. Diving, fishing, biking and surfing at extra cost. Combine with Finch Bay for the ultimate land-based Galapagos experience.



South Plaza Island

Galapagos Cruises



M/T CAMILA

16 Passengers

A motorised trimaran, the deluxe Camila is designed for comfort and stability. Spacious cabins (29m² or larger) feature private balconies, while common areas include a comfortable lounge, sundeck and jacuzzi. Guests enjoy the use of kayaks, snorkelling equipment and wetsuits.



M/C ENDEMIC

16 Passengers

The 30m² suites on board the Endemic feature floor-to-ceiling windows, balconies and spacious private bathrooms. Common areas include a sun deck with jacuzzi, al fresco dining and BBQ area and observation platforms. Guests enjoy the use of complimentary snorkelling equipment, clear-bottom sea kayaks, and standup paddleboards.



M/V ORIGIN

20 Passengers

The first Galapagos vessel to join the prestigious Relais & Châteaux collection. Each of the ten cabins (13m²) have large windows and personal Nespresso machines. There is a generous open bar policy, and kayaks and a glass-bottomed boat are available for guests use.



M/Y LA PINTA

48 Passengers

A luxury mid-size cruise option with amenities including a large observation lounge, library, jacuzzi, small gym, glass-bottomed boat, and kayaks. Guests have the use of snorkelling equipment. Cabins start at 17.6m², with interconnecting cabins available.



M/Y ISABELA

40 Passengers

This mid-size yacht offers adventure, safety and comfort in a relaxed atmosphere. Cabins start at 12m². A glass-bottomed boat allows easy underwater viewing, and sea kayaks and snorkelling gear are also provided.



M/V SANTA CRUZ II

90 Passengers

A great option for those looking for optimum service and a larger vessel, with most cabins 15m² or larger. Amenities include a sundeck, ocean view hot tubs, a lounge, library and a glass-bottomed boat. Dedicated single cabins are great value for solo travellers.



Galapagos Cruises



M/Y PETREL

16 Passengers

A luxury cruise option with cabins starting at 30m² and featuring private balconies. Common areas include a rooftop bar and sundeck, reading room and spacious dining room. Guests enjoy the use of kayaks, snorkelling equipment and wetsuits.



M/Y NATURAL PARADISE

16 Passengers

A first-class yacht customised for sailing the Galapagos Islands. Staterooms start at 16m², while Junior Suites are larger and feature private balconies. Social areas include a sundeck with jacuzzi, lounge room and al fresco dining. Snorkelling equipment, wetsuits and sea kayaks are available on board.



M/V GALAPAGOS LEGEND

100 Passengers

A first-class vessel offering all the amenities of a larger cruise. Family suites, large social areas, kids' corner and a plunge pool ensure that families are well catered for. Standard Plus cabins start at 11m², with suites as large as 30m². Glass-bottomed kayaks offer an exceptional underwater perspective.



M/Y CORALS I AND II

36 & 20 Passengers

Twin first-class yachts offer comfortable and elegant accommodation. Cabins offer either porthole or panoramic views and average 10m². The jacuzzi, sun and shadow decks provide the perfect spaces in which to relax. Diving options are available on some voyages.



M/Y LETTY & ERIC

20 Passengers

These are identical superior tourist class motor yachts. Cabins (9m²) offer either porthole or panoramic views, private bathrooms and air-conditioning. Snorkelling equipment, wetsuits and kayaks are included. Relax on the sundeck between excursions.



M/Y GALAVEN

20 Passengers

A tourist class expedition vessel with 11 en suite cabins of 7m², all with air-conditioning and ocean views. The Galaven offers spacious outdoor seating areas with sun chairs, a large interior dining room and a library. Guests enjoy the use of kayaks, snorkelling gear and wetsuits.





When to Go?

Santiago is roughly the same latitude as Sydney and experiences warm, dry summers and cold winters.

The Atacama Desert has warm days and cooler nights all year round. Prices rise over the summer months and are generally at their lowest during the Southern Hemisphere winter.

The Southern Hemisphere summer is the peak season for Patagonia: see page 53 for more information.

Highlights

The **Atacama Desert** is the driest desert on earth where otherworldly landscapes – extensive salt lakes dotted with pink flamingos, volcanoes and geysers – are framed by the Andean mountain range.

Located just over 3,700km off the coast of Chile and with a distinct Polynesian tradition, **Easter Island** has more than 20,000 archaeological vestiges and Moais.

Explore the Valdivian forests, crystalline lakes and snow-capped volcanoes of Chile's northern Patagonian **Lakes District** (see page 54 for more information).

Chile's Southern Patagonian region contains some of the most dramatic scenery on the continent – including the iconic **Torres del Paine** National Park (See pages 54-55 for more details).

Our Expert's Choice

Visit the stunning **vineyards** surrounding Santiago for a taste of Chile's signature variety, the famous Carmeneré. Stay in one of the region's luxury lodges for the ultimate indulgence.

Roll up your sleeves and discover the art of making empanadas and the classic Pisco sour cocktail at a culinary class in **Santiago**.

Learn about the culture and traditions of Chile's indigenous Mapuche people and overnight in a traditional Mapuche hut.

Enjoy some of the best star-gazing on the planet and visit an observatory in **San Pedro de Atacama**.

Get off the beaten track, away from the maddening crowds and explore some of Chile's newest and best Patagonian national parks – see page 59 for more details.



Valparaíso

A TASTE OF SANTIAGO & VALPARAISO

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Santiago

Arrive in Santiago and transfer to your hotel. Lastarria, Belles Artes and Providencia are all great locations from which to explore the city.

Day 2 Santiago

Enjoy a half-day walking tour of modern Santiago. Visit the Bellavista, San Cristobal Hill and Lastarria districts before hopping on the metro and riding to University Station. Here you'll get off and explore the central district, finishing at the market where you may like to have lunch. *B*

Day 3 Santiago/ Valparaiso

Transfer to the UNESCO Heritage-listed port city of Valparaiso, located about 90 minutes from Santiago. Along the way you will visit a winery in the Casablanca Valley and taste some of Chile's renowned wines. Stay overnight in Valparaiso. *B*

Day 4 Valparaiso

Enjoy a half-day tour discovering the famous murals and street art of Valparaiso. An afternoon at leisure to relax and continue wandering the winding streets of Cerro Alegre on your own. *B*

Day 5 Santiago

Transfer to Santiago Airport and continue your journey. *B*

WINES OF CENTRAL CHILE

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Santiago

Arrive in Santiago and transfer to your hotel. Head out to one of Lastarria's excellent wine bars this evening.

Day 2 Santiago

A half-day tour of Santa Rita Winery, set in the Maipo Valley, with lunch and wine tasting included. After lunch, take a stroll through the beautifully manicured gardens and then return to Santiago. *BL*

Day 3 Santiago

A full-day tour of the Colchagua Valley. Visit the stunning Clos Apalta Winery, built into a granite hillside to ensure constant cool temperatures for cellaring. Lunch is included at Viu Manent Vineyards, with a tour by horse and carriage and wine tasting to finish the day. Return to Santiago. *BL*

Day 4 Santiago

Enjoy a half-day cycling tour of Cousiño Macul Winery this morning. Cycle through the grounds and among the ancient vines, enjoying the surrounding views of the Andean foothills, before heading underground to see the family's personal wine collection. After sampling some award-winning varieties, you will return to Santiago. *B*

Day 5 Santiago

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight – wine aficionados should consider a short flight across the Andes to Argentina's wine-producing capital, Mendoza. *B*

VIK CHILE



In a striking, modern building with views over vineyards and wetlands, this stunning hotel is located around two hours south of Santiago.

The eclectic, art-filled rooms are individually decorated, and feature floor-to-ceiling windows with scenic rural views. Enjoy regional, seasonal Chilean cuisine served alongside Vik Chile's own premium wines at the on-site restaurant. Other amenities include a divine infinity pool, spa, guest lounge, games room and library.

Indulge in a wine tasting experience, explore the vineyards by bike or horseback, or venture further afield and visit some of the excellent nearby wineries in the Colchagua and Cachapoal Valleys.



Easter Island

CHILE'S ANDEAN HIGHLANDS

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Arica/ Codpa Valley

Arrive in Arica Airport and begin your exploration of Chile's Andean north. Visit the colourful Azapa Valley and an archaeological museum to see the Chinchorro mummies, which are more than 7,000 years old. After lunch, continue to the Codpa Valley – a small oasis with a rich cultural tradition, where you stay overnight. *LD*

Day 2 Codpa Valley/ Putre

This morning you will visit the Andean villages of Timar, Tignamar and Saxamar, as well as the extraordinary Ofragia petroglyphs, evidence of human presence in the region more than 10,000 years ago. After lunch and some time to soak in the Chitune Hot Springs, continue to Putre, located 3,600m above sea level and at the base of the beautiful Tarapaca Volcano. *BLD*

Day 3 Putre

A full-day tour exploring Lauca National Park. Hike from Cotacotani Lagoons to Parinacota, a remote hamlet located a staggering 4,392m above sea level and home to just 150 people. Continue to Chungara, the world's highest lake at 4,517m, for lunch. Return to Putre and stay overnight. *BLD*

Day 4 Arica

Transfer to Arica for your onward flight or ask your consultant about continuing overland into Bolivia or Peru. *B*

EASTER ISLAND

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Easter Island

You will be met on arrival at Easter Island and transferred to your hotel.

Day 2 Easter Island

A full-day tour of Anakena visiting the archaeological centre of Akahanga and Rano Raraku Quarry, where all the existing Moais were sculpted. Picnic lunch at Anakena Beach. *BL*

Day 3 Easter Island

Start with a half-day tour of Orongo then visit Rano Kau Volcano, which has the island's largest concentration of petroglyphs. Marvel at the seven Moais overlooking the sea on a tour of Ahu Akivi. See the Caves of Ana Te Pahu – among the largest on the island. *B*

Day 4 Easter Island

Transfer from your hotel to the airport, or extend your stay with four- to seven-night programs. *B*

Properties available include Explora Rapa Nui, Hanga Roa, Altiplanico, Iorana, Taha Tai, Otai and more. Various tour packages are available from two to eight nights with B&B or all inclusive options.

Incorporate Easter Island into your itinerary en route to or from South America. LATAM Airlines flies direct between Tahiti and Easter Island once a week.

EXPLORA RAPA NUI



Located on a hilltop with stunning views over the Pacific Ocean, Explora Rapa Nui's award-winning architecture combines the island's unique geography with local heritage and culture.

The 30 rooms of Explora Rapa Nui are designed to take full advantage of the silence, privacy and spaciousness of the surrounding landscape, ensuring deep rest after a long day of exploration.

On foot, bicycle or boat, more than 20 different excursions unveil Easter Island's unique history and charm. Excursions of groups of no more than eight travellers have cultural shades and are always led by a local guide. They include hikes and bike explorations among archaeological remains, volcanoes, beaches, prairies and cliffs, as well as boat trips or snorkelling where you'll explore the world's most pristine sea waters.



Stays of Distinction – Atacama Desert

The Atacama Desert is the most arid place on earth; a surreal landscape of salt flats, hot springs and geysers. The charming town of San Pedro de Atacama serves as your base for exploring the region. Choose from one of the many hotels in town, or splash out on one of our recommended Stays of Distinction. The Atacama Desert can be reached via a two-hour flight from Santiago, or in combination with an overland package from Bolivia's Salt Plains (page 28) or Northern Argentina (page 51).



TIERRA ATACAMA

Tierra Atacama Hotel and Spa is a sun-swept 32-room desert oasis. Known for its dramatic architecture and locally inspired interiors, the lodge offers a cosy and authentic environment. With Tierra's all-inclusive program, you can explore the desert landscapes with expert guides and, upon return, enjoy delicious meals and Chilean wine under the stars.



ALTO ATACAMA

Alto Atacama's 42 rooms were conceived to blend seamlessly into the environment. The setting, sweeping views, tranquillity and silence – and the hotel's wonderful outdoor lounge spaces – make Alto Atacama a destination in its own right. Get off the beaten track, interact with the local indigenous culture and explore the desert's varied and eerily beautiful landscapes by foot or bike with more than 30 adventurous excursions to choose from.



EXPLORA ATACAMA

Carefully built within the San Pedro oasis, Explora Atacama's location is a great base from which to explore the many wonders of the driest desert on Earth. The facility's 50 rooms are designed to take full advantage of the silence, privacy, and spaciousness of the surrounding landscape allowing for a satisfying rest after a long day of exploration.



AWASI ATACAMA

Nestled behind an ancient adobe wall, Awasi's ten secluded cottages have private patios, outdoor showers and are incredibly spacious at 50m². After exploring the impressive natural scenery of the Atacama Desert with your private 4WD driver and guide, return to Awasi Atacama for a swim in the pool, a drink by the firepit and exquisite evening meals in the Relais & Châteaux restaurant.



NOI CASA ATACAMA

Merging home-style ambiance and sustainable design with the amenities and style of a luxury boutique hotel, Noi Casa Atacama offers a warm, comfortable retreat framed by the most breathtaking scenery in northern Chile. Relax in one of the 29 bright, spacious guest rooms or 18 suites, richly appointed with native artwork and furnishings, 400 thread count Egyptian cotton linens, plush down bedding and private terraces.



CUMBRES ATACAMA

Located two kilometres from the village of San Pedro de Atacama, Hotel Cumbres stands as a tranquil oasis. The hotel's 60 beautifully appointed rooms feature spacious 52m² floorplans and private terraces with views of the Atacama Desert landscape and Licancabur Volcano. Guests can select from a variety of excursions timetabled by the hotel each day.

Reservations 1300 135 391



HIKING AMONG VOLCANOES

Sample Itinerary

Experience the beautiful landscapes of La Araucania, a region studded with towering volcanoes, crystalline lakes and ancient Araucaria forests. Hikes can be tailored to your fitness level, ranging from easy three-hour strolls to challenging eight-hour treks.

Day 1 Temuco/ Malalcahuello

Transfer to your lodge, located in the picturesque Cautin Valley. This afternoon enjoy an easy walk with spectacular views of the Lonquimay, Tolhuaca and Copahue Volcanoes. (3hrs hiking) *D*

Day 2 Nalcas National Reserve

Depart for Nalcas National Reserve where you'll begin a moderate hike amid stunning surrounds. Highlights include the active Llaima Volcano, and regional flora such as Araucaria forests and Patagonia oak. (6hrs hiking – ask us about less active options) *BLD*

Day 3 Tolhuaca National Park

This morning you'll have an easy hike through Tolhuaca National Park to Lake Malleco and an impressive waterfall. Return to the hotel for a short rest and time for lunch. In the afternoon, you will hike towards Lonquimay Volcano and the Navidad Crater, named for an eruption on Christmas Day in 1988. Hike across dried lava to 1,870m where you can enjoy views of four surrounding volcanoes, forests and lagoons. (6hrs hiking) *BD*

Day 4 Conguillio National Park

Transfer to Conguillio National Park where you will begin an easy hike along the Los Contrabandista trail. The hike will take you through ancient forests and along the shores of Lake Conguillio, with views of the Llaima and Sierra Nevada volcanoes as a backdrop. Stay overnight in Conguillio. (3hrs hiking) *BD*

Day 5 Sierra Nevada Volcano

Today a more challenging hike will take you from the shores of Lake Conguillio along the Sierra Nevada trail. Boasting incredible views, the trail is dotted with lush vegetation and offers many great photo opportunities. Your destination is the spectacular lookout point overlooking the lake, Araucaria forest and nearby volcanoes. Return to the hotel for a well-deserved dinner and stay overnight. (8hrs hiking) *BLD*

Day 6 Temuco

After breakfast you will be transferred back to Temuco Airport to continue your journey. *B*

MAPUCHE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Temuco

Arrive in Temuco. Enjoy an introductory tour of the city to learn about the history of the area and links to the Mapuche people. Visit a lively produce market where the local Mapuche community come together, as well as the Pablo Neruda Railway Museum and other local sites.

Day 2 Temuco/ Lake Budi

Depart this morning for the ethnic Mapuche community of Llaguepulli, located on the shores of beautiful Lake Budi. Enjoy a traditional lunch and learn about the Mapuche way of life, their traditions and their culture. Stay overnight in a traditional ruka (thatched Mapuche house) near the lake. *BLD*

Day 3 Lake Budi

After breakfast you will take a boat ride across the lake and enjoy local flora and fauna and the serenity of the landscape. Visit an organic vegetable garden to collect the ingredients for lunch, and then after a delicious meal visit a local artisan to learn the ancient techniques used in traditional wool handcrafts. Return to your ruka and stay overnight. *BLD*

Day 4 Temuco

After breakfast you will drive back to Temuco Airport. *B*





When to Go?

Buenos Aires is fabulous all year round but can be quite hot and humid mid-summer.

The northwest is best visited in the drier months from March to November.

The Andean Lakes District is best from October to May; the colourful autumn months of March and April are particularly picturesque.

Iguazu Falls are spectacular all year round but are perhaps best enjoyed in the cooler, drier months of March, April, August and September. Water levels are generally at their highest from January to March.

Highlights

The cosmopolitan city of **Buenos Aires** never fails to impress with stunning architecture, world-class cuisine, vibrant street art and sensual tango shows.

Comprising some 275 individual cataracts, **Iguazu Falls** are surrounded by tropical jungle and one of Argentina's most spectacular natural attractions.

Don't miss Argentina's wine capital, **Mendoza**, set against a backdrop of stunning Andean peaks. Discover Malbec, Argentina's signature grape variety.

Patagonia boasts many of Argentina's most impressive natural wonders – see pages 54-61 for details.

Our Expert's Choice

Northwest Argentina offers a striking landscape of sweeping Andean plains, deep gorges and fertile valleys. Don't miss some of the country's best-preserved colonial architecture in Salta and Tucuman.

The immense rock formations and deep red earth of **Talampaya National Park** are strangely reminiscent of Central Australia.

Wildlife enthusiasts should head for **Ibera Wetlands**, the second-largest in South America, where you can find capybaras, giant anteaters and maybe even the elusive jaguar.



La Boca, Buenos Aires

A TASTE OF BUENOS AIRES

Sample Itinerary

Let Contours Travel take you beyond the basics on an extended stay in Buenos Aires. Touring options are almost endless – from street art to Jewish history, tango to football, cycling tours to polo exhibitions – ask our expert consultants for more details.

Day 1 Buenos Aires

Welcome to Buenos Aires – the Paris of the Americas! Transfer to your hotel in Recoleta, San Telmo or Palermo. In the evening learn the basic steps of tango before an authentic tango show.

Day 2 Buenos Aires

Depart on a northern districts tour including the famous Recoleta Cemetery and the leafy suburb of Palermo, with elegant mansions, funky cafes, local fashion and homeware boutiques. The excellent Argentine Experience – a hands-on cooking class and dinner with matching wines – provides a fantastic introduction to local cuisine. *BD*

Day 3 Buenos Aires

This morning's tour will take you to the southern districts. Visit the famous Plaza 25 de Mayo and see the Casa Rosada. Continue to the bohemian district of San Telmo and visit Caminito in La Boca before finishing in Puerto Madero. This evening you'll visit two milongas – establishments where people dance the most authentic form of tango – away from the spotlights of the commercial circuit. Return to your hotel at the end of the night. *B*

Day 4 Buenos Aires

Indulge in a fascinating half-day tour discovering the passions of Buenos Aires. Choose from a tour celebrating literary great Jorge Luis Borges and political hero Eva Peron, or uncover the history of Argentine football and tango. *B*

Day 5 Buenos Aires

Enjoy a full-day tour to one of Argentina's iconic estancias, where you'll learn about the life of the gaucho and enjoy a traditional BBQ lunch. Ask your consultant about overnight stays. *BL*

Day 6 Buenos Aires

On your day at leisure, consider a ferry ride across the river to Colonia del Sacramento in Uruguay for a great day out. *B*

Day 7 Buenos Aires

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or extend your time in Argentina with a visit to Iguazu Falls, the colonial northwest or Patagonia. *B*

ACROSS THE RIO DE LA PLATA

The UNESCO World Heritage-listed Uruguayan town of Colonia del Sacramento is perfect for those seeking a relaxing extension to their time in Buenos Aires. Visit the dynamic capital of Montevideo, a wine lodge or an authentic estancia for a more in-depth experience.

Day 1 Buenos Aires/ Montevideo

Catch the ferry across the Rio de la Plata this morning to the Uruguayan capital of Montevideo. Enjoy an afternoon tour of the city, including the diverse neighbourhoods of Carrasco, Pocitos and the Old City, where you can visit the bustling Mercado del Puerto.

Day 2 Colonia del Sacramento

After breakfast, transfer to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed town of Colonia del Sacramento for a tour of the historic centre. See the lighthouse, the main plaza, the Portuguese and Spanish Museums, the port of Yates and the Plaza de Toros, where bullfights were once held. *B*

Day 3 Colonia del Sacramento

A day at leisure to stroll through cobblestone streets lined with colonial houses with red-tiled rooftops. *B*

Day 4 Colonia/ Buenos Aires

After breakfast, catch the ferry back to Buenos Aires. *B*



IGUAZU & IBERA WETLANDS

Visit the awe-inspiring Iguazu Falls and historic Jesuit ruins, and explore the remote Ibera wetlands with its vast wildlife. Ask us about timing your trip to Iguazu to coincide with the full moon night walk – a magical way to experience the falls.

Day 1 Iguazu Falls

Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Iguazu Falls

A full-day tour of the Argentine side of Iguazu Falls, including the wonderful Devil's Throat lookout. *B*

Day 3 Iguazu Falls/ Ibera Wetlands

Transfer to Colonia Carlos Pellegrini. On the way, visit Santa Ana, Nuestra Señora de Loreto and San Ignacio Mini Ruins. Continue by 4WD to Ibera Wetlands, the second-largest wetlands in South America. *BD*

Days 4 & 5 Ibera Wetlands

Two full days to explore the area. Activities include birdwatching, boat rides on the Ibera Lagoon, night walks, canoe trips or horseback rides. *BLD*

Day 6 Posadas

Transfer to the airport. For more great wildlife viewing opportunities, extend your trip to Peninsula Valdes. *B*

PUERTO VALLE



Located just an hour from Posadas Airport on the banks of the Parana River, Puerto Valle is one of the most accessible lodges in the Ibera Wetlands. Constructed in 1868, the traditional estancia has been converted into an exclusive lodge and features 13 river view rooms. Choose from five colonial-style rooms in the original building or eight modern, deluxe suites with contemporary furnishings. Cool off at the end of a day's exploration in the swimming pool and enjoy a traditional Argentine BBQ under the stars at night. Activities include scenic boat excursions through the wetlands and on the river, kayaking, horseback riding and the opportunity to hike along the Monkey Trail in search of howler monkeys.

AWASI IGUAZU



Located just 20 minutes from one of the world's largest waterfalls, Awasi's new 14-room lodge is situated on the banks of the River Iguazu, surrounded by the Atlantic rainforest. Set on stilts, each of the rustic luxury villas feature living rooms, balconies and private plunge pools plus free wi-fi, minibars, and tea and coffeemakers. All offer river and jungle views. Awasi offers fully all-inclusive stays, with every villa assigned a private guide and 4WD, allowing guests to explore at their own pace. Explore 18th-century Jesuit ruins, discover hidden waterfalls (and, of course, the most famous ones!), kayak through jungle streams and visit local Guarani tribes to learn about ancient customs and traditions. Enjoy gourmet cuisine at the exclusive on-site restaurant with all meals and drinks included throughout your stay.



MENDOZA'S WINE ROUTE

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Mendoza

Transfer to your hotel. Kick off your stay in Mendoza with a culinary night tour – wine tasting at Clos de Chacras followed by a visit to Club Tapiz. Finish with a delicious dinner at El Terruno. *D*

Day 2 Mendoza

Enjoy a full-day tour dedicated to Argentina's finest sparkling wines. Start at Cruzat Winery and continue to Chandon for a historic tour of this lovely vineyard. Lunch at Septima Winery with four courses of regional cuisine and matching wines. *BL*

Day 3 Mendoza

A full-day tour of the Uco Valley. Visit Salentein and Domaine Bousquet Vineyards for tastings. Finish at Andeluna for a gourmet six-course lunch and matching wines. *BL*

Day 4 Mendoza

Depart for the Maipo Valley to visit Navarro Correas for a wine tasting, then continue to Pasrai Olive Farm for tasty homemade treats and olive oils. Another wine tasting at Luigi before picnic lunch at the Alta Vista Winery. *BL*

Day 5 Mendoza

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*

STAYS OF DISTINCTION

Why not splurge and stay at one of the region's divine wine lodges – Entre Cielos, The Vines and Casa de Uco are all excellent options located in the valleys surrounding Mendoza.

ISCHIGUALASTO & TALAMPAYA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 San Juan

Transfer to your hotel, then enjoy an afternoon tour of the city including the cathedral and the Museum of Urban Memory with its seismic simulator.

Day 2 San Juan/ Villa Union

A full-day tour visiting Ischigualasto Park, also known as Moon Valley due to its otherworldly appearance. See landforms such as the Worm, Bocce Court and the Submarine. Visit the Palaeontological Museum to see some of the most important fossils found in the park. *B*

Day 3 Villa Union

Depart for the spectacular Quebrada de la Troya to see incredible rock formations created by millions of years of erosion. Continue through the Quebrada de Peñon and ascend to Brava Lagoon, located at 4,350m. During the summer months you'll see magnificent pink flamingos feasting on the lake's plankton. Enjoy a picnic lunch and return to Villa Union. *BL*

Day 4 Villa Union

Enjoy a full-day tour to the stunning Talampaya National Park, with its deep red desert earth and resident guanacos. A drive through the Talampaya Canyon reveals formations such as the Cathedral, the Tower and the Monk. Return to Villa Union and transfer to La Rioja Airport. *B*

**Note: Talampaya has some great hiking options for more active travellers – ask your travel consultant for more information.*

CORDOBA'S JESUIT TRAIL

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Cordoba

Transfer to your hotel on arrival. An afternoon tour explores the most important monuments and buildings of Argentina's second-largest city.

Day 2 Cordoba

Depart on the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Road of the Jesuit Estancias this morning. Travel to Colonia Caroya, established in 1616, then continue to Jesus Maria where you'll visit the house and old winery. Finish the day at Santa Catalina, the largest complex in the region. See the church, residence, novitiate ruins and slave rooms. Return to Cordoba. *B*

Day 3 Cordoba

Travel to Estancia La Candelaria, built in 1683. Enjoy a guided tour and have some time for lunch before returning to Cordoba. *B*

Day 4 Cordoba

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or extend your stay in one of the region's excellent and authentic estancias. *B*

ESTANCIA EL COLIBRI

Indulge with a luxury stay at Relais & Châteaux-affiliated Estancia El Colibri. Featuring parquet flooring and high vaulted ceilings, suites are spacious, elegant and full of light. Spend your days horseback riding, taking polo lessons, picnicing in the garden, swimming in the outside pool, tasting wine and enjoying wonderful culinary delights.



COLONIAL NORTHWEST

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Salta

Arrive in Salta, the best-preserved colonial city in Argentina, and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Salta

Explore the historic centre of Salta on a guided tour. Later you will take a cable car up San Bernardo Hill for sweeping views over the city and surrounding valleys. This afternoon we recommend a visit to the Museum of High Altitude Archaeology to see the brilliantly preserved remains of Inca human sacrifices. *B*

Day 3 Salta/ Cachi

Enjoy a tour around the Calchaqui Valleys. Pass by Cuesta del Obispo, Recta del Tin Tin and Los Cardones National Park. Stay overnight in the quaint mountain village of Cachi. *B*

Day 4 Cachi/ Cafayate

After a morning at leisure, travel to Cafayate along mountain roads, passing through Molinos, Angastaco and Arrows Ravine. Arrive in Cafayate, famous for its Torrontes wine, and stay overnight. *B*

Day 5 Cafayate

In the morning you will tour the town of Cafayate and visit a wine cellar for a tasting. Relax in the afternoon or hire a bicycle and tour the local vineyards. *B*

Day 6 Cafayate/ Tafi del Valle

A morning visit to Quebrada de las Conchas with its unusual rock formations, including the Devil's Throat, the Amphitheatre and the Castles. Visit the ruins of Quilmes, the largest pre-Columbian settlement in

Argentina, which once housed up to 5,000 inhabitants. Continue to Tafi del Valle and stay overnight. *B*

Day 7 Tafi del Valle/ Tucuman

Travel along the Sosa Gorge, crossing the Calchaqui mountains through lush cloud forest and descending to the humid plains of Tucuman. Enjoy a city tour of Tucuman and transfer to the airport. Ask us about extending your trip to Iguazu Falls, Mendoza or San Pedro de Atacama in Chile. *B*

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE



Consider a stay in a traditional hacienda. Built in 1718 by the Jesuits, Estancia Las Carreras allows visitors to experience the tradition and history of the Tafi del Valle region while enjoying modern comforts. Guests can visit the on-site cheese factory, go horseback riding or hiking in the surrounding countryside, or simply relax and enjoy the timelessness of this historic place.

HIGH ANDEAN ADVENTURE

Sample Itinerary

An off-the-beaten-track adventure to the high Andean plateau known as The Puna. Visit during the dry season (April to October).

Day 1 Salta/ Purmamarca

Depart for Purmamarca to see the impressive Seven Coloured Hill and explore the pretty adobe town where you will stay overnight. *B*

Day 2 Purmamarca

A full-day tour along the Humahuaca Valley to see the unique rock formations and cacti-studded landscape of the northwest. Stop in Tilcara to see the Pucara, pre-Inca fortifications with great views along the valley. *B*

Day 3 Purmamarca/ Tolar Grande

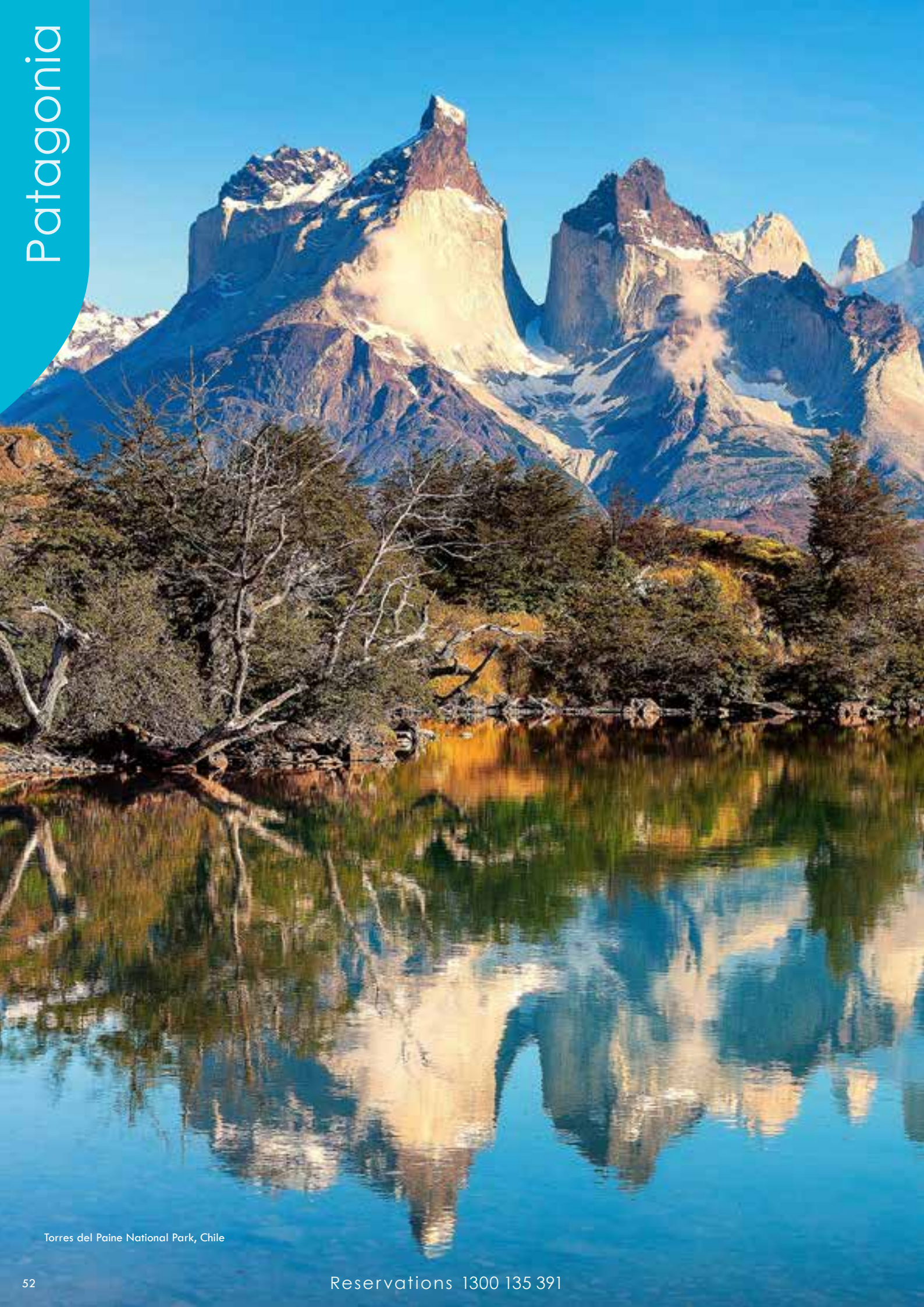
Start ascending along mountain roads to Tolar Grande (3,500m). En route you will see the immense salt plains of Salinas Grandes and stop in San Antonio de los Cobres for lunch. *BLD*

Day 4 Tolar Grande

A full day to explore the surreal landscape of The Puna. Depending on the time of year you may visit Santa Maria Lagoon to see the flamingos, the curious volcanic formation of Arita Cone or the ghost town of La Casualidad. *BLD*

Day 5 Tolar Grande/ Salta

Depart Tolar Grande and visit the tiny turquoise lagoons of Ojos del Mar. Cross the Abra de Gallo mountain pass (4,650m) before descending to the Lerma Valley and arriving in Salta. *B*



Torres del Paine National Park, Chile



When to Go?

The Andean Lakes District can be visited year-round but is best from October to May; the colourful autumn months of March and April are particularly picturesque.

The southern Patagonian region around Torres del Paine experiences extremely cold winters with many lodges closing from June to September. High season (December to February) is very busy with accommodation booked out well in advance.

Highlights

Torres del Paine is Chile's most iconic national park, featuring lakes, glaciers, forests, waterfalls and the unique granite torres (towers).

Marvel at the 70m face of the imposing **Perito Moreno Glacier**, one of the few advancing glaciers in the world.

Enjoy the serene beauty of the **Andean Lakes District**, where crystalline lakes, native forests and snow-capped volcanoes straddle Chile and Argentina.

See the mighty mammals of the deep on a whale-watching tour along the **Valdes Peninsula**.

Our Expert's Choice

Get off the beaten track and discover the beauty of the Austral Road and stunning **Marble Caves**.

Enjoy the solitude of Chile's newest national park, **Parque Patagonia**, staying at the atmospheric Estancia Valle Chacabuco.

Discover the unique cultural heritage of **Chiloe Island**, a land of myths and legends.

Sail through the fjords and pristine waterways of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego on board the award-winning **Australis** cruise vessels.

Don't miss trekking mecca **El Chalten**, where self-guided trails are well-marked and easy to follow.



Petrohue Falls, Andean Lakes District

CLASSIC LAKES CROSSING

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Bariloche

Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Bariloche

Enjoy a morning tour of Bariloche's surrounding mountains, lakes and parks. Take a chairlift up Campanario Hill from where you'll have incredible views. On your free afternoon, consider a visit to Victoria Island and Arrayanes Forest. *B*

Day 3 Bariloche/ Puerto Varas

Transfer in the morning to Puerto Pañuelo, board your catamaran and sail Lake Nahuel Huapi towards Puerto Blest. Take a bus to Puerto Alegre and continue by catamaran across Lake Frías. Take the bus to Peulla and then sail the waters of Todos los Santos Lake, which has a spectacular view of the Osorno Volcano. Visit Petrohue Falls en route to Puerto Varas. *B*

Day 4 Puerto Varas

A day at leisure. Options include a full-day tour to Chiloe Island or a trip to Frutillar and Puerto Octay; a scenic beauty on the shore of Lake Llanquihue. *B*

Day 5 Puerto Varas

Transfer to Puerto Montt Airport. *B*

ANDEAN LAKES HIDDEN PASSAGE

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Puerto Varas/ Petrohue Lodge

Transfer to El Solitario hiking trail for a guided hike through ancient forest, while enjoying views of the surrounding volcanoes. Continue by road to Petrohue Waterfalls. Stay overnight at Petrohue Lodge. *LD*

Day 2 Petrohue Lodge/ Cochamo

Continue to Cochamo and your rustic mountain lodge. *BLD*

Day 3 Cochamo

Enjoy a full day trekking in the remote Tagua Tagua National Park, where you will likely have the native forests, pristine waterfalls and beautiful hiking trails all to yourself. *BLD*

Day 4 Cochamo

Another day to enjoy excursions and activities offered by the lodge. *BLD*

Day 5 Cochamo/ Isla Bandurrias

Getting to Isla Bandurrias is an adventure in itself. Take a boat across Lake Tagua Tagua to La Colina, where packhorses will take your luggage. An easy 40-minute hike will bring you to Las Rocas Lake for a motorboat to the private island of Bandurrias, where you will stay overnight. *BLD*

Day 6 Isla Bandurrias

Enjoy a morning hike through Valdivian forest to the southern part of the lake, where a picnic lunch is served. An afternoon at leisure. *BLD*

Day 7 Bariloche

Hike to the Chilean border station and get your passport stamped. Continue walking along Lake Inferior; after four hours you will cross into Argentina on foot. A jetboat will take you to Lake Puelo dock and then transfer by road to Bariloche. *BL*

CHILOE; ISLE OF MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Castro

Arrive in Puerto Montt or Castro Airport and transfer to the seaside town of Dalcahue on Chiloe Island. Enjoy lunch at a local market before visiting the town church, one of an incredible 16 UNESCO cultural sites on Chiloe. You'll see traditional palafito homes (built on stilts) before heading to your hotel in Castro to stay overnight. *L*

Day 2 Castro

After breakfast you will visit a bustling local market, where the region's famous seafood is on display. Continue for an hour to the coastal village of Quemchi, where brightly painted boats line the waterfront. To the south of the town is Aucar Island, the Island of Sailor's Souls, where you will visit the pretty botanical gardens. Explore the tiny coastal towns and UNESCO Heritage-listed wooden churches of the region before returning to Castro this afternoon. *BL*

Day 3 Castro

After breakfast, take a ferry to Quinchao, the second-largest island in the archipelago. Drive to a lookout point in the middle of the island which affords views of nearby islands and the stunning spectacle of the Andes to the east. Continue to Achao, where you will have some time to explore some of Chiloe's oldest churches and have lunch before returning to Castro late this afternoon. *B*

Day 4 Castro or Puerto Montt

After breakfast transfer to Castro or Puerto Montt Airport for your onward flight. *B*



Stays of Distinction - Northern Patagonia

Northern Patagonia encompasses both Chile and Argentina and is a fabulous destination all year round. The region is particularly well suited to self-drive holidays, with well-maintained roads and a huge selection of boutique hotels, estancias and lodges to choose from. Puerto Montt in Chile and Bariloche in Argentina are the region's main gateways, while visitors to beautiful Chiloe Island can fly direct between Santiago and Castro.



HOTEL AWA

Located just outside Puerto Varas, the striking Hotel AWA is set on a stunning 20-hectare estate with a private beach. Spacious rooms boast floor-to-ceiling windows with views of Llanquihue Lake and nearby volcanoes. Inviting interiors are adorned with local materials and artworks which reflect the essence of the region. Choose from a range of excursions including birdwatching, volcano climbs, zip-lining, kayaking and rafting.



TIERRA CHILOE

Set among the rich and timeless culture of remote Chiloe Island, Tierra Chiloe's sustainable 24-room lodge is surrounded by rolling countryside and boasts views of the Pacific Ocean and southern archipelago. Through Tierra's all-inclusive program, you can discover Chiloe by land and sea and enjoy locally sourced produce that arrives daily, including farm-fresh eggs, succulent oysters and the daily catch.



ESTANCIA PEUMA HUE

This charming boutique hotel is nestled within the grounds of Nahuel Huapi National Park, just 30 minutes from Bariloche. With a capacity for 28 guests, the ecolodge offers a highly personalised experience. Explore the impressive mountain scenery on horseback, or hike one of the numerous mountain trails that rise high above the estancia. A large organic garden provides healthy and delicious local cuisine.



&BEYOND VIRA VIRA

The remarkable &Beyond Vira Vira sits on the shores of the peaceful Liucura River and is surrounded by stunning volcanoes. Its 'Elegance of Adventure' concept combines personal hospitality with unforgettable adventures and excursions. Activities include horse trekking in the Cordilleras, hiking in one of the many surrounding national parks, skiing in winter or simply spending a leisurely day sailing on Lake Villarrica.



FUTANGUE HOTEL & SPA

Located approximately halfway between Puerto Varas and Pucon, this charming lodge features 16 spacious rooms decorated with native timbers and colourful textiles inspired by the local Mapuche culture. Activities include hiking the surrounding Valdivian forests, mountain biking around hidden lagoons, and kayaking pristine lakes and rivers. Enjoy regional flavours at the excellent Meson del Cauille restaurant, including wild mushrooms, native potatoes and locally caught seafood.



UMAN LODGE

Perched on a cliff with expansive views of the surrounding mountains and Futaleufú River valley below, this stunning 16-room lodge is the perfect base for hiking, rafting, horseriding, fly fishing and more. Explore the magnificent surrounds, and return to the lodge for scrumptious Patagonian cuisine and premium Chilean wine. Guest rooms are luxurious, cosy and equipped with private decks. On-site facilities include outdoor and indoor pools plus a sauna, jacuzzi and hammam.



Torres del Paine National Park

The soaring granite 'towers' of Torres del Paine are one of Patagonia's most iconic images, and the national park is certainly a highlight for any traveller to this remote wilderness. Stay in Puerto Natales and visit the park as a day trip (two hours by road) or opt for one of our Stays of Distinction on the opposite page, and enjoy better access, fantastic excursions and world-class service and cuisine. Book well in advance for travel during the summer months or visit from March to November for fewer crowds and better chances of spotting the elusive puma. After your stay, continue overland into Argentina to see the awe-inspiring Perito Moreno Glacier.

W TREK TORRES DEL PAINE



5-Day and 7-Day Options

The W Trek is one of the world's most iconic trekking routes! A challenging, rewarding and unforgettable trip through forests, mountains and glaciers with accommodation at the unique EcoCamp Patagonia and mountain refuges. Choose from standard, superior or suite domes at EcoCamp Patagonia and enjoy a unique blend of adventure and comfort.

The five-day trek includes the famous French Valley, Grey Glacier Trail and the challenging Base of the Towers hike. Those tackling the seven-day option will also get to hike the Cuernos Trail along beautiful Lake Nordenskjöld and enjoy a leisurely tour to Azul and Sarmiento Lakes. Weekly departures October to April. Consider a Winter Wonderland departure (May to September) and enjoy fewer tourists and snow-capped vistas.

PUMA TRACKING TORRES DEL PAINE



October to April – Fixed Departures May to September – Flexible Dates

Unique Puma Tracking Jeep Safaris are specifically designed to maximise your chances of seeing these magnificent cats, with expert trackers working alongside your guide. You will also have the chance to see guanaco, Patagonian foxes, armadillos, Andean condor, flamingos and more as a dedicated team of biologists, professional photographers and certified national park guides track the park's population of pumas. Choose the level of accommodation that suits you – from cosy three-star lodges to the stunning, all-inclusive Explora Patagonia. Contours Travel recommends low season travel for the best prices and fewer crowds.

EL CALAFATE & EL CHALTEN

Sample Itinerary

Don't miss the stunning landscapes across the border in Argentina! Perito Moreno Glacier and the trekking mecca of El Chalten are the perfect extension to your Torres del Paine adventure.

Day 1 **El Calafate**

Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 **El Calafate**

A full-day tour to Los Glaciares National Park for spectacular views of Perito Moreno Glacier. Ask your consultant about optional mini-trekking on the glacier. **B**

Day 3 **El Calafate/ El Chalten**

Travel overland to El Chalten and check in to your lodge. **B**

Day 4 **El Chalten**

Enjoy a half-day trek to Laguna Capri. At the viewing point you'll have stunning vistas of Mt Fitz Roy, flanked by Poincenot, Saint Exupery, Mermoz and Guillaumet. Longer treks are available – please contact us for more options. **B**

Day 5 **El Chalten**

Return to El Calafate and transfer to the airport for your onward flight. **B**



Lago Grey, Torres del Paine

Stays of Distinction - Paine & Surrounds



TIERRA PATAGONIA

An architectural marvel that blends seamlessly into the Patagonian pampa. Enjoy inspiring views of Torres del Paine National Park from every corner of the 40-room lodge. A welcoming team and warm interiors inspired by the local culture make you feel right at home. Tierra's all-inclusive program allows you to explore the surrounding estancias and mountains with some of the best-trained guides around.



EXPLORA PATAGONIA

Set on the shore of Lake Pehoe and conceived as an exploration base site, the refined comfort of the hotel is ideally suited for those wanting to relax after a day of trekking and exploring this stunning park. The hotel is all-inclusive and offers world-class dining, beautiful Chilean wines and exceptional sightseeing and touring options to keep you busy every day.



THE SINGULAR PATAGONIA

Formerly a cold storage plant built in the early 20th century, The Singular has been transformed into a hotel unlike any other, honouring the site's heritage and history with a stunning refurbishment. Located in Puerto Bories, the hotel offers 57 rooms and suites, a world-class spa, a gourmet restaurant and more than 20 different excursions – including those to Torres del Paine National Park.



AWASI PATAGONIA

Situated in a private reserve overlooking Torres del Paine National Park, Awasi has just 12 villas and a main lodge. Each villa is assigned a private guide and 4WD so guests can explore at their own pace, visiting where they want when they want. Each villa has a hot tub, a wood-burning stove, a living room and measures 80m².



HOTEL LAS TORRES

Las Torres is a working private estancia; a comfortable and relaxed four-star lodge with 84 rooms. The lodge is simply furnished using local materials and artworks, while regional cuisine is showcased using largely locally grown produce. Located in the heart of the national park, this is an excellent base for hiking, 4WD excursions and horseriding.



ECOCAMP PATAGONIA

EcoCamp's cosy geodesic domes in the heart of Torres del Paine National Park provide the region's first fully sustainable accommodation, complete with green technology. The all-inclusive Patagonia Wildlife Safari program offers daily guided hikes and excursions. More active travellers can use the EcoCamp as a base for five- and seven-day W Treks.



Whale watching, Valdes Peninsula

VALDES PENINSULA

Sample Itinerary

Puerto Madryn is the gateway to the wildlife sanctuary of Valdes Peninsula. June to December is best for whale watching.

Day 1 Trelew/ Puerto Madryn

Upon arrival, transfer to Puerto Madryn.

Day 2 Puerto Madryn/ Punta Delgada

A full-day tour of Valdes Peninsula. An optional whale-watching boat tour is available from July to November. *B*

Day 3 Punta Delgada/ Puerto Madryn

Visit the wildlife reserve at Caleta Valdes in the afternoon to see elephant seals, sea lions and more native fauna. *B*

Day 4 Puerto Madryn

Visit Punta Tombo Fauna Reserve, the largest Magellanic penguin colony on the continent. From mid-April to mid-September the visit to the penguin rookery will be replaced by a tour to Valle de Chubut and other Welsh villages. Continue to the airport. *B*

BAHIA BUSTAMANTE LODGE

Accommodating a maximum of 18 guests, a stay at Bahia Bustamante is like having the Valdes Peninsula all to yourself. Rustic but comfortable rooms provide the perfect base to explore the Atlantic Patagonian surroundings.

SPIRIT OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Punta Arenas

Arrive Punta Arenas Airport and depart on a tour of the city, visiting the main points of interest, including the main square and maritime museums.

Day 2 Punta Arenas/ Lake Blanco

Begin your journey to the mythical Tierra del Fuego with a two-hour navigation through the Strait of Magellan. Disembark in Porvenir, visit the local museum and have lunch. This afternoon you will visit King Penguin Park to see this iconic Antarctic bird. Stay overnight in Lake Blanco, located on Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego. *BLD*

Day 3 Lake Blanco

Today you will visit the spectacular Karukinka Park, where a hike through native forest will bring you to Del Cura Lagoon. Enjoy a picnic lunch as you admire the views of the surrounding countryside. Return to Lake Blanco and stay overnight. *BLD*

Day 4 Lake Blanco/ Tolhuin

Cross into Argentina this morning and visit Estancia Rolito, a working sheep ranch, for a delicious homemade lunch. Afterwards, continue to Tolhuin, and stay overnight. *BLD*

Day 5 Tolhuin/ Ushuaia

Drive to the capital of Tierra del Fuego and the world's southernmost city, Ushuaia, with lunch included en route. *BL*

NAVARINO ISLAND

Sample Itinerary

From December to March fly from Punta Arenas, or take a speedboat from Ushuaia, to the wild and remote island of Navarino. Enjoy rugged landscapes, the stunning Dientes de Navarino mountain range and unique flora and fauna.

Day 1 Punta Arenas/ Puerto Williams

Fly from Punta Arenas to Puerto Williams on Navarino Island and transfer to beautiful Lakutaia Lodge. *LD*

Day 2 Navarino Island

One of the best ways to see the majestic landscapes of the Beagle Channel is by kayak, following the watery paths of ancient nomads who used canoes to travel between the islands of Tierra del Fuego. Spend the morning paddling along Lautu and Micalvi Sounds and exploring the coast of Punta Gusanos. This afternoon you can visit the Omora Ethnobotanical Park and discover the island's diverse, miniature forests of lichens, moss and bryophytes. *BLD*

Day 3 Navarino Island

A morning hike to the base of the spectacular Dientes de Navarino (Navarino's Teeth) massif which features breathtaking views of the surrounding landscapes of Tierra del Fuego, the Beagle Channel and Puerto Williams. The afternoon is at leisure or you can take a tour of Puerto Williams. *BLD*

Day 4 Puerto Williams/ Punta Arenas

There is time for a final excursion this morning – a horseride to Los Bronces Waterfall or another guided hike – before you transfer to the airstrip for your flight back to Punta Arenas. *B*



With Torres del Paine experiencing an ever-increasing number of visitors to the park, there has never been a better time to get off the beaten track and discover some of Patagonia's newest national parks. The Carretera Austral is perfect for self-drive holidays, with very little traffic and plenty of opportunities for off-road adventures. These sample itineraries can be tailor-made with a driver and guide or as self-drive programs complete with detailed map and GPS coordinates!

GLACIERS & CAVES OF THE CARRETERA AUSTRAL

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Balmaceda/ Río Tranquilo

Arrive at Balmaceda Airport and transfer 195km by road to your hotel on the shores of Lake General Carrera.

Day 2 Río Tranquilo

Day at leisure. Consider a tour to see the awe-inspiring San Rafael Glacier. Adventurers may prefer hiking the stunning Exploradores Glacier to see thousand-year-old ice caves in myriad shades of blue. *B*

Day 3 Río Tranquilo/ Puerto Guadal

A short boat ride across the lake will bring you to the Marble Caves. Explore secret caves and breathtaking formations of coloured rocks – a unique and mesmerising sight. Options for kayaking also available. Transfer 60km to Puerto Guadal on the southern edge of the lake. *B*

Day 4 Puerto Guadal

Enjoy a full-day trip to the imposing Leones Glacier. After crossing Lake General Carrera, head upstream along the River Leones in a jet boat. Disembark for a 30-minute hike to arrive at Leones Lake, fed by glaciers. A second navigation will bring you up close to Leones Glacier, where you will have time to soak up the beauty of this pristine wilderness. *BL*

Day 5 Puerto Guadal/ Coyhaique

After breakfast you will transfer to Coyhaique, with a stop in Cerro Castillo National Park along the way (a total distance of 275km). Stay overnight in Coyhaique. *B*

Day 6 Balmaceda

Transfer to Balmaceda Airport for your onward flight. *B*

PATAGONIAN SECRETS

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Balmaceda/ Puerto Ibañez

Arrive in Balmaceda and drive 90km to Puerto Ibañez where you will stay overnight.

Day 2 Puerto Ibañez/ Chile Chico

After breakfast, explore the magnificent Cerro Castillo National Park, home to a variety of fauna such as skunks, cougars and the southern Andean deer. This afternoon, cross Lake General Carrera and continue 40km to Chile Chico to stay overnight. *B*

Day 3 Chile Chico/ Parque Patagonia

Drive to Jeinimeni National Reserve, where you can see prehistoric Patagonian rock art in the Cueva de las Manos and explore the rugged landscape of Moon Valley. Continue to Parque Patagonia and overnight in the charming Estancia Valle Chacabuco (total distance 185km). *BD*

Day 4 Parque Patagonia

A full day to explore the park and appreciate the solitude of this remote wilderness. Swim near the confluence of the Baker and Chacabuco Rivers; look for shy guanacos along the gentle La Vega Loop or drive the full-day scenic route right up to the Argentine border. *BLD*

Day 5 Parque Patagonia/ Coyhaique

Depart Parque Patagonia for Río Tranquilo, where you can make a short stop to see the Marble Caves. Continue to Coyhaique and stay overnight (a total distance of 340km). *B*

Day 6 Balmaceda

Drive to Balmaceda Airport for your onward flight. *B*

ESTANCIA VALLE CHACABUCO



The successful transformation of Estancia Valle Chacabuco from struggling sheep station to sustainable tourist accommodation is all thanks to the foundation Conservation Patagonia – the same organisation responsible for the creation of Parque Patagonia thanks to a huge donation of private land to the Chilean government. Since purchasing the estancia in 2004, much work has been done to restore native grassland and forest, and coax native species back to the area.

The cosy lodge features textiles and recycled local timbers that provide a uniquely Patagonian experience. With just six guestrooms, it is an intimate base from which to explore the stunning surrounds of Chile's newest national park. Enjoy views of Mt Tamanguito from the dining room and relax by the fire at the end of the day's exploration.



AUSTRALIS CRUISE



Consistently voted among the world's best small ship ocean cruise lines, Australis is an expedition cruise company that specialises in exploring the 'end of the world' – the pristine waterways and fjords of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Between September and April, Australis sails between Punta Arenas (Chile) and Ushuaia (Argentina) along the Strait of Magellan, the Beagle Channel and other legendary passages including many places where no other cruise ships venture.

The twin vessels Stella and Ventus Australis can accommodate up to 210 passengers in 100 comfortable cabins, offering travellers a relaxed stay while providing breathtaking sights from the decks. Guests enjoy top-notch service on board with all meals, drinks and onboard lectures included in your cruise price.

FJORDS OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO

4 Nights Punta Arenas – Ushuaia

Day 1 Punta Arenas

Arrive in Punta Arenas and transfer to your ship. During the night, the ship will cross the Strait of Magellan and enter the labyrinth of channels that defines the southern extreme of Patagonia. *D*

Day 2 Ainsworth Bay/ Tucker Islets

Wake to the ship sailing up Almirante Sound, a spectacular offshoot of the Strait of Magellan. Enjoy a shore excursion at Ainsworth Bay, where you might see the resident colony of elephant seals as well as copious birdlife. Take a Zodiac trip around the Tucker Islets to get close to a colony of Magellanic penguins. *BLD*

Day 3 Pia Glacier/ Glacier Alley

This morning you'll disembark for a hike to Pia Fjord and a great view of the icebergs. Continue sailing through picturesque Glacier Alley, a passage featuring a number of impressive tidewater glaciers flowing down from the Darwin Mountains and Darwin Ice Sheet. *BLD*

Day 4 Wulaia Bay/ Cape Horn

Drop anchor in Wulaia Bay this morning and enjoy a stroll through Magellanic forests. Navigate to Cape Horn National Park. Weather permitting, explore the flora and fauna of this remote windswept island. *BLD*

Day 5 Ushuaia

Disembark this morning in Ushuaia, the world's southernmost city. *B*

PATAGONIAN EXPLORER

4 Nights Ushuaia – Punta Arenas

Day 1 Ushuaia

Arrive in Ushuaia and transfer to your ship. This evening, the vessel will navigate the narrow Murray Channel between Navarino and Hoste Islands. *D*

Day 2 Cape Horn/ Wulaia Bay

Head to Cape Horn National Park where you can disembark (weather permitting). This afternoon, drop anchor in Wulaia Bay for a walk through Magellanic forests. *BLD*

Day 3 Pia Glacier/ Garibaldi Glacier

Disembark in the morning for a short hike to Pia Fjord and a great view of the icebergs. This afternoon, visit Garibaldi Glacier and hike through virgin forest to a glacial waterfall, a towering wall of ferns and moss, and spectacular viewpoints looking down on the glacier and fjord. *BLD*

Day 4 Agostini Sound/ Condor Glacier

Enter Agostini Sound early in the morning to see the glaciers that descend from the middle of the Darwin Mountain Range. Hike around a lagoon with stunning views to Aguila Glacier. Navigate to Condor Glacier in the afternoon for a chance to see the abundant Andean condor. *BLD*

Day 5 Magdalena Island/ Punta Arenas

Visit the magnificent penguin colony on Magdalena Island in the morning (September and April visit Marta Island sea lion colony instead). Disembark in Punta Arenas around 11.30am. *B*



SKORPIOS CRUISE



Celebrating 40 years of operation in 2018, the family-run Skorpios Cruises offers unparalleled experience in expedition cruising in Patagonia. Regardless of which itinerary you choose, you'll enjoy private facilities, all meals and an open bar during your cruise.

The Skorpios II has just 53 cabins and explores the Northern Ice Field during the six-day Chonos voyage which departs from Puerto Montt. Highlights include San Rafael Glacier (the closest glacier to the Equator), Quitalco Hot Springs, the singular culture of Chiloe Island and the chance to see dolphins and penguins during the summer months.

Skorpios III has 45 cabins and explores the Southern Ice Field. The four-day Kaweskar voyage departs from Puerto Natales through the Magellanic fjords and channels. You'll see ten different glaciers on this remote and icy adventure; an immersive experience in the vast Patagonian landscape.

CHONOS VOYAGE

6 Days/ 5 Nights

Day 1 Puerto Montt

Begin sailing through the Llanquihue Archipelago. You'll catch sight of Calbuco City, Ancud Gulf and the Chiloe Archipelago as Skorpios sails south to cross the Corcovado Gulf at about midnight. *D*

Day 2 San Rafael Glacier

After a morning visit to the fishing village of Puerto Aguirre, continue sailing through the Ferronave, Pilcomayo and Costa Channels. After dinner, anchor near the San Rafael Glacier. *BLD*

Day 3 Quitalco Fjord

Cross the San Rafael Lagoon entrance early in the morning and prepare for boat excursions among the multicoloured icebergs (weather permitting). Set sail for the Quitalco Fjord. *BLD*

Day 4 Perez Norte Channel

After breakfast, you can disembark and bathe at local thermal hot springs. Weather permitting, you can take boat excursions inside the fjord. This evening, set sail towards Chiloe Island. *BLD*

Day 5 Chiloe Island

Continue sailing the eastern coast of Chiloe Island, disembarking in the pretty city of Castro in the afternoon. After an evening farewell dinner and dance on board, sail through the night towards Puerto Montt. *BLD*

Day 6 Puerto Montt

Disembark at the pier in Puerto Montt around 9am. *B*

KAWESKAR VOYAGE

4 Days/ 3 Nights

Day 1 Puerto Natales

Check in at the Skorpios Terminal in the morning and board your cruise. Begin sailing through the Angostura Kirke, Morla, Vicuña, Union, Collingwood and Sarmiento Channels. *D*

Day 2 Amalia & El Brujo Glacier

Disembark in the morning at glaciers Amalia and El Brujo for short hikes to stunning viewpoints. Back on board you'll sail for the Calvo Fjord. Board the Capitan Constantino icebreaker and sail along the icy fjord. Visit the Fernando, Capitan Constantino and Alipio glaciers. Begin sailing towards Montañas Fjord later in the evening. *BLD*

Day 3 Montañas Fjord

This morning, visit Montañas Fjord to see four glaciers sliding down the side of Sarmiento Mountain then board the smaller expedition boats and visit Alsina Glacier and the lovely bay. After lunch, take the boats to a nearby beach then hike to the base of the Bernal Glacier. Back on board, the Skorpios III begins sailing back towards Puerto Natales, crossing Angostura Kirke later in the evening. You'll be treated to a farewell Captain's dinner and dance on board. *BLD*

Day 4 Puerto Natales

After arriving in Puerto Natales disembarkation begins around 8am at the Skorpios Terminal. *B*



When to Go?

The Antarctic season runs from late October to early April

Highlights

Dubbed 'Kodak Gap' for its jaw-dropping scenery, the ice-choked **Lemaire Channel** is hemmed in by steep cliffs and one of Antarctica's most memorable sights.

Wildlife lovers should head to **South Georgia** for mind-boggling multitudes of penguins, sea elephants and more!

See the stars of the movie 'Happy Feet' – Adelie penguins are even cuter in real life!

Our Expert's Choice

Antarctica offers great opportunities for adventurous travellers – including snowshoeing, skiing, kayaking, camping and the infamous polar plunge!

Discover the human history of Antarctic exploration with a visit to Shackleton's grave, on **South Georgia**.

WHICH VOYAGE?

Generally speaking there are three main itineraries for trips to the Antarctic region:

- **Antarctic Peninsula:** the classic Antarctic adventure is typically an 11- to 13-day journey, starting and ending in Ushuaia and crossing the Drake Passage. Slightly longer itineraries aim to take you below the Antarctic Circle. Other variations include voyages to the Weddell Sea for a chance to see emperor penguins.
- **Antarctica, Falklands and South Georgia:** These voyages are usually 18 to 21 days in length and include shore excursions to the Falkland and South Georgia islands. Combine the stunning beauty of the Antarctic Peninsula with the incredible wildlife of South Georgia and history of the Falklands for the ultimate Antarctic adventure.
- **Fly/ Cruise:** A fantastic option for those who are pressed for time or don't wish to tackle the infamous Drake Passage, fly/cruise options start and end in Punta Arenas and involve a charter flight to King George Island, from where you pick up the cruise. Variations include starting or ending in the Falkland Islands with flights between Punta Arenas and Stanley. The shortest fly/cruise voyage is just seven days.

CHOOSING A VESSEL

Let's face it, you didn't go all the way to Antarctica to relax in a luxurious cabin! Cruising in Antarctica is all about the time you spend off the ship. Whilst many vessels offer a high level of comfort and amenities, luxury liners are simply not cut out for Antarctic exploration. In fact, ships with more than 500 passengers are not even allowed to land in Antarctica!

Antarctic regulations also mean that only 100 passengers can go ashore at any one time, so we recommend choosing a smaller vessel to maximise the amount of time you spend on shore. All the ships we recommend are expedition vessels with a strong focus on time spent off the ship.

Aside from the size of the vessel, other considerations are budget, length of cruise, destinations and optional activities. Is camping on the Antarctic continent something you've always dreamed about? Fancy kayaking among towering icebergs and darting penguins? Or perhaps you're looking to improve your photography skills and need the help of a professional?

Talk to our expert consultants about choosing the right ship for your Antarctic adventure.

ANTARCTIC SEASONS

Early-season voyagers (November and early December) will experience Antarctica at its most pristine. Icebergs and ice formations are at their sharpest and most dramatic, and the snow is a pure and dazzling white as the continent awakens from its winter slumber. Penguins are at their most active during November, with many species mating and nesting. Adventurous travellers choose early-season voyages because the sheer quantity of ice and snow allows skiing and snowshoeing – impossible on mid- and late-season voyages.

Peak season (mid-December to mid-February) offers wildlife viewing at its best with long daylight hours, incredible, drawn-out sunsets and, often, calmer seas. January is the time to see fluffy, grey penguin chicks hatching and experience them at their cutest! You may also get the chance to see playful fur seal pups frolic beside your Zodiac during these warmer summer months. Voyages during this peak period tend to sell out far in advance so it's important to plan ahead to secure your preferred ship and cabin type.

Late season (February and March) is the best time to see whales – orcas, humpback and sperm whales are abundant during this time. You may also still catch the odd penguin chick and experience the incredible noise and confusion of the rookeries at their busiest.



© Martin van Lokven-Oceanwide Expeditions



AKADEMIK IOFFE & AKADEMIK SERGEY VAVILOV

96 Passengers

Designed for polar research, these twin ice-strengthened vessels are stable, comfortable and perfectly suited for expedition cruising. They feature identical deck plans, cabin types and spacious common areas including a hot water spa, sauna and plunge pool.

Vavilov offers fly/cruise itineraries as well as a unique cruise focusing purely on the wonderful wildlife of South Georgia. The Ioffe's Off the Beaten Track itinerary offers a range of active options such as snowshoeing, sea kayaking, back country skiing and hiking. A complete expedition kit including jacket, waders, drybag and binoculars is included for use on voyages.



GREG MORTIMER

120 Passengers

The custom-designed Greg Mortimer is at the cutting edge of nautical technology as the first passenger ship to feature the patented X-BOW™ design, and with hydraulic viewing platforms and environmentally-friendly virtual anchoring. Four dedicated sea-level boat launching platforms mean smoother and safer Zodiac transfers to shore. All staterooms have private bathrooms, twin and double bed configuration options, ample storage, international power outlets and a daily cabin service. Optional activities include kayaking, skiing, diving and climbing (additional cost). Complimentary expedition jackets are included in the cruise cost and you will receive a photobook memento of this once-in-a-lifetime adventure.



ORTELIUS

106 Passengers

The expedition-style Ortelius offers simple but comfortable cabins, and a relaxed onboard atmosphere. Boasting the highest ice class notation, the vessel is ideal for exploring remote locations.

A unique feature of the vessel is the helipad. In places where it's not possible to land a Zodiac, passengers are transferred by helicopter (weather permitting) – a thrilling addition to an already incredible adventure. Rubber boots are included for use on all voyages.



© Martin van Lokven-Oceanwide Expeditions



PLANCIUS

116 Passengers

This vessel accommodates 116 passengers in 53 cabins with private facilities. The expedition-style vessel offers a restaurant/lecture room and a spacious observation lounge and bar with a full panoramic view. Its large open deck spaces offer excellent opportunities to enjoy the scenery and wildlife.

The Plancius and Ortelius BaseCamp departures are perfect for more active travellers. During these voyages the ship will be taken to carefully chosen places in the Antarctic where passengers can have more time for adventure activities such as hiking, mountaineering, kayaking and even scuba diving.



SEA SPIRIT

114 Passengers

Providing spacious accommodation across five decks, Sea Spirit features the manoeuvrability and friendly atmosphere of a small ship. The vessel has an ice-strengthened hull, a fleet of 11 Zodiacs for shore excursions, and a set of retractable fin stabilisers for smoother sailing. Optional activities include camping on the ice and kayaking. Insulated, water-resistant and windproof parkas are included in cruise costs with comfortable and warm rubber boots provided on loan throughout the voyage as well.



USHUAIA

84 Passengers

The ice-strengthened polar vessel Ushuaia is very well-appointed and provides ample deck space and an open bridge policy. The full complement of inflatable craft ensures superb landings and wildlife-viewing opportunities on the otherwise inaccessible coastline. The Ushuaia has been refurbished to accommodate a maximum of 84 passengers in 41 comfortable twin cabins and suites.

Itineraries include 10- to 12-day Antarctica Peninsula voyages, slightly longer Weddell Sea and Polar Circle voyages and 18- to 20-day cruises that include the Falklands and South Georgia. All voyages start and end in Ushuaia.



One Ocean Expeditions



RCGS RESOLUTE

146 Passengers

This purpose-built vessel offers expedition cruising with the highest ice class. Comfortable, spacious cabins are spread over six decks and all feature lower berths and outside views. Between excursions indulge in the saltwater plunge pool, hot water jacuzzi, steam room or sauna. A complete expedition kit including jacket, waders, drybag and binoculars is included for use on voyages.

Voyages commencing in the Falkland Islands are accessed via direct charter flight to and from Santiago – making it more convenient than ever to visit the polar region.



HEBRIDEAN SKY

110 Passengers

Given a multimillion-dollar refit in 2016, the vessel added state-of-the-art stabilisation, fuel efficiency and upgraded communications systems. Each suite features a sitting area, a private bathroom and a picture window. A number of suites include private balconies. Cruises operating from Ushuaia include the Antarctic Peninsula, Antarctic Circle and longer voyages to the Falklands and South Georgia. This ship also operates as part of a fly/cruise experience, with eight-day itineraries.



OCEAN NOVA

72 Passengers

Perfect for those with limited time, or who don't fancy crossing the infamous Drake Passage, a fly/cruise allows you to reach the White Continent in the shortest time possible. A two-hour charter flight takes you from Chile to Antarctica, where you board the Ocean Nova.

The ship boasts comfortable outside cabins, all with private facilities. Common areas include a glass-enclosed observation lounge and presentation room, spacious dining room, bar and library.



Iguaçu Falls, photo by Embratur



When to Go?

Brazil, and especially Rio de Janeiro, experiences a huge surge in visitors over New Year's Eve and Carnival – plan well ahead for travel over these dates.

The weather for coastal Brazil is generally warm and pleasant and rarely experiences extreme hot or cold temperatures.

The Pantanal dry season from June to September is the best time to see mammals; the wetter months are wonderful for birdwatching.

May to September are the driest months in the Brazilian Amazon but rainfall is common all year round.

Highlights

The granite mountains, white-sand beaches and lush rainforest of **Rio de Janeiro** combine to create one of the world's most spectacular cities.

The Brazilian side of the falls boasts the best panoramic views of majestic **Iguaçu Falls**. Surrounded by tropical forest, it offers great birdwatching opportunities.

See the famous Meeting of the Waters on the mighty **Amazon**, where the Rio Negro and Rio Solimões converge.

Stroll the stunning historic centre of **Salvador de Bahia** and experience the vibrant African influence evident in local music, dance, food and religion.

Our Expert's Choice

For wildlife enthusiasts, a trip to the world's largest wetland region, the **Pantanal**, is hard to beat. See blue hyacinth macaws, giant anteaters, toucans and more with a stay in a traditional fazenda.

A stay in the picture-perfect colonial town of **Paraty** is the perfect way to wind down after the frenetic pace of Rio de Janeiro.

Venture into Bahia's interior to explore the stunning tabletop mountain scenery of **Chapada Diamantina**.



Rio de Janeiro

A TASTE OF RIO

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Rio de Janeiro

Transfer to your hotel on arrival. We offer a wide range of accommodation in popular Copacabana, upmarket Ipanema and the bohemian district of Santa Teresa.

Day 2 Rio de Janeiro

Depart this morning for Corcovado Mountain, where you'll see the enormous statue of Christ the Redeemer and enjoy fabulous views over the city. Continue to Santa Teresa for lunch and wander the scenic cobblestone streets. *BL*

Day 3 Rio de Janeiro

A morning walking tour explores the waterfront area that was rejuvenated for the 2016 Olympics and is now a lovely place for a bike ride or a walk. See the stunning architecture of the Museum of Tomorrow and the Rio Museum of Art. Take an afternoon sunset tour of Sugarloaf Mountain, riding the cable cars for great views over Rio's famous beaches. *B*

Day 4 Rio de Janeiro

Spend the morning at leisure. This afternoon, visit a neighbourhood percussion school where students of various ages and experience levels come together to celebrate the rhythms of Brazil. This exhilarating experience is unique to Contours Travel. *B*

Day 5 Rio de Janeiro

Take a morning jeep tour up into one of Rio's favelas where you'll see another side of life for cariocas (residents of Rio). Locals have welcomed the tours as a way of creating a positive source of income. After an afternoon at leisure experience some of the colour and glamour of Carnival with a live samba show and dinner. *BD*

Day 6 Rio de Janeiro

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or ask us about Rio's excellent nearby beach breaks – colonial Paraty and chic Buzios are both popular weekend destinations for locals. *B*

CARNIVAL

Held every year during the week leading up to Lent, Rio Carnival attracts some two million revellers from all corners of the globe. Samba schools around Rio prepare year-round for the biggest event on the Rio calendar, when the city comes alive with an amazing energy. Seeing the spectacular display of colour and movement inside the Sambadrome is unforgettable and something everyone should experience at least once.

2020	21 to 26 Feb
2021	12 to 17 Feb
2022	25 Feb to 2 Mar



ILHA GRANDE & PARATY

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Rio de Janeiro/ Ilha Grande

Depart Rio this morning and transfer by road along the coast to Angra dos Reis. Here you will board a ferry to Ilha Grande, a stunning island paradise of tropical beaches and virgin Atlantic rainforest. Stay overnight at a beachside hotel.

Day 2 Ilha Grande

After breakfast, hike to beautiful Lopes Mendes Beach, frequently named as one of Brazil's most beautiful. Along the way you will see Las Palmas Waterfall and perhaps a mischievous sagui monkey. An afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 3 Ilha Grande

A day at leisure. Consider an optional boat excursion to Lagoa Azul where you can snorkel and visit the tiny hamlet of Freguesia de Santana. *B*

Day 4 Ilha Grande/ Paraty

Take the ferry back to the mainland and transfer by road to Paraty. Take a guided walk through cobblestone streets and discover the history of this once wealthy trading post of the Portuguese empire. Stay overnight in a boutique hotel in the historic centre. *B*

Day 5 Paraty

A day at leisure. Consider an optional hike along an ancient gold trail or a schooner cruise out on the bay for some great snorkelling opportunities. *B*

Day 6 Paraty

Transfer to Sao Paulo or Rio de Janeiro Airport for your onward flight. *B*



Salvador de Bahia

BEST OF BAHIA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Salvador

Arrive and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Salvador

Take a morning walking tour of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed centre. Explore Salvador's African roots, which are evident in its music, dance, cuisine and culture. End the day with a folkloric ballet at the Miguel Santana Theatre. *B*

Day 3 Salvador/ Chapada Diamantina

Travel by bus to Lençóis (6hrs) or take a direct flight (Thu and Sun only). Take an afternoon walking tour to Serrano Pools and the Cachoeira da Primavera Waterfall. *B*

Day 4 Chapada Diamantina

Visit Lapa Doce Cave, with the second-largest limestone formations in Brazil in the morning. Continue to Pratinha where you can swim in the crystal-clear waters. Finish at Pai Inácio table mountain for picture postcard views and a stunning sunset. *B*

Day 5 Chapada Diamantina

Transfer to the trailhead and hike uphill for spectacular views of the valley and mountain scenery. Continue for a leisurely hour to the Fumaça Falls, a 380m waterfall named for its thick, smoke-like mists of spray. *B*

Day 6 Lençóis/ Salvador

Return by bus or plane to Salvador, with a transfer to your hotel on arrival. *B*

Day 7 Salvador

Transfer to the airport or extend your stay in the region with a visit to the stunning Morro de São Paulo on Ilha Tinharé. *B*

THE SERRA VERDE TRAIN

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Curitiba

Arrive in Curitiba and transfer to your hotel. We recommend visiting the beautiful botanical gardens in the afternoon, and the Oscar Niemeyer Museum is a must for lovers of bold architecture.

Day 2 Curitiba/ Ilha do Mel

Transfer to the train station in Curitiba in the morning to board the Serra Verde Express. This stunning train journey departs Curitiba and descends 900m through the lush Serra do Mar to the historic town of Morretes. Enjoy views of the Atlantic rainforest, mountain canyons and tropical lowlands on this dramatic journey. After time to explore Morretes, transfer by boat to beautiful Ilha do Mel (Honey Island), and spend your afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 3 Ilha do Mel

A relaxing day to enjoy the island at your leisure. Stroll to the lighthouse for stunning views or visit the magnificent Encantadas Cave. *B*

Day 4 Ilha do Mel/ Curitiba

After breakfast, take the boat to Pontal do Sul and continue by road to Curitiba. Transfer to your hotel or the airport on arrival. *B*

BRAZIL BEACH BREAKS

With more than 7,000km of coastline it's no surprise that Brazil contains some of the best beaches in Latin America – if not the world. Below are some of our favourites:

Buzios

An ultra-chic resort just three hours from Rio. Upscale accommodation and dining options and excellent nightlife make this a favourite of Rio's residents, or 'cariocas'.

Paraty

A UNESCO World Heritage-listed colonial gem on the stunning Angra do Reis bay, Paraty is three hours from Rio and backed by lush Atlantic rainforest.

Florianópolis

One of the most accessible options with direct international flights from Santiago and Buenos Aires, Florianópolis offers fabulous surf spots and a range of accommodation options around Santa Catarina Island.

Fernando de Noronha

One of the most exquisite beach destinations in the world, Fernando is located 350km off the northeast coast of Brazil and offers excellent diving and snorkelling. Fly to Fernando from Natal and Recife.

Recife

The northeast's most exciting city also contains some of the loveliest urban beaches in Brazil. Calm turquoise waters stretch north to Olinda, a historic colonial city with an artsy bohemian vibe.



Amazon & Pantanal Cruises



M/V AMAZON CLIPPER PREMIUM

Manaus
2, 3 & 5-Night cruises

The first-class riverboat M/V Amazon Clipper Premium hosts 32 guests in 16 spacious outside cabins, with lower beds and private ensuite facilities. Common areas include an air-conditioned dining room, sundeck with 360-degree panoramic views, a lecture room with library, and a jacuzzi and outdoor showers for refreshing and relaxing. Five-night cruises explore the Amazon and Rio Negro, including the Lake Janauari Ecological Park and Anavilhanas Archipelago.



M/Y TUCANO

Manaus
4 & 6-Night cruises

Accommodating a maximum of 18 passengers, the Motor Yacht Tucano is comfortable, intimate and fun. This is not a luxury cruise, but rather a base for an exhilarating Amazon adventure. The riverboat features a large outdoor deck, air-conditioned salon and beautiful woodwork throughout. The six-night voyage explores some of the most untouched rainforest in the Amazon, venturing up the Rio Negro channels. You will visit the Lake Janauari Ecological Park, Anavilhanas Archipelago and the northernmost point of the voyage, the Rio Jauaperi.



M/V DESAFIO

Manaus
3 & 6-Night cruises

This refurbished wooden-hulled schooner features 12 cabins divided between the upper and lower decks and sleeps 24 passengers. Common areas include an air-conditioned restaurant with panoramic windows and an outdoor sundeck with bar. Six-night cruises will take you to Anavilhanas, the largest river archipelago in the world with more than 400 islands. You will also visit the Jau National Park, containing the largest area of protected tropical rainforest in the world.



M/Y PERALTA

Pantanal, Corumba & Cuiaba

This luxury cruise offers three- and four-night cruises through the Southern and Northern Pantanal, allowing guests the opportunity to experience incredible wilderness in comfort and style. Each of the ten cabins is equipped with floor-to-ceiling windows, air-conditioning and private facilities. Between excursions, relax on the observation deck or enjoy a refreshing drink by the bar. Kayak the Paraguay River, learn how to cook with piranha and discover why the Pantanal is celebrated by wildlife enthusiasts. For your best chance to see the elusive jaguar, cruise the Northern Pantanal between July and October.



by Axel Giering

Amazon & Pantanal Lodges



ANAVILHANAS JUNGLE LODGE

Manaus
Minimum stay 3 Days/ 2 Nights

Located 3.5 hours from Manaus, Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge has 20 exclusive suites arranged in cottages and bungalows with air-conditioning and private balconies, plus a swimming pool for guests. Choose from a range of activities including jungle hikes, fishing, canoe rides, pink dolphin spotting and visits to local communities.



CRISTALINO JUNGLE LODGE

Alta Floresta
Recommended 4 nights minimum

Located in the Southern Amazon about two hours from Alta Floresta Airport, the lodge places an emphasis on sustainable tourism practices. Guests enjoy chic accommodation, spacious common areas and a floating river deck. The lodge offers programs for all nature lovers, including birdwatching, family groups and photography. As the lodge is quite remote, we recommend four-night stays or longer.



CAIMAN ECOLOGICAL REFUGE

Pantanal, Campo Grande
Jun-Sep: Fixed 3 & 4-Night packages
Oct-May: Daily departures

This working cattle ranch is located four hours from Campo Grande Airport, in the Southern Pantanal. Choose from luxury suites or standard accommodation with air-conditioning and private facilities. Enjoy cosy common areas, fabulous home-style meals and a swimming pool. Activities include photo safaris, trail walking and canoe rides. Why not extend your trip with a visit to Bonito?



ARARAS ECOLODGE

Pantanal, Cuiaba

Located on a 2,780-hectare private reserve, Araras Ecolodge offers 19 comfortable air-conditioned rooms, all with private bathrooms and large verandahs with hammocks. Enjoy stunning views of the Northern Pantanal from the top of the lodge's observation towers, and refreshing dips in the pool between excursions. Activities include trekking, birdwatching, canoeing, horseback riding and photo safaris, all conducted with expert local guides. Visits to Araras can be combined with the Park Ecolodge in the unique Chapada dos Guimarães region.

When to Go?

December to March is the peak season; book ahead for hotspots such as Cartagena.

Visit Caño Cristales from July to November to experience the explosion of colours in the river.

Highlights

Flaunting a wealth of colonial architecture, UNESCO World Heritage-listed **Cartagena de Indias** is utterly beguiling.

Bogota is a cosmopolitan metropolis with splendid museums, bustling markets and scintillating nightlife.

Stay in a traditional hacienda among the **Coffee Triangle's** verdant hills and acres of coffee.

Our Expert's Choice

See the unique natural spectacle of the Liquid Rainbow when **Caño Cristales** bursts into colour.

Accessible only on foot, the spectacular ruins of **La Ciudad Perdida** (The Lost City) are revealed to a select few adventurers.

A gentle amble from **Barichara** along the Camino Real is the perfect way to experience the beauty of the Colombian countryside at your own pace.



DISCOVER COLOMBIA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 **Bogota**

Arrive in Bogota and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 **Bogota**

A half-day city tour includes visits to La Candelaria, the Gold Museum and the Botero Museum. Take the cable car to Monserrate lookout for views of the city and the Andes mountain range. *B*

Day 3 **Bogota/ Villa de Leyva**

Depart Bogota, travelling north to Zipaquirá where you'll visit the famous underground Salt Cathedral. Continue to the pretty colonial village of Villa de Leyva and stay overnight. *BL*

Day 4 **Villa de Leyva/ Bogota**

On the way back to Bogota you'll visit the Convento del Santo Ecce Homo, founded in 1620. Afternoon at leisure in Bogota. *B*

Day 5 **Bogota/ Coffee Region**

Fly to Pereira and transfer to your traditional hacienda accommodation. Enjoy an afternoon tour of a coffee plantation. *B*

Day 6 **Coffee Region**

Begin with a city tour of Filandia. Continue to Cocora Valley Natural Reserve for trekking or horseback riding among the iconic Quindío wax palm, Colombia's national tree. After lunch, travel to Salento, the oldest town in the region, and visit a traditional handcraft factory. *BL*

Day 7 **Coffee Region/ Medellin**

Fly to Medellin and transfer to your hotel. Once synonymous with crime and cartels, Medellin has undergone a rapid transformation and is now one of Colombia's most liveable cities. *B*

Day 8 **Medellin**

Depart with your guide on a half-day tour showcasing the city's social transformation. Visit Poblado, where Pablo Escobar once lived, and witness the dramatic changes that saw Medellin win the World City Prize for innovation in 2016. *B*

Day 9 **Medellin**

Enjoy a full-day tour to the picturesque town of Guatapé, where the houses are intricately painted in colourful designs. Visit enormous El Peñol rock, thought to be part of a meteorite due to its size, and climb to the top for stunning views over the man-made Guatapé Lake. *B*

Day 10 **Medellin/ Cartagena**

Fly to Cartagena and transfer to your hotel in the old city. An afternoon tour takes in the city's colonial district, Parque Bolívar, Museo del Oro, the Palace of the Inquisition, Santo Domingo church, the Ramparts and the Museo de las Fortificaciones. *B*

Day 11 **Cartagena**

A day at leisure to relax and explore. Consider an optional excursion to the Rosario Islands or a visit to the markets with a local chef to learn about the astonishing variety of local produce and sample some of Colombia's exotic fruits. *B*

Day 12 **Cartagena**

A day at leisure. Consider a day trip to San Basilio de Palenque, a community of the descendants of escaped slaves from the colonial period of the 17th century, which has survived intact in San Basilio along with their practices, customs and traditions. *B*

Day 13 **Cartagena/ Santa Marta**

Travel overland to Santa Marta and enjoy an afternoon tour of the historic centre, including the imposing cathedral and the nearby Bay of Taganga. *B*

Day 14 **Santa Marta**

Enjoy a full-day tour to the spectacular Tayrona National Park with dreamlike white sandy beaches surrounded by turquoise blue waters, coral reefs, densely rich jungle and mangroves. You'll have a light hike through the forest and time for a swim before returning to your hotel. *B*

Day 15 **Santa Marta**

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*



Caño Cristales River

CIUDAD PERDIDA



Discover one of South America's most rewarding archaeological sites on this multi-day trek through the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1979. The remote city was built by the Tayrona people in around 800CE and features a series of terraces high upon a mountain plateau, with commanding views of the surrounding valleys. The challenging trek will take you into lush jungle, across mountain streams and through traditional, indigenous communities. Finally, a climb up 1,183 stone steps will reveal the ancient city. Treks range from four to six days depending on your fitness level. Accommodation is in simple camps with hammocks or bunks with mosquito nets. The best time to travel is from December to March (the dry season along the Caribbean Coast).

CAÑO CRISTALES

Sample Itinerary

This mythical river of five colours is located an hour from Bogota by plane in the Sierra de la Macarena National Park. Please note that as this is an under-developed region for tourism, accommodation is fairly basic.

Day 1 **Bogota/ La Macarena**

Fly from Bogota to La Macarena. Transfer to your hotel on arrival for lunch then grab your bathing suit for this afternoon's tour to the stunning Caño Cristales River. Travel by boat along the Guayabero River and enjoy an easy hour-long hike to see Karol Cristal swimming hole, Los Ochos and Piscina del Turista. Return to La Macarena and overnight. *L*

Day 2 **La Macarena**

Today's exploration will take you back to the famed river of five colours to explore other natural attractions such as the Quartz, Pianos, Love and Virgin Waterfalls. A boxed lunch will be provided. *BL*

Day 3 **La Macarena**

Enjoy another day exploring the Sierra de la Macarena National Park. Visit la Silla del Tinigua, Tres Espejos, Pozo Cuadrado and Las Escaleras swimming holes. Keep your eyes peeled for the myriad bird species found in the national park – more than 400 species can be found in this area. Return to La Macarena and overnight. *BL*

Day 4 **La Macarena/ Bogota**

Transfer back to the airport for your return flight to Bogota. *B*

WAYABERO LODGE



In late 2020, Wayabero Lodge will usher in a new level of comfort and service to this stunning region. Owned by the award-winning team behind Mashpi Lodge in Ecuador, Wayabero will act as a base for explorations to the nearby Sierra de la Macarena National Park, including the majestic Caño Cristales River.

All 36 rooms and suites will feature expansive views and luxury amenities. After a day's exploration you'll be welcomed back to the lodge with signature house-made cocktails and exquisite cuisine created by Colombian chef Jose Barbara. Contact your consultant and be one of the first adventurers to visit this revolutionary lodge and nature reserve.



Giant Anteater with baby, Guyana

INTRODUCING THE GUIANAS



Located on the northeast coast of South America and separated from neighbouring Brazil by thousands of acres of pristine jungle, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana offer a very different experience from the rest of the continent. Speaking English, Dutch and French respectively, these nations have a distinctly Caribbean culture and a cultural *mélange* that has created diversity in everything from food and music to religion.

Guyana and Suriname are emerging gems in the ecotourism market, with lush interiors, cascading waterfalls, virgin rainforest and tropical wildlife to rival the best nature destinations in the world. This region has one of the highest levels of biodiversity on Earth – an incredible 80% of Guyana is covered by rainforest. While travel to the interior is challenging and takes time, it is certainly worth it! Remote Indian villages, incredible pristine rainforest and staggering wildlife lie in wait for adventurous travellers.

BEST OF GUYANA & SURINAME

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Georgetown, Guyana
Arrive and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Kaieteur Falls
Board your flight to Kaieteur Falls, the world's highest free-falling waterfall. *BL*

Day 3 Georgetown/ Caiman House
Fly to Lethem and transfer across the savannah to Caiman House Field Station, a combined guest lodge and research centre. This afternoon you will head out to watch staff capture, tag and release black caimans for data collection. Stay overnight in Caiman House. *BLD*

Day 4 Caiman House/ Karanambu Lodge
An early-morning excursion on Awariku Lake for wildlife spotting followed by breakfast. A boat transfer along the Rupununi River will bring you to Karanambu Lodge. Enjoy an afternoon excursion looking for giant river otters. *BLD*

Day 5 Karanambu Lodge
Make an early start to reach an area which is home to a population of giant anteaters. Enjoy evening excursions from the lodge. *BLD*

Day 6 Karanambu Lodge/ Surama
Travel along the Rupununi River by boat spotting various wildlife along the way. Arrive at your accommodation in the Amerindian village of Surama in the afternoon. *BLD*

Day 7 Surama
Rise before dawn for a walk across the savannah. In the afternoon, paddle on the Burro Burro River for opportunities to observe giant river otters, tapirs and spider monkeys. *BLD*

Day 8 Atta Rainforest Lodge
Transfer to Atta Rainforest Lodge in Iwokrama Forest with activities along the way. The lodge offers a 154m-long canopy walkway. *BLD*

Day 9 Paramaribo, Suriname
Start with an early-morning canopy walk then return to the lodge for breakfast. Fly to Paramaribo, via Georgetown, and stay overnight. *B*

Day 10 Danpaati River Lodge
Travel by road to Atjoni. From here you will travel by motorised canoe to the Upper Suriname River and Danpaati River Lodge where you will stay overnight. During an evening cruise, look for caimans along the banks of the river. *BLD*

Day 11 Danpaati River Lodge
Visit a local Maroon village, founded by escaped slaves who managed to maintain many of their African traditions. After lunch, take a guided walk through the rainforest or go for a paddle in a dugout canoe. *BLD*

Day 12 Danpaati Lodge/ Paramaribo
Morning at leisure. Return to Paramaribo this afternoon and stay overnight. *BL*

Day 13 Paramaribo
A full-day tour of Paramaribo's colonial plantations and museums. *BL*

Day 14 Paramaribo
Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or ask your consultant about crossing into French Guiana. *B*



Kafeteur Falls, Guyana



KARANAMBU LODGE

Located on the banks of the Rupununi River, Karanambu has been the home of the McTurk family and a working cattle ranch since 1927. Each of the six traditional thatched cabins accommodate two people and feature private facilities, a veranda with hammock, drinking water and 100% solar electricity. Activities may include hiking forest trails, boat trips through flooded forests and 4WD adventures across the Rupununi savannah. The lodge's otter rehabilitation program means that orphaned river otters are often present at the ranch.



DANPAATI RIVER LODGE

Danpaati River Lodge is an exceptionally remote and tranquil oasis in the heart of nature, located 200km south of Paramaribo. The lodge features a welcoming and breezy lounge facing the river, a large pool surrounded by a hardwood yoga deck, and easy access to one of the few portions of the Suriname River where it is actually safe to swim. Accommodations are in spacious A-frame-style cabins with carefully appointed amenities including a fresh coffee service in the mornings, mosquito nets and unbeatable views into the thick, surrounding nature.



ATTA RAINFOREST LODGE

The Iwokrama Canopy Walkway is a series of suspension bridges and decks of up to 30m in height and 154m in length, located in the Iwokrama Forest. Located at the base of the walkway, Atta Rainforest Lodge offers comfortable private room accommodation, delicious home-cooked meals and traditional Amerindian hospitality. The short 20-minute walk to the walkway platforms means the lodge the perfect base to experience the canopy before dawn! Birdwatchers take note – conservation efforts around the lodge have led to a nearly 100% success rate for sightings of the fabulous Guianan cock-of-the-rock.



KABALEBO NATURE RESORT

Deep in the Amazon rainforest and accessible only by air, Kabalebo Nature Resort is more than 200km from the nearest road or village and is efficiently run and guided by descendants of the original Amerindian and African Maroons. Comfortable river cabins have private facilities with hot and cold water, and air-conditioning. Activities include guided jungle hikes, canoe trips to search for wildlife, exploring nearby waterfalls or fishing for native Amazonian species. In between excursions, relax by the pool and swap adventures with fellow guests in the bar.



View of Popocatepetl Volcano from Cholula



When to Go?

December to April are the driest months across the country and the best time to visit.

The Riviera Maya, near Cancun, is best avoided during the North American Spring Break (around early March) and during the hurricane season (August to October).

Day of the Dead celebrations occur every year between 30 October and 2 November; if you would like to experience the unique festivities be sure to plan well in advance.

Highlights

Mexico has a wealth of stunning colonial cities – **Guanajuato**, **San Cristobal de las Casas** and **San Miguel de Allende** are just a few of the best-preserved.

Explore the magical Maya ruins of **Palenque**, **Chichen Itza** and **Uxmal**.

Sample Mexico's justifiably famous cuisine in the culinary hotspots of **Puebla**, **Oaxaca** and **Mexico City**.

Our Expert's Choice

See the ancient city of **Teotihuacan** from a hot air balloon at dawn.

Get off the beaten track on the **Yucatan Peninsula** and explore hidden cenotes and ancient ruins with a rental car.

Ride the Chepe Train through the **Copper Canyon** and enjoy some of Mexico's most dramatic scenery.

Explore the extraordinary sculpture gardens of eccentric surrealist Edward James at Las Pozas in **Xilitla**.

Enjoy a hands-on cooking class in **Merida** or explore Oaxaca's street food with a special walking tour.



Our Lady of Guadalupe Basilica, Mexico City

A TASTE OF MEXICO

Sample Itinerary

The vibrant Mexican capital is just a four-hour flight from Los Angeles. With so much to see and do you'll appreciate a few extra days in this continually surprising city.

Day 1 Mexico City

Arrive in Mexico City and transfer to your hotel. Start your immersion into Mexican culture with a folkloric ballet performance at the magnificent Bellas Artes Theatre. Transfers included. (Wed and Sun only)

Day 2 Mexico City

See the highlights of Mexico City on this half-day tour, including the Zocalo, cathedral, National Palace murals by Diego Rivera, Chapultepec Park and the Museum of Anthropology. You may like to continue exploring the museum at the end of your tour and enjoy a relaxing walk back to your hotel through the park. *B*

Day 3 Mexico City

An early start takes you to Teotihuacan for an unforgettable hot air balloon ride over the ruins. Afterwards, enjoy a guided tour during the coolest part of the day. You'll have plenty of time to climb the amazing pyramids as well as visit the Palace of the Quetzal Butterfly, the Temple of the Feathered Serpent and the Avenue of the Dead. Return to your hotel with the afternoon at leisure. Consider a visit to the excellent Soumaya Museum to see its fabulous art collection and the extraordinary architecture of the exterior. *B*

Day 4 Mexico City

A morning at leisure. Ask us about including a visit to Xochimilco floating gardens to navigate the canals on board a colourful trajinera. This afternoon, enjoy a guided tour of Coyoacan to visit the family home of famous Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, decorated in her unique style and now housing a wonderful museum. Enjoy some free time to wander the Plaza Hidalgo and explore the popular market. *B*

Day 5 Mexico City

Enjoy a full-day tour to Taxco, a quaint, colonial cobbled town famed for its silverware and unique late baroque architecture of the Santa Prisca Church. On the way visit Cuernavaca, the city of the eternal spring, with its cathedral and the imposing Palace of Cortes. *B*

Day 6 Mexico City

Transfer to the airport or travel overland to another of Mexico's fascinating cities. *B*

PUEBLOS MAGICOS



Mexico's Pueblos Magicos program was developed by the tourism board to promote a series of 'magical towns' dotted throughout the country, in recognition of their natural beauty, cultural heritage, traditions or historical relevance. With more than 110 towns officially recognised, you are bound to find one that piques your interest – whether it be architecture, regional food, handcrafts or music (or often a combination of all of these!). Many of our suggested itineraries already feature some of the more popular pueblos such as San Cristobal de las Casas, Oaxaca and Taxco. Let your consultant know what interests you and we'll create a magical Mexican holiday just for you.



Campeche

ANCIENT CULTURES

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Mexico City

Arrive in Mexico City and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Mexico City

Depart early for Teotihuacan Ruins to see the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon and enjoy the ruins in the cooler part of the day. Return to Mexico City to explore the highlights, including the Zocalo, cathedral, National Palace and the world-renowned Museum of Anthropology. *B*

Day 3 Mexico City

A half-day tour of the bohemian district of Coyoacan, including the famous Frida Kahlo Museum. *B*

Day 4 Mexico City/ Puebla

Pass towering snow-capped volcanoes as you travel overland to Puebla. The town is famous for its hand-painted talavera tiles and ceramics, and its streets, churches and plazas are a constant reminder of this beautiful craft. *B*

Day 5 Puebla

A day at leisure to relax and explore this UNESCO World Heritage-listed city. *B*

Day 6 Puebla/ Oaxaca

An overland bus ride to Oaxaca, encircled by the Sierra Mountains. Beautiful Oaxaca was once the centre of the Mixtec and Zapotec civilisations. *B*

Day 7 Oaxaca

A half-day tour to the ruins of Monte Alban. See exquisite architecture, unique stone mosaics and stunning views over the Central Valleys. *B*

Day 8 Oaxaca

After a morning tour of the local markets, learn some traditional Oaxacan recipes at a cooking class. Enjoy the fruits of your labours with a delicious lunch. Spend the afternoon at leisure. *BL*

Day 9 Oaxaca/ Tuxtla/ San Cristobal

Fly to Tuxtla Gutierrez. On arrival you'll be transferred to San Cristobal via the Sumidero Canyon. Enjoy a boat ride along the Grijalva River to view the impressive canyon walls, more than a kilometre high. *B*

Day 10 San Cristobal

Visit the colourful market and the native villages of Chamula and Zinacantan in the morning. These living Tzotzil communities conserve important ancient traditions. *B*

Day 11 San Cristobal/ Palenque

Enjoy a morning drive to Agua Azul waterfalls where you can take a refreshing swim. Continue to Palenque in the afternoon and stay overnight. *B*

Day 12 Palenque/ Campeche

A half-day tour of the Maya ruins of Palenque, built on the fringe of the Chiapas jungle. Transfer overland to Campeche this afternoon and stay overnight. *BL*

Day 13 Campeche/ Merida

Depart for Merida in the morning, with a visit to the ruins of Uxmal 'three times built' and Kabah en route. Uxmal is one of the best restored and maintained ruins in the Yucatan and certainly one of the most magnificent. Continue to Merida. *B*

Day 14 Merida

A morning tour of Merida, with the afternoon free to explore this lively and colourful city at your own pace. *B*

Day 15 Merida

A day at leisure to relax and explore. *B*

Day 16 Merida/ Riviera Maya

Travel across the Yucatan Peninsula to the Riviera Maya, with a guided tour of the spectacular ruins of Chichen Itza on the way. *BL*

Day 17 Riviera Maya

A half-day tour of Tulum, the only Maya site built along the coast and featuring stunning views of the azure waters of the Caribbean. *B*

Day 18 Cancun

Transfer to Cancun Airport for your onward flight. *B*

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- There is no better way to see Teotihuacan than from a hot air balloon at dawn. Ask your consultant for details. *B*
- Coincide your stay in Oaxaca with Day of the Dead festivities (31 Oct to 2 Nov) – a remarkable experience.
- Stay an extra night in Palenque and explore the rarely visited ruins of Bonampak and Yaxchilan.
- Admire the elegant pink flamingos of the Celestun Biosphere Reserve – an easy day trip from Merida.
- Cool off in one of Mexico's underground cenotes – natural swimming holes formed by the collapse of limestone bedrock.
- Splash out with a special boutique stay in one of the Yucatan's historic haciendas.

San Miguel de Allende

COLONIAL HERITAGE

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Guadalajara

Fly into Mexico's second largest city and the capital of Jalisco state – where tequila and mariachi were born. Head to the Plaza de los Mariachis the evening and enjoy some traditional live music. *B*

Day 2 Guadalajara

Enjoy a morning tour of the city, including Government Palace, the magnificent cathedral and Plaza del la Rotonda. Continue to the town of Tequila to learn about the distillation process of Mexico's most famous export. *B*

Day 3 Guadalajara/ Zacatecas

Visit Tlaquepaque, renowned for its beautiful handicrafts, enroute to Zacatecas. Spend the evening at leisure to enjoy live music along the Callejoneada. *B*

Day 4 Zacatecas/ Guanajuato

Visit the stunning baroque cathedral and enjoy panoramic views from La Bufa Hill. Return to the historic centre by cable car. In the afternoon continue on to beautiful Guanajuato, located in a picturesque valley. *B*

Day 5 Guanajuato/ San Miguel de Allende

Enjoy a tour of the city – a maze of narrow cobblestone alleyways running up and down the hillside. Depart for San Miguel de Allende, birthplace of one of Mexico's Independence heroes, for an afternoon tour of the city and overnight stay. *B*

Day 6 San Miguel de Allende

Spend the morning exploring the charming centre of San Miguel de Allende, which frequently tops the list of world's best cities by travellers. This afternoon, transfer to nearby Leon Airport or continue overland to Mexico City. *B*

BEAUTIFUL BAJA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Los Cabos/ Todos Santos

Arrive in San Jose del Cabo and transfer to the charming colonial town of Todos Santos.

Day 2 Todos Santos

Depart on a half-day tour of the magical village of Todos Santos, founded as a Jesuit mission in 1730. This appealing coastal town was once a thriving sugar producer; its former wealth reflected in its many grand old mansions. Take an evening Mexican cooking class with a local chef, then dine on your delicious creations! *BD*

Day 3 Todos Santos/ La Paz

Private transfer to La Paz. Take the afternoon at leisure to swim, kayak or snorkel in the Sea of Cortez. Don't miss a whale-watching tour for the chance to see these friendly giants up close. Ask our consultants about whale-watching tours from mid-January to late March. *B*

Day 4 La Paz

A fantastic full-day excursion to Espiritu Santo Island National Park, with opportunities to see dolphins and jumping manta rays, and swim and snorkel with playful sea lions. *BL*

Day 5 La Paz

Enjoy a half-day tour of the Balandra Mangrove region. This walk will take you to a secluded area that's home to a variety of native bird species. Continue to Tecolote Beach; a pristine strip of white sand and aquamarine water where you can swim and relax. Enjoy a traditional lunch of fish tacos and return to your hotel in the afternoon. *BL*

Day 6 La Paz

Transfer to the airport or take a ferry across the Sea of Cortez for a train journey through the Copper Canyon. *B*

COPPER CANYON

Sample Itinerary

Ride the famous Chepe Train through some of Mexico's most spectacular scenery and experience the best of the Copper Canyon.

Day 1 Los Mochis/ El Fuerte

Arrive at Los Mochis Airport and transfer to your hotel in the colonial town of El Fuerte.

Day 2 El Fuerte/ Divisadero

Transfer to the train station for the famous Chepe Train ride to Posada Barrancas, just outside Divisadero. Transfer to your hotel on the rim of the canyon where lunch awaits you. Afternoon at leisure. *BLD*

Day 3 Divisadero/ Creel

A morning tour of the best lookout points in Divisadero, and options to ride the cable car and ziplines inside the Adventure Park in Divisadero. Transfer from Divisadero to Creel and arrive at your hotel. Spend the afternoon at leisure, with plenty of optional hikes available. *B*

Day 4 Creel

A full-day tour of the spectacular Copper Canyon, including the Valley of the Mushrooms, Lake Arareco, San Ignacio Mission, Cusarare Waterfall and Basihuare Canyon. A picnic lunch is included on today's tour. *BL*

Day 5 Creel/ Chihuahua

Transfer to Chihuahua via the famous Mennonite Community of Cuauhtemoc. Enjoy a city tour of Chihuahua before being dropped off at your hotel. *B*

Day 6 Chihuahua

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*



Santo Domingo Church, Oaxaca

FLAVOURS OF MEXICO CULINARY TOUR

Sample Itinerary

Uncover the rich heritage behind Mexico's diverse cuisine on our suggested culinary tour; a truly unique and memorable eating and drinking experience in Mexico.

Day 1 Mexico City

Arrive and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Mexico City

Visit magnificent Mexico City's most important sites including the cathedral and National Palace, where you can see Diego Rivera's famous murals. Continue to the San Juan Market to sample the traditional flavours of Mexico, from pre-Hispanic food to contemporary culinary dishes. Finish with a drink in a traditional cantina. *B*

Day 3 Mexico City

An early-morning tour of Teotihuacan allows you to enjoy the ruins during the cooler part of the day. This evening, take a guided tour of the Colonia Navarte district where you will visit traditional taquerias and sample tacos al pastor. Enjoy a private mezcal tasting with a local chef before finishing the tour at a craft brewery. *B*

Day 4 Mexico City

This morning's bicycle tour will take you through the hip neighbourhoods of Roma, Condesa and Polanco. Your guide will take you to some of the city's best hole-in-the-wall taquerias and street stands as you explore the bohemian parks and markets of these lively barrios. *B*

Day 5 Mexico City/ Puebla

After breakfast, travel overland to Puebla with a tour of the Cholula archaeological complex en route. Enjoy a traditional mole poblano for lunch. *BL*

Day 6 Puebla/ Oaxaca

Take the bus across the Sierra Madre mountain range to Oaxaca and transfer to your hotel. *B*

Day 7 Oaxaca

Discover why Oaxaca is consistently rated one of Mexico's most important culinary regions on today's walking tour. You will visit Mercado Benito Juarez to taste the famous chapulines (grasshoppers), cheese quesadillas and a fresh regional juice. Continue to Mercado 20 de Noviembre to enjoy a traditional tlayuda topped with refried beans. Dessert might be Oaxacan sherbet or a corn-based nicuatole. Finally, taste some of the mezcal for which the region is famous. *B*

Day 8 Oaxaca

Enjoy a tour of the local markets in the morning before heading to the Casa Crespo for a hands-on cooking lesson, with lunch included. This afternoon visit the impressive Monte Alban Ruins. *BL*

Day 9 Oaxaca

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*

DAY OF THE DEAD



With origins that can be traced back to the Aztecs, the unique Día de Muertos festivities take place every year between 31 October and 2 November, as Mexicans flock to cemeteries with flowers and candles to honour their dead. Families gather to spend the night beside tombs; a bittersweet occasion as they mourn their losses and reminisce about their loved ones.

Oaxaca is the best place for tourists to experience the *comparsas* that take place all over the city. *Comparsas* are parades where local people dress up in traditional outfits and go from house to house dancing with brass bands and fireworks, celebrating the lives of the dead. Ask your travel consultant about our Day of the Dead package to experience these festivities firsthand.



Chichen Itza, Yucatan Peninsula

ROUTE OF THE MAYA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Villahermosa

Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel in Palenque.

Day 2 Palenque

A full-day tour visiting the Maya sites of Yaxchilan and Bonampak located in the Lacandon jungle. *B*

Day 3 Palenque/ Campeche

A half-day tour of the Maya ruins of Palenque. Transfer to Campeche in the afternoon. *BL*

Day 4 Campeche

Depart early in the morning for Calakmul, set deep in the tropical forest of the Tierras Bajas. Continue to Balamku, or the Temple of the Jaguar: one of the most important sites in Mexico. *BL*

Day 5 Campeche/ Merida

Depart Campeche for a tour of Uxmal, one of the best-maintained ruins in the Yucatan. Continue to Merida. *B*

Day 6 Merida

A free day to explore Merida. *B*

Day 7 Chichen Itza

Take a full-day trip across the Yucatan Peninsula to Playa del Carmen, with a tour of the spectacular ruins of Chichen Itza on the way. *BL*

Day 8 Playa del Carmen

A half-day tour of Tulum Ruins, the only Maya site built on the coast. Afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 9 Cancun

Transfer to the airport for your flight or ask us about extending your stay. *B*

SELF-DRIVE YUCATAN

Sample Itinerary

The Yucatan Peninsula is one of the best places in Mexico to rent a car and explore independently. We'll design the itinerary and book your accommodation – you just hit the road and enjoy the beautiful cenotes, ancient ruins and rugged landscapes of the peninsula. See a sample itinerary below and the following page for our Yucatan hacienda Stays of Distinction.

Day 1 Cancun

Transfer to your hotel on arrival. Stay overnight.

Day 2 Cancun/ Chichen Itza

Your guide will accompany you to pick up your rental car this morning. Drive to Chichen Itza (about 3hrs) where your accommodation is confirmed. We suggest a stop in Valladolid en route. *B*

Day 3 Chichen Itza

Make sure you're up early to explore Chichen Itza before it gets too hot! Chichen Itza's most impressive sights and structures are located in the central zone. Here you'll find the Great Ball Court, several platforms, temples and the spectacular Pyramid of Kukulcan – a massive 25m stone representation of the Maya calendar. *B*

Day 4 Chichen Itza/ Merida

Drive to Izamal (1hr), known as 'The Yellow City' for the eye-catching colour of its buildings. Continue to Merida (1hr), and spend the afternoon exploring the historic centre. *B*

Day 5 Merida

A day at leisure to explore the extraordinary ruins of Uxmal – one of the largest archaeological sites in the Yucatan (around 1.5 hrs drive). Highlights include the Pyramid of the Magician and the Quadrangle of the Nuns. *B*

Day 6 Merida/ Campeche

Drive to Campeche (around 2.5hrs drive). Spend the afternoon exploring the walled city centre and beautifully restored buildings. *B*

Day 7 Campeche/ Calakmul

Drive to the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve this morning (around 3hrs) and check into the Puerta Calakmul Hotel. *B*

Day 8 Calakmul

A day at leisure to visit the main archaeological sites of the region: Calakmul, Xpujil, Becan, Chicanna, Balamku, Hormiguero and Rio Bec. *B*

Day 9 Calakmul/ Tulum

Drive to Tulum in the morning (about 4hrs). We recommend a stop en route at the spectacular Laguna Bacalar to see the 'lagoon of seven colours'. *B*

Day 10 Tulum

A day at leisure to relax on the beach or visit Tulum Ruins, the only Maya city built on the coast. *B*

Day 11 Cancun

Drive to Cancun Airport and return your rental car. *B*

Reservations 1300 135 391



Tulum Ruins

Stays of Distinction - Yucatan Peninsula

The Yucatan Peninsula has an incredible wealth of historic former residences and plantation houses which have been converted into luxury boutique accommodation. Dotted across the peninsula, these beautiful properties are perfect for unwinding at the end of a day's exploration.



HACIENDA SAN JOSE

Located in the northern Yucatan Peninsula, this historical plantation house is close to the Chichen Itza archaeological site and around 45 minutes from Merida Airport. Its 15 rooms and suites, spread around a colonial patio, feature 18-foot ceilings with exposed beams and rafters; 10-foot wooden double doors; beautiful wooden beds; dark, tropical hardwood cabinets; and cool tiled floors. For the ultimate romantic getaway, opt for a private Maya Villa, complete with private garden and plunge pool.



HACIENDA SANTA ROSA

Less than an hour's drive from Merida Airport and in the heart of the Maya archaeological zone, Hacienda Santa Rosa is surrounded by natural beauties such as the Oxkintok and the Calcehtok Caves, and cultural sites including the ruins of Uxmal and the town of Becal. The hacienda's 11 comfortable guest rooms and suites are decorated in the colonial style. Hammocks and wicker chairs, a private terrace and a garden make this place a perfect spot to relax at the end of your day's touring.



HACIENDA TEMOZON

Formerly the most productive agave estate on the Yucatan Peninsula, Hacienda Temozon is now the peninsula's most luxurious hacienda hotel. Its 28 guest rooms and suites are furnished in the colonial style, evoking the region's history. The superb outdoor pool is a highlight, surrounded by lush tropical gardens and with stone columns rising regally from the waters. The hacienda is located about a 35 minutes drive from Merida Airport and is the perfect base for exploring Loltun Caves and Uxmal's Maya ruins.



HACIENDA UAYAMON

Built in 1700, Hacienda Uayamon combines the history of the Yucatan with the sophistication of a luxury resort. This historic hacienda is about 26km south of the walled city of Campeche. It includes 10 detached casitas nestled among lush gardens, with cool tiled floors, large mahogany beds and private terraces. Don't miss a dip in the fabulous pool, situated in a ruined part of the former building and incorporated into the ancient structure.



Viñales Valley



When to Go?

The best months to travel are November to May; bookings over the peak season of December to March should be made well in advance.

The Caribbean hurricane season runs from July to October with August and September usually receiving the most rainfall.



Highlights

Stroll the streets of **Old Havana** and admire the eclectic architecture, classic cars and impromptu jam sessions that characterise life in the Caribbean's most vibrant city.

Perfectly preserved **Trinidad** is a time capsule of life during the 19th century sugar boom, with horses and carts plying the cobblestone streets.

The **Viñales Valley** offers a stunning landscape of rust-red earth, rolling green farmland and dramatic limestone outcrops that conceal underground caves and river systems.

Experience the rhythms of Cuba firsthand – take a salsa lesson or head to a local Casa de la Trova and see some of Cuba's marvellous musicians playing the hits that Buena Vista Social Club made famous.

Our Expert's Choice

Stay overnight in **Cienfuegos** and visit the atmospheric Teatro Tomas Terry for some great live music in an authentic setting.

The tiny fishing village of **Baracoa** boasts some of the best cuisine in Cuba – don't miss pescado con leche de coco (fish in coconut sauce) or the sweet local delicacy of cucurucho (a mixture of dried coconut with sugar, honey, guava, papaya and nuts).

Get lost in **Camaguey's** confusing network of blind alleys and winding streets, rumoured to have been designed to repel attacks from marauding pirates!



Havana

A TASTE OF HAVANA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Havana

On arrival, transfer to your accommodation in Old Havana. Experience Cuban hospitality with a special dinner at a local paladar. *D*

Day 2 Havana

Stroll along the cobblestone streets of the historic centre on this fascinating walking tour. Visit the four main plazas before heading to the Gran Teatro for a guided tour of this majestic building. Enjoy a private 90-minute salsa class in the afternoon. *B*

Day 3 Havana

A morning tour by classic car focuses on the city's eclectic architecture. You'll see art deco, art nouveau, neoclassic and neo-gothic architecture, and some of the city's most iconic buildings. Visit the famous La Cabaña Fortress in the evening to witness the cannon shot ceremony, then enjoy dinner at a local paladar before hitting a bar in Old Havana for live music and a few classic Cuban cocktails. *BD*

Day 4 Havana

Your full-day tour starts with a visit to a cigar factory to see the manufacturing process. Continue to Viñales and take a boat ride along the underground Cueva del Indio river. *BL*

Day 5 Havana

A day at leisure. Farewell Cuba with another night of traditional live music at Cafe Taberna Benny More. *B*

Day 6 Havana

Transfer to the airport. *B*

LA BELLA CUBA

Sample Itinerary

Western Cuba offers some of the country's most impressive architecture, stunning landscapes and fascinating cultural icons, while also boasting the island's best tourist infrastructure. Discover the UNESCO World Heritage-listed cities of Havana and Trinidad, visit Che Guevara's memorial and explore the picturesque Viñales Valley.

Day 1 Havana

On arrival, transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Havana

A morning walking tour of Old Havana offers fascinating insights into the city's unique history and culture. Afternoon at leisure to continue exploring the vibrant historic centre. *B*

Day 3 Havana

A morning tour of modern Havana by classic car including the impressive Revolution Square, dominated by the mural of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. Continue along the famous Malecon. *B*

Day 4 Havana/ Las Terrazas

Transfer to the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and community of Las Terrazas. Visit a 19th century coffee plantation and sample a cup of the local brew. After lunch you can relax and take a swim in the refreshing waters of the Rio San Juan. Stay overnight in Las Terrazas. *BL*

Day 5 Las Terrazas

A full-day tour to the Viñales Valley, with a stop at a cigar factory along the way to see how Cuba's most famous export is made. Discover the beauty of Viñales from a spectacular viewpoint and then continue to Cueva del Indio to take a boat ride along the underground river. *BL*

Day 6 Las Terrazas/ Cienfuegos/ Trinidad

Drive in the morning to Cienfuegos, where the streets are lined with mansions displaying glimpses of their original beauty. After a city tour and lunch, continue on to Trinidad. *BL*

Day 7 Trinidad de Cuba

Enjoy a walking tour of UNESCO Heritage-listed Trinidad. After lunch, continue to Topes de Collantes Natural Reserve, nestled in the Escambray Mountains, to explore the forested hiking trails. *BL*

Day 8 Trinidad/ Havana

Depart Trinidad and travel through sugar plantations to the city of Santa Clara, where you'll enjoy a visit to the mausoleum of Che Guevara. Transfer to Havana in the afternoon. *BL*

Day 9 Havana

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or ask us about options to extend. *B*



Trinidad

BUENA VISTA CUBA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Havana

Arrive at Havana Airport and transfer to your accommodation in Old Havana.

Day 2 Havana

A morning walking tour of Old Havana offers fascinating views of this city's historical and cultural highlights. Tour modern Havana by classic car after lunch, including the impressive Revolution Square. Continue along the famous Malecon. *BL*

Day 3 Havana

A day at leisure to relax and explore. *B*

Day 4 Havana/ Viñales Valley

This full-day tour includes a visit to a cigar factory to see the manufacturing process. Discover the beauty of Viñales from a spectacular viewpoint and then continue to Cueva del Indio to take a boat ride along the underground river. Arrive at your homestay, where dinner is included. *BLD*

Day 5 Viñales Valley

Explore the lovely Viñales Valley with your guide on today's walking tour. You'll cross the countryside, meet farmers from the region and learn about the local crops of tobacco, tropical fruits and maize. *B*

Day 6 Viñales Valley/ Cienfuegos

Transfer to the plaza for the bus service to Cienfuegos. Transfer to your accommodation on arrival. *B*

Day 7 Cienfuegos/ Trinidad

A half-day tour of this architectural jewel, known as the 'Pearl of the South'. After lunch you'll travel to Trinidad. *BL*

Day 8 Trinidad

Depart this morning for the lovely Valle de los Ingenios (Sugar Mill Valley) and visit to the Manaca-Iznaga Plantation House and tower for stunning views. Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant then return to Trinidad for a tour of the colonial centre. *BL*

Day 9 Trinidad

A day at leisure to relax and explore. Ask us about optional excursions to Topes de Collantes or historic Sancti Spiritus. *B*

Day 10 Trinidad/ Camaguey

Transfer to the bus station for the service to Camaguey. Discover this beautiful city from a Cuban Bicitaxi – a man-powered tricycle – in the afternoon. Sit back while your guide takes you on a tour of some of Camaguey's most unique streets. Discover the architectural diversity of this UNESCO World Heritage city – neoclassical, art deco, neo-colonial and art nouveau buildings combine to create one of the most picturesque cities in Cuba. *B*

Day 11 Camaguey/ Bayamo

Transfer to the bus station for the service to Bayamo. Transfer to your hotel on arrival. *B*

Day 12 Bayamo/ Santiago de Cuba

This morning, explore the city of Bayamo in a horse-drawn carriage, touring the most important streets and sights. Afterwards, transfer to the bus station for the service to Santiago de Cuba. Transfer to your hotel on arrival. *B*

Day 13 Santiago de Cuba

A full-day tour of this sultry city includes the Moncada Barracks, Revolution Square, the Caney Rum Bar, the colonial fortress of San Pedro de la Roca and the House of Habano. Lunch is included at Marlin Marina, overlooking the bay. *BL*

Day 14 Santiago de Cuba/ Baracoa

Transfer to the bus station for the service to Baracoa. Enjoy an afternoon walking tour of this charming village. Admire the town's iconic fortress, visible as you wander the quiet streets of the historic centre, and on clear days fantastic views of El Yunque table mountain. *B*

Day 15 Baracoa

Follow the cocoa route to discover the secrets of processing this important plant. You'll have the opportunity to learn step-by-step how chocolate is obtained and marketed, including planting, harvesting, processing, storage and actual selling. Lunch is included at a local restaurant. *BL*

Day 16 Baracoa/ Havana

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Havana. On arrival, transfer to your hotel and enjoy your last night in this unique city! *B*

Day 17 Havana

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*

Also available as a self-drive; talk to our consultants about creating a tailor-made fly/drive holiday.



Tikal Ruins, Guatemala



When to Go?

December to April is the dry season in most areas.

The lush green scenery found from May to November means the wetter months can be just as enjoyable.

Festivities around Easter are both colourful and fascinating – Antigua, Guatemala is a particularly vibrant place to visit during Semana Santa.

Turtle-nesting seasons run from February to April, and July to September in Tortuguero National Park.



Highlights

With more than 25% of the country's territory protected, Costa Rica is one of the world's best ecotourism destinations – **Monteverde**, **Tortuguero** and **Manuel Antonio National Parks** are top picks.

Guatemala and Belize boast a number of impressive Maya sites – **Tikal** and **Caracol** are the most extensive.

The Nicaraguan city of **Granada** offers some of the best-preserved colonial architecture in Central America. **Antigua** in Guatemala boasts a picturesque historic centre and is surrounded by volcanoes.

Named one of the seven man-made wonders of the world, the **Panama Canal** is an amazing testament to human ingenuity. A partial transit through the canal is a great experience.

Our Expert's Choice

Get away from it all with a stay on the private island of **Isla Palenque**, Panama.

Choose a homestay and connect with locals in the Maya villages of the Guatemalan highlands.

Wildlife enthusiasts will love the **Osa Peninsula** in Costa Rica and Belize's **Orange Walk** region.

Explore pristine swimming holes and sample local seafood on the twin volcanic island of **Ometepe**, Nicaragua.

Enjoy a candlelit dinner at the base of spectacular Maya ruins of **Uaxactun** and overnight in the unique jungle camp.



Chichicastenango Market, Guatemala

ESSENTIAL GUATEMALA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Guatemala City/ Antigua

On arrival transfer to the colonial city of Antigua.

Day 2 Antigua

Enjoy a half-day tour of Antigua's best street food. You'll get to try local specialities such as pupusas, chuchitos and rellenitos. *B*

Day 3 Antigua/ Lake Atitlan

Visit the colourful Comalapa Market and explore the Maya ruins of Iximche. Continue to Lake Atitlan and stay overnight. *BL*

Day 4 Lake Atitlan

Depart by boat across the lake to San Juan la Laguna to visit a women's textile co-operative. Continue to Santiago and learn about the indigenous Tz'utujil Maya's beliefs and spirituality. *B*

Day 5 Lake Atitlan/ Flores

Visit Guatemala's most famous market, Chichicastenango, in the morning (Thu and Sun only). Transfer to Guatemala City Airport and fly to Flores. *B*

Day 6 Flores

A free morning before enjoying a sunset tour of Yaxha Ruins. Climb to the top of the temple before dark. Enjoy drinks and snacks while watching the sun set over the rainforest and nearby lake. *B*

Day 7 Tikal/ Guatemala City

A full-day tour of UNESCO World Heritage Centre Tikal National Park. Take an evening flight to Guatemala City and stay overnight. *BL*

Day 8 Guatemala City

Transfer to the airport for your flight or ask us about options to extend. *B*

SKY ROUTE TREK



The Sky Route Trek is a four-day, three-night journey between two of Guatemala's most beautiful and inspiring destinations: Antigua and Lake Atitlan.

The treks are supported by comfortable safari-style tent camps, an overland 'trek truck' with a toilet and hot shower, delicious food and drink, and knowledgeable guides. Each day you'll travel light with day packs while support staff move camp and your gear from one breathtaking destination to the next.

Along the way you'll walk through cloud forest canopy and coffee farms, be immersed in the sights and sounds of Guatemala's living Maya culture and communities and be amazed at the kindness and warmth of its people.

GUATEMALA'S HIDDEN SECRETS

Sample Itinerary

Discover a very different side to Guatemala! Visit the quirky Caribbean town of Livingston, home to the Afro-Caribbean Garifuna people; cruise the meandering jungle-fringed waterways of Rio Dulce and venture into the interior to see Semuc Champey, Guatemala's most exquisite natural feature.

Day 1 Livingston/ Rio Dulce

Arrive in Livingston, located on the Caribbean coast of northeastern Guatemala. Direct ferries link southern Belize to this laid-back Garifuna village. Visit the local Ak'Tenamit community project, which promotes education and employment opportunities for the local community. Enjoy a Rio Dulce river cruise and stay overnight.

Day 2 Rio Dulce/ Lanquin

Explore the Maya ruins of Quirigua and then transfer by road to Lanquin. Visit the limestone Lanquin Caves system this afternoon and see thousands of bats leaving the cave to feed at dusk. Stay overnight in Lanquin (around 5hrs). *BL*

Day 3 Lanquin/ Semuc Champey

A morning tour of Semuc Champey, a series of swimmable turquoise pools located atop of a 300m-long natural limestone bridge. Drive to Coban where you will stay overnight (around 3hrs). *BL*

Day 4 Coban

Continue your Guatemalan adventure – from centrally located Coban you have the option to travel overland to Tikal, Guatemala City, Antigua or even Lake Atitlan. *B*



Photo: Belize Tourism Board

THE UAXACTUN EXPERIENCE



Nestled between the sprawling, jungle-shrouded temples of the Uaxactun archaeological park and a small, present-day Maya village lies a unique lodging experience for those who appreciate the road less travelled.

Eight ample tents, raised off the ground on solid, covered platforms, surround you with the sights and sounds of the jungle while keeping you comfortable. Each tent feels like its own bungalow, with two cosy twin beds, a night table, a rug, reading lamps, and even a small porch and garden. Stone-paved paths lead to shared bathrooms with unheated showers just a few steps away.

Nearby, you can explore Uaxactun, one of the longest-inhabited cities in the pre-Columbian Maya world; enjoy a traditional lunch in the local village; and take a 45-minute drive to see one of Guatemala's archaeological crown jewels, Tikal National Park. At night, you can close your eyes, listen to the exotic serenade of the Petén rainforest, and imagine the lives of the ancient peoples who made these lands their home.

MAGICAL MAYA RUINS

Guatemala & Belize Sample Itinerary

Day 1 **Peten**

Arrive in Flores and transfer to your hotel. Tour Yaxha Ruins, set among lush jungle foliage, in the afternoon. Before dark, climb to the top of the temple. Enjoy drinks and snacks while watching the sun set over the surrounding rainforest and nearby lake.

Day 2 **Peten**

A full-day tour will take you through UNESCO World Heritage-listed Tikal National Park, one of the most impressive Maya ruins in Central America. *BL*

Day 3 **Peten/ San Ignacio**

After breakfast, transfer across the border into Belize and continue to San Ignacio, home to some of Belize's best ruins and adventure activities. *B*

Day 4 **San Ignacio**

Depart this morning on a half-day tour of Xunantunich. Situated on the banks of the Mopan River, Xunantunich was once a thriving city, with large plazas surrounded by pyramids. *B*

Day 5 **San Ignacio**

Visit the beautiful site of Caracol ('snail' in Spanish), the largest archaeological site in Belize, covering 75km² of thick jungle. After a guided tour and lunch, continue to the Rio Frio pools and caves, where you'll have time for a swim. *BL*

Day 6 **San Ignacio**

A day at leisure. Optional activities include caving, tubing, birdwatching and horseriding. *B*

Day 7 **Belize City**

Transfer to Belize City Airport for your onward flight. *B*

RAINFOREST & REEF

Belize Sample Itinerary

Day 1 **Belize/ Orange Walk**

Arrive in Belize City and transfer to the Orange Walk district, home to steamy jungle rivers and diverse wildlife. Check into your lodge, where dinner is included – choose from Lamanai Outpost Lodge or the deluxe Chan Chich Lodge. *D*

Day 2 **Orange Walk**

Spend the day exploring the jungle with your guide. Look for wildlife or visit the nearby Maya ruins. *BLD*

Day 3 **Orange Walk**

Another day exploring the rainforest. You may, if you are lucky, spot one of the region's elusive jaguars. *BLD*

Day 4 **Orange Walk/ Ambergris Caye**

Transfer to Belize City and take a short flight or water taxi to Ambergris Caye, home to the world's second-longest reef system. *B*

Day 5 **Ambergris Caye**

A morning snorkelling tour begins at Hol Chan Marine Reserve, exploring the coloured reefs. Continue to Shark Ray Alley where you'll encounter friendly stingrays, inquisitive brown nurse sharks and turtles, and an abundance of colourful reef fish. *B*

Day 6 **Ambergris Caye**

A day at leisure to relax and explore. *B*

Day 7 **Belize City**

Take a flight or water taxi back to Belize City and connect with your onward flight. *B*



Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Costa Rica

BEST OF NICARAGUA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Managua/ Leon

Arrive at Managua Airport and transfer two hours by road to Leon, where you will stay overnight.

Day 2 Leon

Explore the rich history of this important city. Climb to the top of Central America's largest cathedral and enjoy stunning views across the city. Visit San Francisco Convent and the indigenous neighbourhood of Sutiaba. *B*

Day 3 Leon/ Granada

Depart for Masaya to see the impressive volcanic crater and visit the craft market. After lunch, travel to Granada, located on the shores of Lake Nicaragua. *BL*

Day 4 Granada

Explore Granada's charming colonial centre on this morning's walking tour, including the leafy Parque Central, San Francisco Convent and the pedestrianised Calle la Calzada. *B*

Day 5 Granada/ Ometepe Island

Transfer by road to San Jorge. From here it's a short ferry ride to the twin volcanic island of Ometepe. *B*

Day 6 Ometepe Island

A full-day tour of Ometepe includes visits to Altagracia church and museum, Santo Domingo's beach petroglyphs and the verdant hiking trails of Charco Verde. Enjoy impressive views of Concepcion and Maderas Volcanoes as you make your way around this stunning island. *BL*

Day 7 Peñas Blancas

Take a ferry back to the mainland. Costa Rica is just a short drive away and a great complement to your Nicaraguan adventure. Alternatively, depart from Managua Airport. *B*

CLASSIC COSTA RICA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 San Jose

Arrive at San Jose Airport and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 San Jose/ Tortuguero

Depart San Jose, travelling through the lush Braulio Carrillo National Park to Guapiles. From here, take a long boat for two hours through jungle-fringed canals to Tortuguero National Park. Enjoy an afternoon walking tour of this tiny village. *BLD*

Day 3 Tortuguero

Take an early-morning canoe ride along the extensive networks of canals and lagoons to spot wildlife such as monkeys, turtles and caimans. Later this afternoon, enjoy a guided hike through the national park. *BLD*

Day 4 Tortuguero/ Arenal

Transfer by boat back to Guapiles and have lunch in a local restaurant. After lunch, a shuttle transfer will take you La Fortuna village, dominated by the mighty Arenal Volcano. *BL*

Day 5 Arenal

A full-day tour will show you the best of this action-packed region. Start with a visit to Arenal's Hanging Bridges for a 3km walk through the rainforest canopy. Next, head to La Fortuna Waterfall for an inviting dip in the cool waters. Lunch is included before heading to Arenal Volcano for a walk through the rainforest to reach a lava lookout point. Finally, drive to Tabacon Hot Springs to soak in the natural pools and enjoy dinner in this beautiful setting. *BLD*

Day 6 Arenal/ Monteverde

Transfer to the shores of Lake Arenal for a scenic 30-minute boat ride, with fantastic

views of the Costa Rican highlands along the way. Continue by road for another hour and a half up a steep mountain road before arriving into Monteverde in time for lunch. *B*

Day 7 Monteverde

A half-day tour explores one of Costa Rica's most famous ecotourism destinations, Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. Orchids, bromeliads and strangler figs line the trail, and if you're very lucky you may spot the beautiful quetzal. *B*

Day 8 Monteverde/ Manuel Antonio

Take a shuttle transfer to the famous Manuel Antonio National Park, considered to be Costa Rica's most beautiful park, with enchanting white-sand beaches ideal for swimming, and tropical rainforest alive with wildlife. *B*

Day 9 Manuel Antonio

Experience Costa Rica's striking coastline and abundant marine life on a kayak and snorkel tour. Paddle Biesanz for a refreshing swim and local snacks. Your guide will show you where to snorkel to explore the coral reef. After time to relax, you can paddle back and enjoy a hearty lunch. *BL*

Day 10 Manuel Antonio/ San Jose

A guided hike through the national park provides the chance to see sloths, monkeys and tropical bird species. Later this afternoon, transfer to San Jose. *B*

Day 11 San Jose

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or extend your trip to beautiful Nicaragua. *B*



Arenal Volcano, Costa Rica

PACUARE RIVER RAFTING

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 San Jose/ Pacuare Lodge

Depart early for the Pacuare River, stopping for a traditional Costa Rican breakfast en route. After a safety briefing, you're ready to begin your rafting adventure! Paddle for an hour and a half downriver through scenic canyons and lush jungle vegetation to arrive at Pacuare Lodge. Optional activities such as a guided hike are available in the afternoon. *BLD*

Day 2 Pacuare Lodge

Wake to the sounds of birdsong and the rushing river. This is a full day to enjoy optional activities such as a canopy tour or visit to a remote Cabecar indigenous village. *BLD*

Day 3 Pacuare Lodge/ San Jose

Spend the morning at leisure. In the afternoon, head back to the river for another exciting rafting adventure. Your guides will stop between the rapids for short hikes through the forest to pristine waterfalls. After lunch you'll board the minibus back to San Jose. (Rafting difficulty Class III-IV) *BL*

OSA PENINSULA



Costa Rica offers some of the best nature experiences in Central America and Corcovado National Park is an absolute must for wildlife lovers. The pristine Osa Peninsula is home to the national park and is bordered on the northwest by Drake Bay, on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the east by the Golfo Dulce. The peninsula offers untouched scenery, secluded beaches and abundant wildlife, as well as standout luxury lodges surrounded by lush primary rainforest. The best time to visit is November to late April – the dry season in Costa Rica. Direct flights are available from San Jose to Puerto Jimenez, the gateway to the Osa Peninsula.

COSTA RICA TO PANAMA

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 San Jose/ Cahuita

Transfer by road to the laid-back village of Cahuita, located on the Caribbean coast.

Day 2 Cahuita

Enjoy a guided hike through Cahuita National Park, where you will have the chance to see sloths, monkeys, brilliant blue morpho butterflies and more. Afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 3 Cahuita/ Bocas del Toro

Transfer across the Panamanian border this morning, then continue to Almirante, where you will take a boat to Bocas del Toro Archipelago. Afternoon at leisure. *B*

Day 4 Bocas del Toro

Enjoy a full-day tour of some of the archipelago's most popular sights, including snorkelling at Coral Cay, dolphin-spotting at Dolphin Bay and some time to relax on Red Frog Beach. *BL*

Day 5 Bocas del Toro/ Boquete

Take the boat back to Almirante this morning and continue by road to the charming town of Boquete. *B*

Day 6 Boquete

Your full-day tour starts with a hike along the Waterfall Trail, looking out for birds such as the resplendent quetzal. After a picnic lunch, continue to a coffee plantation to sample the local brew. This afternoon, soak in the hot springs of Caldera and take a dip in the refreshing Caldera River. *BL*

Day 7 Boquete/ David

Transfer to David Airport for your onward flight. *B*



Panama Canal, Panama

PANAMA CITY STOPOVER

Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Panama City

Arrive at the airport and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Panama City

A half-day city tour exploring historic Casco Viejo and the modern parts of the city. *B*

Day 3 Panama City

Depart on a full-day tour visiting the indigenous community of Embera. Travel by dugout canoe to the village, where you will learn about Embera customs and their relationship with nature. After lunch, visit a nearby waterfall for a dip before returning to your hotel. *BL*

Day 4 Panama City

Today you will enjoy a partial transit of the Panama Canal! Departing from Marina Flamenco in Amador and travelling through the Miraflores and Pedro Miguel Locks, the partial transit allows you to experience firsthand the operations of the canal itself. Partial transits operate every weekend and there are usually two full transits per month. Call our expert consultants for schedules. *B*

Day 5 Panama City

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight or ask us about options to extend. *B*

CARIBBEAN BEACH BREAK

Panama Sample Itinerary

Day 1 Panama City

Arrive in Panama City and transfer to your hotel.

Day 2 Panama City/ San Blas

A short flight will take you to the pristine San Blas Islands in the Caribbean Sea. Home to the indigenous Kuna people, the islands are self-governing and tourism is limited to just a few islands to help the Kuna preserve their way of life. Your stay in San Blas includes two daily tours to nearby beaches, uninhabited islands or Kuna villages. *BLD*

Day 3 San Blas

Enjoy a free day on the San Blas Islands. Join a tour to a secluded beach or visit a Kuna community to learn about the customs of this interesting tribe, including the women's traditional dress, and molas, which feature intricate geometrical designs inspired by nature. *BLD*

Day 4 San Blas/ Panama City

Fly back to Panama City and transfer to your hotel. Enjoy an afternoon tour to the Agua Clara Visitor Centre where you can learn about the construction of the Panama Canal while taking in great views over Gatun Lake and the canal expansion works. *B*

Day 5 Panama

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. *B*

PANAMA DISCOVERY CRUISE

24 Passenger Capacity



The Panama Canal is justifiably considered one of the man-made wonders of the world and the MV Discovery is a great way to experience the ingenuity of this marvel of engineering. As the only vessel authorised to overnight in Panama Canal waters and the Chagres River, your itinerary is guaranteed to be a unique experience.

The vessel has just 12 spacious cabins which feature large picture windows, private facilities and air-conditioning. Common areas include a dining area, bar and lounge with large panoramic windows, and an observation deck where all fresco meals can be served. Excursions include visits to indigenous villages, snorkelling off remote islands and kayaking the waters of the famous canal. The seven-day cruise starts and ends in Panama City.



Stays of Distinction



CASA PALOPO

Lake Atitlan, Guatemala

Built on a hillside, Casa Palopó has preserved a unique intimate atmosphere from its past as a private residence. Rustic interiors feature soft colour palettes and locally sourced decor which honours Guatemala's rich textile tradition. The unbroken view of Lake Atitlan and the three volcanoes overlooking it is stunning: from the infinity pool, the terraces or simply through the large bay windows.



CHAN CHICH LODGE

Orange Walk, Belize

With an unparalleled abundance of wildlife (and the best chance to see the elusive jaguar in its natural habitat), Chan Chich is an extraordinary destination for naturalists, birders and for those seeking an authentic retreat in the jungle. Enjoy views of the surrounding jungle from your wrap-around veranda with hammock, chairs and futon for lounging. Explore the nearby Maya ruins and discover the local flora and fauna on foot or by canoe.



JICARO ISLAND ECOLODGE

Granada, Nicaragua

A National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World, this five-star hotel is located just a short boat ride from the colonial town of Granada, with spectacular views of Mombacho Volcano across the lake. Nine luxury casitas offer lake views and feature a spacious living area with outside deck and hammock. Select from a variety of excursion options including kayaking, hiking, birdwatching and visits to the colonial towns of Granada and Masaya.



HACIENDA ALTAGRACIA

Costa Rica

Located 3.5 hours from San Jose Airport, Hacienda AltaGracia is tucked high among the mountains of Pérez Zeledón – one of the last unexplored areas in southern Costa Rica. Spacious suites and casitas enjoy panoramic views over the mountains or San Isidro Valley. Explore nearby waterfalls, hike along private trails through the rainforest and visit remote tribal villages. After a day of exploration, refresh in either the indoor or outdoor pool and hot tub and enjoy delicious farm-to-fork cuisine at the gourmet restaurant.



LAPA RIOS

Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica

Described by National Geographic as one of the world's most authentic rainforest experiences, Lapa Rios is a model ecotourism project and a sustainability pioneer. Set in a private nature reserve spread over 1,000 acres of Central America's last remaining lowland tropical rainforest on the wild Osa Peninsula, Lapa Rios is paradise for wildlife, nature and beach lovers. Seventeen private bungalows line three ridges overlooking the pristine point where the Golfo Dulce meets the Pacific Ocean.



ISLA PALENQUE

Chiriqui, Panama

Isla Palenque is an exclusive private island resort set amid 400 acres of enchanting jungle in the Gulf of Chiriqui. Transfer from David Airport to Boca Chica, where a ten-minute boat ride will bring you to this luxurious haven. Eight stunning beachfront casitas feature air-conditioning, private gardens and hammocks, wifi and minibars. During your stay at Isla Palenque, enjoy a selection of guided in-house island tours, as well as the use of kayaks, paddleboards and fishing gear.



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Contours Travel is a tour operator specialising in Latin America. All Services provided by Contours Travel are sold on these terms and conditions ("Terms"). Please read the following booking conditions carefully and make sure you understand them before making your booking. By paying the non-refundable deposit or payment in full, you acknowledge that you have read, understand and agree to be bound by these Terms & Conditions and warrant that you have brought them to the attention of all travellers in your booking.

How to Book

In order for Contours Travel to confirm your booking it requires a completed booking form, a scanned copy of your passport and the relevant deposit. A booking is only accepted by Contours Travel once it receives the specified deposit and issues you or your travel agent with a confirmation of acceptance of your booking. Contours Travel reserves the right to accept or reject any booking it receives. If the specified service fee and deposit are not paid on time, your booking will automatically lapse. Special booking procedures and conditions apply for certain bookings. If special booking procedures and conditions apply, Contours Travel will notify you accordingly.

Deposits

A non-refundable deposit of at least \$500 per person applies for all bookings. For bookings that include cruises, Amazon lodges, all inclusive hotels, Inca Trails and other products, please contact Contours Travel for respective deposit requirements.

Late Booking Fee

For all bookings made 30 days or less prior to the day you are due to depart from Australia, a late booking fee of \$50 per booking will apply.

Payments & Due Dates for Payment

Payment of the total booking cost is required 70 days prior to the day you are due to depart from Australia. If your booking is made less than 70 days prior to the day you are due to depart from Australia, payment of the total booking cost is required upon confirmation of acceptance of your booking application by Contours Travel. If Contours Travel is unable to secure your booking it will refund this deposit less its relevant service fee. Special payment arrangements and conditions apply for certain bookings. If special payment arrangements and conditions apply, Contours Travel will notify you prior to issuing your booking confirmation. Please note that credit card payments are subject to the following surcharges: 1.4% for Visa/Mastercard and 2% for Amex. These surcharges reflect our costs to process card payments.

Contents

Contours Travel has taken considerable care to make sure all information in the brochure and on the website is correct. Circumstances beyond the control of Contours Travel may necessitate change in travel arrangements including but not limited to changes to itineraries, tours or cruises up to and after your departure date. Contours Travel cannot be held responsible for any changes to your travel arrangements which may occur. Prices quoted in this brochure are based on exchange rates, cost of services and applicable taxes as at 1 March 2019. Contours Travel reserves the right to adjust the price of any of your travel arrangements at any time due to changes including but not limited to airfare and land arrangement price increases, currency devaluation, fuel surcharges or exchange rates. Before you book, please check with your travel agent or Contours Travel if there are any alterations to the travel arrangements you have selected.

Descriptions, Maps & Photographs

Descriptions featured in the brochure or on the website are based on current guides and are subject to change at any time. Maps and photographs are included for general information and may not necessarily reflect actual routings, locations or services. Hotel room photographs may not be specific to the actual room occupied.

Tour Costs

Our costs include but are not limited to costs of research, consultation and communication with travel agents and overseas suppliers, marketing and advertising. All prices are per person and expressed in Australian Dollars, unless stated otherwise. All prices are subject to change without notice up to the day of departure due to factors including but not limited to currency fluctuation, government taxes, charges and levies provided that

once you have paid for your booking in full, we will not surcharge for any adverse currency fluctuations. Any airfares quoted or confirmed are subject to change without notice prior to the ticket being issued. Please note security and airport taxes around the world change daily. Prices quoted or confirmed do not include costs that are not a compulsory part of the relevant tour. Such costs may include but not be limited to the following: visas, insurance, excess baggage, meals not mentioned, vaccinations, beverages, tips, shipboard gratuities, costs of a personal nature including but not limited to laundry, telephone calls, cost of passport and personal services to hotel rooms, emergency evacuation costs, airport departure taxes, security charges, other airport taxes, international and domestic airfares.

Amendment Requests

Should you make an amendment to your confirmed booking, a fee of \$50 per amendment per country will apply to cover extra costs including but not limited to administrative costs, communication costs and any applicable supplier charges. Cancellation fees may also apply. While we will endeavour to make amendments, please note that amendments are not always possible.

Cancellation by You

Written notice must be provided for all cancellations. If it is necessary to cancel your travel arrangements, the following fees will apply per person per booking. If travel arrangements are cancelled more than 60 days before the due date for departure – the deposit. If the travel arrangements are cancelled less than 60 days before the due date for departure – 50% of the total booking cost. If the travel arrangements are cancelled less than 30 days before the due date for departure – 100% of the total booking cost. Cancellation fees from service providers including but not limited to airlines, cruise operators, hoteliers and coach companies, may also apply. Special cancellation arrangements and conditions apply for certain bookings. If special cancellation arrangements and conditions apply, you will be notified by Contours Travel prior to us issuing your booking confirmation.

Minimum Stay

The company is a specialist tour operator and does not normally accept reservations of less than five nights. Exceptions may be made at our discretion and subject to an under-stay fee being charged.

No Show

If you fail to check in at a designated location or service as confirmed in your booking, a "no show" fee equal to 100% of the cost of that particular component of your travel arrangements will be charged.

Refund for Unused Service

Once you have left Australia, Contours Travel will not refund or compensate you for any service not used by you due to late arrival, failure of any transportation to operate as scheduled, early departure or by notice. Contours Travel does not authorise any overseas suppliers including but not limited to hotel management and staff to make any undertakings on our behalf or otherwise in respect of refunds or other matters.

Airlines

The depiction or recommendation of any domestic and international airline in the brochure or on the website does not commit the airline to any travel arrangements and the airline shall not be responsible for statements or literature relating to the travel arrangements in the brochure or on the website.

Variation/ Cancellation by Contours Travel

If unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of Contours Travel or suppliers, providers or representatives of Contours Travel require Contours Travel to make necessary changes to your travel arrangements, Contours Travel reserves the right to vary, cancel or reschedule your travel arrangements including but not limited to departures and itineraries. If we cancel your travel arrangements prior to travel or during travel for matters outside of our control and which we could not reasonably foresee, then you agree that you will not be entitled to any refund to the extent that we offer alternative travel arrangements that you accept. Notwithstanding, you agree that any refund you may be entitled to will be reduced by the value of any costs we have incurred in connection with your booking and which we cannot reasonably recover at the time of cancellation.

When it is necessary to change a hotel, Contours Travel reserves the right to substitute accommodation of at least a similar standard.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have adequate travel insurance for the full duration of your travel arrangements in respect of illness, injury, death, medical expenses, loss of baggage, personal items and deposits, cancellations and curtailment of tours en route and that you provide us with the policy number and emergency contact number prior to travel.

Passport, Visa and Vaccination

It is mandatory that you familiarise yourself with any visa and health requirements that may be applicable in the countries you are visiting. You are responsible for all entry and exit health requirements and any other documents required by any law, regulation, order, demand or requirement of a country visited or transited. Please note that passport and visa requirements are not the responsibility of Contours Travel. Contours Travel cannot be held liable for any loss or expense due to your failure to comply with the above.

Health

You must check with your doctor whether you are fit to travel to your selected destination. If you are travelling to certain South American cities situated at high altitudes, you must check with your doctor that you are fit to travel to these altitudes.

Commonsense

Commonsense and a level of ordinary care must be exercised before and during travel. Contours Travel cannot be held responsible for problems, damage or loss of enjoyment brought about by a lack of attention, understanding or care by you.

Limitations and Liability

Contours Travel, its employees and agents act only as booking agents and to the fullest extent permitted by law disclaim responsibility and exclude liability for injury, death, damage, loss or claims arising directly or indirectly from acts or omissions by suppliers or other service providers or from accidents, loss or damage to person or property, delays, changes in schedules, transport failures, strikes, wars, uprisings, acts of God or other causes over which Contours Travel, its employees and agents have no control. Australian Consumer Law and corresponding legislation in other jurisdictions in certain circumstances imply mandatory conditions and warranties into agreements ("Consumer Warranties"). This clause does not exclude or limit the application of any Consumer Warranties or other warranties where to do so would contravene the law of the relevant jurisdiction or cause any part of this clause to be void. Other than the Consumer Warranties, you hereby waive and Contours Travel hereby disclaims all warranties whether written or oral, express or implied. The liability of Contours Travel is to the fullest extent permitted by law limited to providing the Services again or payment of the cost of having the Services supplied again, the choice of which is at the option of Contours Travel.

Severance

If any provision of these Terms is held to be invalid or in any way unenforceable, it shall be severed from these Terms and the remaining provisions shall not in any way be affected or impaired and these Terms shall be construed so as to most nearly give effect to the parties' intentions at the time when Contours Travel confirmed its acceptance of the relevant booking.

Governing Law

All matters in respect of the Services provided by Contours Travel but not in respect of other things are governed by the laws of Victoria and the courts of Victoria shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to determine all claims arising in connection with such Services or pursuant to these Terms and Conditions.

Definitions

In these Terms, the following terms have the following meaning: (a) "Contours Travel" means Contours Travel Pty Ltd of 287 Victoria Street, West Melbourne, Victoria 3003, and (b) "Services" means booking and packaging by Contours Travel of accommodation, transportation, tour and other services provided by other suppliers.



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