

**SOUTH GEORGIA & THE FALKLANDS  
WITH A COMPLIMENTARY EXPLORATION OF  
BUENOS AIRES & THE WILDLIFE-RICH PENINSULA VALDES**

DEPARTURE: October 18, 2010

ITINERARY: 24 DAYS/21 NIGHTS

Oct. 18: U.S./Fly Overnight to Buenos Aires, Argentina

Oct. 19: Buenos Aires/Overnight Caesar Park Hotel

Upon arrival, we check in and relax at the Caesar Park Hotel in fashionable La Recoleta, with its cafes, galleries and elegant shops. Buenos Aires undoubtedly resembles the aristocratic atmosphere of the big European capitals. But beyond this Buenos Aires, there is another one: the bohemian neighborhood of La Boca and the popular Tango that lives in San Telmo streets. This is the mixture that makes Buenos Aires original and irresistible.

This afternoon we have an overview of Argentina's spirited capital with an Old World languor, visiting the Plaza de Mayo, the pink Presidential Palace, whose famous balcony hosted national myths since Peron times, the old quarter of San Telmo, and La Boca, with its striking pink, blue and green houses.

A special private event follows at El Zanjón, an unusual historical site that gives you a cross-sectional look into the archaeological history of Buenos Aires. This beautifully restored residence encapsulates three centuries and as you go below ground, you will see how the building has changed throughout the centuries, and also enter the underground tunnels where we meet the owner for a wine toast. Your evening is at leisure.

Oct. 20: Buenos Aires/Overnight Caesar Park Hotel

Early risers may want to join an optional birding outing at the nearby Costanera Sur Nature Reserve, where 70 species of birds can be seen.

Today we explore the city's cultural heritage. *Portenos*, as the multi-national people of Buenos Aires are known, possess an elaborate and rich cultural identity. They highly value their European heritage, lifestyle and architecture. We begin at the origins of the South American Paris, focusing on the lifestyle of the old upper classes: their Beaux Arts palaces on grand boulevards lined with trees; the art chosen by them, their parks and renowned monuments. A short morning walk through the famed Recoleta Cemetery shows us local history in a snapshot: presidents, artists and influential Argentineans lie in this eclectic landmark. We continue to the magnificent museum of Latin American modern and contemporary art. And we explore Peron history everywhere: in buildings, squares and in the Evita Museum, focusing on its major figure, Eva Peron, a story that helps us to understand contemporary Argentina.

This evening we explore another of the city's cultural icons — the Tango. Located in the bohemian neighborhood of San Telmo, El Viejo Almacén has housed stories of treachery and furtive love, singers and dancers, knives and poems. We begin with a delicious dinner, sampling the renowned Argentinean beef, matched with good Argentinean wines. Then we cross the cobbled street to the most authentic tango venue in Buenos Aires, which still maintains its original colonial architecture. The show gathers the best musicians and dancers in town, and we will have ringside seats. (B,L,D)

Oct. 21: Buenos Aires/Embark Ship

A day at a former *Argentine estancia* is a wonderful way to see and enjoy the countryside and the landscapes of the picturesque *gauchos*. Travel to La Carabassa, a beautiful private ranch dating to 1840. Learn about the history of the private house and grounds, savor a typical Argentine barbecue of the local beef and wines, and relax in the soothing views. Perhaps it's due to the flat *pampas*, or the blessed climate, that horseback riding and polo are associated with Argentina. At La Carabassa, we've made special arrangements for you to attend a private polo match to learn about the game and the behind-the-scenes work involved in the making of a horse and good player. Our day ends aboard *National Geographic Explorer* as we chart a southerly course. (B,L,D)

Oct. 22-23: At Sea (B,L,D)

With whales beneath and birds above, settle in to shipboard life and hear talks from our staff preparing you for the exciting days ahead in South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. There's time to take full advantage of the ship's amenities. (B,L,D)

Oct. 24: Peninsula Valdes, Patagonia

Our staff has been longing to return to the Valdes Peninsula since 2005. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Valdes Peninsula is a wildlife haven where the endangered southern right whales come to breed, mate and calve their young. We will be there at the absolute peak of the migration season, and at this time of year the cows and newborn calves can be seen, often in water as shallow as 15 feet. We take smaller boats out to the bay and look for these behemoths, loaded with the characteristic barnacles and callosities on their heads. (B,L,D)

Oct. 25: At Sea—South Atlantic

Oct. 26-27: Falkland Islands

Your first impression is likely to be: Scotland, until you see grazing sheep juxtaposed with penguins. Lace up your walking shoes and hike the tussock grass-covered landscape, observing Magellanic penguins emerge from their burrows. Join our keen birders to the nesting albatross site, or compare aperture settings with a National Geographic photographer. The relationships our staff has built over the years ensure you see another side of the Falklands: meeting the rugged, friendly islanders who live in this isolated outpost of the U.K. (B,L,D)

Oct. 28-29: At Sea (B,L,D)

Oct. 30-Nov. 4: South Georgia Island

Most of our Naturalist's name South Georgia as their favorite southern destination. After your first landing, you'll understand their passion. Walk the wild beaches, yards away from herds of snorting, belching four-ton elephant seals. Paddle a kayak as curious fur seals play in the seaweed. Hike mountain passes along Shackleton's epic route. At St. Andrew's Bay you'll be surrounded by 100,000 king penguins! (B,L,D)

Nov. 5-6: At Sea (B,L,D)

Nov. 7: Falkland Islands

Visit the photogenic, Victorian town of Port Stanley. Hoist a few at the local pub and stop at the Anglican Cathedral with its archway of whalebones. (B,L,D)

Nov. 8: At Sea (B,L,D)

Nov. 9-10: Ushuaia, Argentina/Disembark/Santiago/U.S.

Disembark in Ushuaia with time to explore before our LAN charter flight to Santiago. Fly on an overnight flight to the U.S. (B,L)