PATAGONIA: ARGENTINA & THE CHILEAN FJORDS (Ushuaia/Buenos Aires)

20 DAYS/17 NIGHTS – NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER

EXPEDITION HIGHLIGHTS

• Enjoy special access to pristine wildlife reserves closed to the public, from Argentina’s Bahía Bustamante to Yendegaia and Karukinka natural parks in Tierra del Fuego.
• Explore the famed reserve of Peninsula Valdés, Argentina, searching for native wildlife such as the guanaco and Darwin’s rhea, a large flightless bird.
• Explore Torres del Paine National Park with naturalists, and cruise in Zodiacs among glaciers and islets in the Chilean fjords.
• Transit the legendary Beagle Channel and Strait of Magellan and round Cape Horn.

More than a century after Europeans settled it, Patagonia remains remote. Never precisely defined, it stretches south from the Rio Colorado and eastern part of the Rio Bio-Bio to the tip of the continent. Our exploration here includes a look at total Patagonia—from the pampas of Argentina to the fjords, lakes and glaciers of Chile—along with unforgettable highlights and wilderness of epic proportion. By special permission from the Wildlife Conservation Society, with whom we are proud to partner on this voyage, we’ll explore Tierra del Fuego’s newest and largest reserve, Karukinka. Experience the landscapes of the gauchos at a private estancia (sheep ranch). Zodiac and kayak in the Chilean fjords near impressive glaciers. Hike the trails of Torres del Paine, the renowned reserve that guards the most magical of Patagonia’s scenic treasures.

MAR. 7 AND 8: U.S. / FLY OVERNIGHT TO BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
Fly overnight to Buenos Aires and check into the Caesar Park Hotel (MGallery). Explore the city’s Beaux Arts palaces, the bohemian quarters of La Boca and San Telmo, and the famous balcony forever associated with Eva Peron.

MAR. 9: FLY TO USHUAIA / EMBARK SHIP
Fly to Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, where you set sail aboard National Geographic Explorer. (B,L,D)

MAR. 10 AND 11: BEAGLE CHANNEL/YENDEGAIA/CAPE HORN
Sail the Beagle Channel to Yendegaia, a stunning wilderness that covers more than 95,000 acres on Tierra del Fuego. We’ve received special permission to explore the reserve, a former cattle ranch that hosts beech forests, wild rivers, and abundant wildlife. The following day, we round Cape Horn, the southernmost tip of South America, and, weather permitting, take Zodiacs ashore for panoramic views. (B,L,D)

MAR. 12: EXPLORING THE CHILEAN FJORDS
Myriad fjords or senos indent the coast. Many are punctuated with tidewater glaciers at the end, and we cruise deep into the senos to explore by ship, Zodiac and kayak. (B,L,D)

MAR. 13 AND 14: PUERTO NATALES/TORRES DEL PAINE N.P.
From Puerto Natales, drive to monumental Torres del Paine National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The landscape is immense, with razor-backed ridges, Andean
condors, flamingos, and rheas. Torres del Paine is an amazing sight of jagged granite mountains topped with a thick layer of dark slate. It’s one of the most spectacular and wildlife-rich areas in the Americas, covering 450,000 acres of glaciers, forests and grasslands, rivers and colorful lagoons. (B,L,D)

**MAR. 15: EXPLORING THE CHILEAN FJORDS**
The renowned fjords of southern Chile rival those of southeast Alaska. See gigantic glaciers, thousands of islands, lakes and waterfalls and come to appreciate (in the words of Herman Melville) “all the attending marvels of a thousand Patagonia sights and sounds.” Our Captain and expedition leader will be on the lookout for memorable places to explore by Zodiac and kayak. (B,L,D)

**MAR. 16: TIERRA DEL FUEGO, CHILE: KARUKINKA NATURAL PARK**
One of Patagonia’s crown jewels, Tierra del Fuego is a beautiful island known as the ‘Land of Fire’ at its most southern tip—home to remarkable wildlife. Our destination is the newest and largest protected area on Tierra del Fuego: Karukinka Natural Park. Since 2004, it has been owned and managed by the Wildlife Conservation Society, with whom we are proud to partner on this voyage. We are thrilled to have been offered permission to explore their park. Spanning 1,160 square miles, this protected area is a bountiful reserve of sub-Antarctic woodlands, peat bogs, windswept steppes and snow-covered mountain ranges. Weather permitting, choose to kayak, surrounded by spectacular scenery and soaring Andean condors. (B,L,D)

**MAR. 17: PUNTA ARENAS, CHILE**
The southern city of Punta Arenas is set on the Strait of Magellan. Visit the natural history museum and the Braun Menendez Museum, an opulent mansion testifying to the wealth of sheep farmers in the 1800s. Choose to hike in the forest reserve on the rolling hills above the town. This afternoon, we continue through the Strait of Magellan, looking for marine wildlife and seeing the scenery of Tierra del Fuego. (B,L,D)

**MAR.18: EXPLORING COASTAL ARGENTINA**
The remote Argentine coast has sandy beaches and dramatic arches and caves, perfect for exploring. Weather permitting, we may cruise along one of Argentina’s newest national parks, Monte León. (B,L,D)

**MAR. 19: PUERTO DESEADO**
For a remote port, Puerto Deseado has a distinctive maritime history, as it was encountered by Magellan, Sir Frances Drake, Thomas Cavendish and Charles Darwin. Deseado is actually a submerged estuary and we board small boats to view the steep cliffs, breeding shags, and searching for the small Commerson’s dolphin. (B,L,D)

**MAR. 20: BAHÍA BUSTAMANTE**
Visit the vast private sheep estancia (ranch) and wildlife haven, owned by the Soriano family, unique for its Patagonia steppe vegetation and wildlife: 100 species of birds, southern sea lions, elephant seals, guanacos, and rheas, the flightless birds that are cousins of the emu and the ostrich. (B,L,D)

**MAR. 21 AND 22: PENINSULA VALDÉS/AT SEA**
A UNESCO site, Peninsula Valdés is a wildlife haven. Inland, see guanacos (a wild relative of the llama), maras, armadillos, and a Magellanic penguin colony. We’ll spend the day exploring. (B,L,D)

**MAR. 23 AND 24: BAHÍA BLANCA, ARGENTINA/AT SEA**
We cruise up the expansive estuary, a maze of channels and islands, hoping to view the rarely observed Franciscana, or La Plata dolphin, as well as the local and rare Olrog’s gull. From this port city, set on the edge of vast grasslands called the pampas, we venture into the countryside flanked by the mountain range of Sierra de la Ventana. Visit the Parque Provincial Ernesto Tornquist, which preserves a wide range of species native to the pampas. (B,L,D)

**MAR. 25 AND 26: BUENOS AIRES/U.S**
Disembark in Buenos Aires. There will be free time to explore the city before you transfer to the airport for your overnight flight home. (Mar. 25: B)
OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS
Ask about an extended stay at Iguazú Falls or Easter Island.

>>Iguazu Falls, 3 Days/3 Nights. Call for details.

>>Easter Island, 4 Days/4 Nights. Call for details

A note about the weather: in this very wild part of the world, the weather is highly unpredictable. As can happen on any of our expeditions, we may well have to adapt our plans to conditions at the time of our visit.

Aboard the 148-guest - National Geographic Explorer

Departure Dates: 2014: March 7, Oct. 23*

*The Oct. 23 departure embarks in Buenos Aires and disembarks in Ushuaia.

Cost Per Person Double Occupancy
Category 1 $15,950
Category 2 $16,990
Category 3 $17,990
Category 4 $18,850
Category 5 $22,860
Category 6 $25,990
Category 7 $29,990

Sole Occupancy
Solo A $21,240
Solo B $22,480

Advance Payment: ...............$1,800

Sample Airfares: Round-trip Miami/Buenos Aires
Economy....................... from $1,440
Business....................... from $4,395

Charter Airfare: from $395 (one-way Buenos Aires/Ushuaia)

Charter flight between Buenos Aires and Ushuaia is not included.

Cost Includes: Shipboard accommodations; one hotel night; meals indicated; excursions; services of Lindblad Expeditions’ Leader, Naturalist staff and expert guides; use of kayaks; entrance fees; all port charges and service taxes.

Not Included: Air transportation not indicated as included; charter flight Ushuaia/Buenos Aires; immigration/passport fees; personal items such as alcoholic beverages, emails, laundry, voyage DVD etc. Gratuities to ship’s crew at your discretion.