



**GIPPSLAND
TRAVEL**

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AWESOME ANTARCTICA
with a taste of South America
26 day tour including a
13 day Sea Adventurer Expedition Cruise
4 February to 1 March 2017
Personally escorted by Jacquey Turner

TOUR OPTIONS:

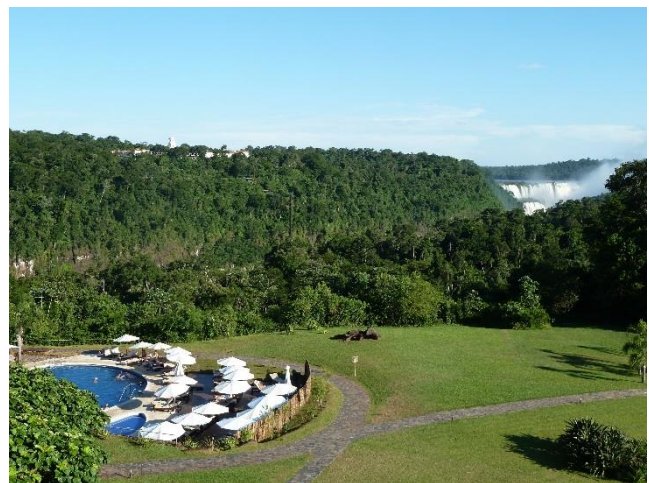
AWESOME ANTARCTIC including Iguazu Falls departing Saturday 4 February
(fully escorted)

AWESOME ANTARCTIC joining in Buenos Aires departing Monday 6 February
(flight to Buenos Aires not escorted).

Saturday, 4 February **Melbourne – Buenos Aires – Iguazu Falls** **(D)**

We shall have an early morning transfer from Gippsland to Melbourne Airport to depart on our flight to Buenos Aires. On arrival at Ezeiza Pistarini International Airport, we will be met by our guide and transferred by car to Aeroparque Domestic Airport for our flight to Iguazu Falls. We will then be met at the Iguazu Falls airport and then transferred to the **Sheraton International Iguazu Falls Resort**, or similar, for a 2-night stay.

The Iguazu Falls: This is the region of great rivers, humid tropics, red earth and magnificent jungle. Just 18kms from Puerto Iguazu you enter the National Park of the same name where the famous falls sit. The deep flowing waters of the river fall from heights of 70 metres through 275 falls spread over 2.7 kms. The frontier with Brazil goes through the Garganta del Diablo (Devil's Throat) where the falling water gives the illusion of magic rainbows. A visit to these falls is a truly unforgettable experience. Tonight we will have dinner at the hotel.



Sunday, 5 February

Iguazu Falls

(B,D)



Today we have full-day guided tour, walking along the many tracks on this side of the river and observing the falls from platforms that bring us extremely close to the water. 'Iguazu' in the Indian Tupi Guarani language means large waters. Set amidst jungle, a visit to these falls will be an unforgettable experience. From the hotel we will be transferred to the visitor's centre inside the Iguazu National Parkland then board a small train to travel to the beginning of the upper path, lower path and Devil's Throat. The Upper walk is 500 mtr long lasting about 45 minutes. On Lower path you can walk 1.3kms of footpaths lasting 1.5 hours. It's a different view from which we will see the falls from the middle and be warned that we may get a little wet!

For Devil's throat we'll board the little train at Devils Throat Station that surrounds the upper part of the Iguazu River, from here we will walk along a bridge (walkway) that leads to the balcony of Devil's Throat for the most spectacular view. There will be time to rest up before we get together for optional drinks and dinner at the hotel.

OPTIONAL: *For the adventurous, you can take an optional **speed boat ride**, going upstream on the river, taking you extremely close to the falls.*

Monday, 6 February

Iguazu Falls – Buenos Aires

(B, D)

Today we will have half day tour visiting the Brazilian side of the falls. Seeing the falls from the Brazilian side will give us a completely different perspective as we will have the panoramic view of the entire falls.

OPTIONAL: *From the Brazilian side of the falls you will be able to take a **Helicopter Flight** over the falls. (Please note that this cannot be pre-booked). This flight takes around 7 minutes but it's worth every cent.*

After our visit to the falls we will be transferred from our hotel to Iguazu Falls airport for our afternoon flight to Buenos Aires where we will be met and transferred to the **Marriott Hotel**, or similar, for a 3-night stay.



Buenos Aires is the Argentine Republic's capital city. Located on the southern bank of the River Plate, the population of greater Buenos Aires is around 13 million people and has been virtually rebuilt since the beginning of this century with very few of the old buildings remaining. The centre of Buenos Aires has maintained the original layout since foundation and the Plaza de Mayo is its heart. Tonight we will meet up with the rest of the group for a Welcome Dinner.

Tuesday, 7 February

Buenos Aires

(B, D)

We depart from the hotel for our half day city tour, travelling down 9 de Julio Ave, the widest avenue in the world, past the famous Colon Opera House, the Obelisk, commemorating the first founding of the city in 1536 to get to Plaza de Mayo (May Square). We will also see the surrounding buildings; Government House, the Metropolitan

Cathedral with the Mausoleum of General San Martin, Argentina's greatest national hero and the Cabildo, the colonial town hall built in 1751. We then head to La Boca, the typically Italian district where the first Italian immigrants settled and 'Caminito' street.

The tour continues to the Buenos Aires port area, past San Martin Square towards the residential district of Palermo Chico and Palermo Park. We then head to Recoleta elegant district to visit the Recoleta Cemetery where the famous are laid to rest (including Eva Peron). We will return to the hotel along the stylish Alvear Ave.

We may be able to finish the tour in Recoleta and enjoy some shopping in this elegant part of Buenos Aires. Tonight we shall be entertained at a Dinner and Tango Show: "Esquina de Carlos Gardel", where we wine & dine at a unique venue offering a floor show sketching the history of popular Argentine music.



Wednesday, 8 February **Buenos Aires** **(B)**

OPTIONAL TOURS: Today we can either relax or choose one of the following activities that are included in the tour cost.

***Full Day Tour of Tigre & San Isidro including Delta Cruise & lunch**

This full day tour takes you through the elegant northern riverside suburbs of Vicente Lopez, Olivos, where the President's Residence is located, San Isidro and its gothic Cathedral and San Fernando before reaching Tigre. On departure from the hotel you will be taken to Maipu station in Olivos and board the coastal train. The train rides along the river coast through one of the most elegant areas on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. On arrival in San Isidro, you will visit the Cathedral and then head onto Tigre, a charming city with many rowing, canoeing and yacht clubs, summer residences and restaurants by the riverside.

The tour continues aboard a typical motor boat along the Paran River Delta (1 hour cruise). The Delta is 220 square kilometres in size and small islands and numerous streams spread throughout the area. The nearby Lujan, Sarmiento, Tigre and San Antonio rivers are all part of this excursion. The tour returns along the Panamericana Highway.

***Tango Lesson at Mansion Dandi Royal**

You will be picked up and taken to the Mansion Dandi Royal. You will then enter the "Academia del Tango", a Tango dance school, where accomplished and well known Argentine Tango dancers will introduce you to the fine art of Tango in a 1 hour lesson. Held at "salon de Tango", a typical Tango ballroom, where you can dance on an original 1925 wooden floor that will give you the feeling of the golden times of Tango. And above all a unique experience in the magic and seduction of Tango, a journey through time one hundred years back, to the days when the Tango was danced in every corner of San Telmo.



*** Full Day Fiesta Gaucha at Cina Cina Ranch & lunch**



This excursion will visit one of the Gaucho Farms (Argentine cowboys). The tour will take you out of the city of Buenos Aires and into the Pampas (countryside) to spend a day on a Gaucho farm. This lovely full day excursion is a unique opportunity to have close contact with an Argentine Gaucho, their traditional music and dances, and take part in a real gaucho festival. The party is held at a beautiful country residence, on an old ranch and the day is filled with hayrides, horseback riding and a typical "asado criollo" (barbecue) with wine followed by a folklore show featuring the traditional music and dances and a gaucho skills demonstration.



Thursday, 9 February

Buenos Aires - Calafate

(B.D)

We will be transferred to Aeroparque domestic airport for our flight to Calafate. On arrival at Calafate airport, we will be met by our guide and transferred to our hotel, **Mirador Del Lago**, or similar, for a 2-night stay

El Calafate is the centre of the tourist network in the deep south of mainland Argentinian Patagonia, and is one of the country's most-visited tourist destinations. These offshoot attractions cluster around the tremendous bloated tuber of Lago Argentino, the greatest of all exclusively Argentinian lakes and the third biggest in all South America. Lago Argentino has a surface area of 1600 square kilometres - it's so deep that its temperature remains almost constant at 8°C year round. When the weather is brighter, the lake soaks up the light of the Patagonian sky to reflect a glorious hue of polarized blue.

This afternoon we will be met at the hotel and travel to the Patagonian Ranch, which is situated at approximately 40 kilometres distance from El Calafate. We will be welcomed with tea and home-made patisserie, before a sheep shearing demonstration; and once the latter finishes, we will have the opportunity of taking a look at the building, while waiting for dinner, served with a typical grilled Patagonian lamb and folklore show.

Friday, 10 February

El Calafate

(B)

Today we embark on a full day tour to the Perito Moreno Glacier & Navigation Safari. We leave El Calafate bordering the southern arm of the Argentine Lake to get to Los Glaciares National Park (90 km away). It is an 80 km long bus ride, which means there will be lots of photo opportunities as the bus makes several stops. All the way a guide from "Los Glaciares" National Park will be with us, giving us all the information about the surrounding area, the history and mysticism of this unique glacier. The winding road bordering Brazo Rico leaves behind the Sighs Curve and reaches the paths to the Glacier. Perito Moreno Glacier is about 30.000 years old. Its surface is 192 km², the front wall is 5 km long and some of its peaks are 80 metres high. The deep silence is suddenly interrupted by the tremendous noise of huge pieces of ice that crack from the glacier and fall into the lake to float on the Canal de los Tempanos (Icebergs Channel). The continuous advance of the glacier eventually separates this Channel from the rest of the Lake. As the Channel is its only communication with the rest of the lakes in the area, the lake grows to reach over 30 metres above its normal level and floods the surrounding areas. Such pressure opens a tunnel in the ice wall forming an arch that eventually collapses in the world famous 'breaking of the glacier'. This spectacle used to take place every 4 years but due to the planet heating it hasn't happened in the last 10 years.



Awesome Antarctica – 2017

In order to get a closer look at this majestic glacier, our boat departs from port Bajo de las Sombras, inside the National Park, and sails along Brazo Chico on Argentino Lake toward the Northern wall of the Perito Moreno glacier. For almost an hour we will sail along the 70m wall getting an amazing view of the falling ice and a superb perspective of the entire glacier. We will return to our hotel late in the afternoon.

Saturday, 11 February **El Calafate - Ushuaia** **(B.D)**

We transfer to El Calafate airport for our flight to Ushuaia. On arrival our guide will meet and transfer us to our hotel, **Los Cauquenes**, or similar, for a 2-night stay.

Ushuaia, the hub of tourism in Tierra del Fuego, lies in the far south of the island, between the mountains - amongst them Cerro Martial and Monte Olivia - and the sea, the town tumbles down the hillside to the wide, encircling arm of land that protects its bay from the southwesterly winds and occasional thrashing storms of the icy Beagle Channel. In addition to having several of its own sites of interest, Ushuaia acts as a convenient base



for exploring the rugged beauty of the lands that border this historically important sea channel and lies 1000km to the north of Antarctica, but is still the closest port to the white continent - and most tourists pass through the town to make their journey across Drake's Passage, the wild stretch of ocean that separates the two continents. Whales, elephant seals, albatrosses, and numerous species of penguins are just some of the rare wildlife you can hope to see, and you'll be shuttled to interesting sites by zodiac inflatables or even by helicopter.

Sunday, 12 February **Ushuaia** **(B)**

Today we head out for a full day tour to the Tierra del Fuego National park which lies 12 km west from Ushuaia and was created in 1960 and became the southernmost preserved area in Argentina. It covers 6 km along the Beagle Channel. The topography is extremely rough. Everything is a succession of craggy mountains, rivers in the middle of the valleys and lakes. There are six species of trees and a large variety of flowers (yellow violets; white, green and yellow orchids; seapinks) There are plenty of birds as well as silver fox, upland geese, rabbit, muskrat, beaver, salmon, trout, tailed hake and sardines. On the shores there are crabs, sea snails and mussels.



Departing from the city of Ushuaia, we will drive out of the city passing by the slope of the Susana Mount that overlooks the work of the prisoners of the old prison, where now the Southern Fuegian Railway is located and where we will board the Train at the end of the world. We will see breathtaking views of covered mountains, rivers, lakes and vast natural forests in the Andes Cordillera. The train consists of steam locomotives, coaches comfortably heated and fitted with large windows. It leaves from Estación del Fin del Mundo (End of the World Station), 8 km West of Ushuaia, and runs about 1 hour, ending at the Estación del Parque (Park Station). At the Estación del Fin del Mundo, we can enjoy local cakes and hot chocolate. On this train we will enjoy an unforgettable journey, acquiring historical background, experiencing the natural wonders of the Tierra del Fuego, and travelling on a train of the Golden Age of railways.



After this train trip we will continue through the valley to the Ensenada Bay, where we will be able to contemplate the Redonda and Estorbo Islands and on the other coast of the Channel of Beagle, the snow white Mountains of the Sampaio Chain (Chile). Back again on the national route #3 with the fuegian forest and its flora close to the road we will go to the Roca Lake to do a long walk by the lake coast and by the Lapataia River, originated in the lake. From this point we can see the Cónдор Hill natural border with Chile. We will go towards the other end of the Park and will observe the Green Lagoon and the Black Lagoon, large growing peat bog. Finally we will pass by the beaver dams, whose footpath will lead to Lapataia Bay.

Monday, 13 to 25 February

Sea Adventurer Expedition Cruise

Today we depart the hotel to be transferred to the port in Ushuaia. After boarding *Sea Adventurer*, we set sail along the Beagle Channel commencing our Crossing the Circle and Antarctic Peninsula cruise.

This Polar Adventure Ship was built in 1975. *Sea Adventurer* (formerly known as the *Clipper Adventurer*) underwent a \$13 million conversion in 1998. Her proud reputation is complimented by her well-appointed elegance. The *Sea Adventurer* is the perfect expedition ship for people who enjoy soft adventures and creature comforts. All cabins have outside views and facilities ensuite. The *Sea Adventurer* is equipped with Zodiacs for shore landings and ocean level cruising, yet offers fine dining.





Saturday, 25 February Ushuaia – Santiago (B,L,D)

We cruise up the Beagle Channel in the early morning before docking in Ushuaia. We then farewell the *Sea Adventurer* and transfer to the airport for our Lan Chile flight to Santiago via Buenos Aires. On arrival in Santiago de Chile, we will be met by our guide and transferred to our hotel, **Plaza El Bosque Park & Suites**, or similar, for a 2-night stay. Chile's capital, Santiago, is located in the central valley, approximately 1800 feet above sea level, framed by the majestic Andean mountain range and only 120 kms from the Pacific Ocean. First settled in 1541 at the foot of the Santa Lucia hill, it is now the fifth largest city in South America and is set in one of the most beautiful locations. Although essentially a modern capital, it still has some beautiful historic colonial buildings dating from the 16th century.

Sunday, 26 February Santiago (B,D)

We will be picked up from our hotel this morning for a sightseeing tour of the city of Santiago and the Civic Centre, La Moneda Presidential Palace and the house of government that was originally built to coin money. In 1846 and until 1958, President Manuel Bulnes had La Moneda fitted out as the private residence of Chile's presidents. Now the building has been renovated as government palace, seat of the Presidency of the Republic.



The Plaza de Armas, originally --and following Spanish customs-- is an open space where open air markets could be held and it wasn't until 1860 that the first flower gardens were planted together with trees that are still there to this day.

The Bellavista district is the home of much of Santiago's artisans, and is lined with galleries, as well open-air cafes and restaurants and nightlife. We will go to a lookout on San Cristobal hill, its tallest peaks rising 880 m above sea level for a panoramic view of the city, then continue towards the residential districts of Vitacura, Las Condes and Providencia, boasting modern high rise buildings and exclusive shopping malls. Tonight we will celebrate the end of our tour with a farewell dinner at the hotel.



Monday, 27 February Santiago de Chile – Auckland (B)

This morning we will be picked up from our hotel and taken to the Cousiño Macul winery, where we will be welcomed by a bilingual guide who will take us through the centenary cellars. We learn about the history of the Cousiño family and the winemaking process and see the huge contrast among the old equipment and machines used in the XIX Century to the most advanced technology from nowadays, in the Lota cellar.

Next, you will be able to go back in time, when descending to one of the oldest and finest Chilean wine cellars, built in 1872 by French architects. There, the Cousiño family keeps its' private collection, with bottles that date back to as far as 1927. Finally, the visit ends in the Wine Shop, where an Antiguas Reservas wine will be offered.

After arriving back at the hotel, the afternoon is free with time to relax or catch up with some last minute shopping before our late checkout and transfer to the Santiago airport for our Lan Chile flight home.

Tuesday, 28 February Inflight – International Date line crossing.

Wednesday, 1 March Auckland – Melbourne

We arrive in Auckland in the early hours of the morning and then connect to our flight to Melbourne. On arrival in Melbourne, the coach will transfer us back to Gippsland.

YOUR TOUR ESCORT

Jacquey Turner is a highly experienced travel agent and tour escort with more than 30 years industry experience.

Jacquey's attention to detail and personal care ensure that everyone travelling in her group will have a most enjoyable Antarctica and South America experience.

