

Patagonian Atlantic Coast

Wildlife & archeological sites



CHUBUT | PUERTO MADRYN | VALDÉS PENINSULA

10
DAYS

PATAGONIA

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ATLANTIC
COAST

DAY 01 TRELEW / PUERTO MADRYN

Arrival. Reception and assistance at Trelew airport. Transfer to Puerto Madryn. Accommodation. Dinner.

DAY 2 PUERTO MADRYN

Breakfast. Full day Valdes Peninsula with Lunch at Faro Punta Delgada. Full day in Valdes Peninsula, was recently declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO due to its geography, flora and fauna, features that turn it into a paradise of nature. Departure from Puerto Madryn towards Puerto Piramide, going through the Isthmus Carlos Ameghino, a privileged place that due to its geologic formation parallel to the coast. This is a unique place not only for its geography but specially for its fauna: the sea elephants, creatures that weight around 3,000 kg and that lay on the beach and dive under 1,000 meters deep, are waiting for you in Punta Cantor Reserve, situated at the mouth of this inlet. From the extremes of the inlet you will enjoy the most imposing sights of the Argentine Sea. The tour continues towards the light-house of Punta Delgada. Lunch in this spot. During your way back to Puerto Madryn, you will take part in a Mediterranean experience to appreciate the Salinas Grande y Chica (Grand and Small salt pits), depressions of 35 meters below sea level, and you will be able to see wild animals such as: maras (Patagonian hare), guanacos, foxes and skunks. The tour guide will tell you everything about the history of the San José Fort and about the salt extraction from the salt pits. Return to Puerto Madryn. Accommodation.

DAY 3 PTO. MADRYN / COMODORO RIVADAVIA

Breakfast. Transfer to Comodoro Rivadavia, visiting Camarones Penguin Rookery at Cabo dos Bahias Reserve with Lunch in Camarones. Distance to travel: 540 km. (338 miles). The Reserve is located some 30 km (19 miles). away from the small fishing village of Camarones. Its impressive setting among other rocks that plunge into the turquoise sea and the fact of not being so heavily visited as the most famous penguin rookeries close to Puerto Madryn, render it an authentic jewel for lovers of untouched nature. You will be able to wander along the interpretative paths drawn among the nests of hundreds of Magellan penguins that gather in this colony every year. A tour around the reserve will allow you to appreciate, within less than a meter distance, the funny way of walking of these sea birds so curious that will approach you. Please remember that it is not permitted to shout, touch, feed or bother the animals as this is a natural reserve: the animals live freely in their habitat, that is why you must

not leave the paths. You will not only be able to see penguins, but also many others species of sea birds that build their nests in this colony: seagulls, petrels, Antarctic pigeons, skuas, vapor ducks, chorlos, cormorants and little seagulls. And you will most surely have the chance to see some typical species of the steep such as foxes and "guanacos", which wander freely in this untouched natural area. Continue to Comodoro Rivadavia. Accommodation.

DAY 4 COMODORO RIVADAVIA / PTO. DESEADO

Breakfast. Transfer to Puerto Deseado with box lunch. Navigation of the Deseado River estuary spotting the cliffs of the Royal Cormorants, and a bunch of nearby islands that host amazing colonies of penguins, sea birds, and sea lions. We will disembark at Penguin Island. The Natural Reserve Río Deseado is plentiful of biological wealth. Marine fauna is incredibly rich in the area. It offers the possibility of spotting 80% of the bird species of the Patagonian Coasts. It is the only place on earth where 5 different species of cormorants coexist, from the less distinctive Bigua (brown cormorant) to the blue-eyed cormorant. There are of course many other interesting species, such as: Magellan penguins (October thru April), which nestle at Quiroga Island, Punta del Paso Key, Birds Island, and Chaffers Island. In the island known as "Roca Lobo" you will find a migratory colony of sea lions. Another interesting inhabitant of the reserve is the Commerson's dolphin. Accommodation.

DAY 5 PUERTO DESEADO / JARAMILLO PETRIFIED WOODS / PUERTO SAN JULIAN

Breakfast. Departure towards Puerto San Julian, visiting en route the Petrified Woods Natural Monument with box lunch. Distance to travel: 480 km. (300 miles). Patagonia has not always been the arid steppe it is at present. Ages ago the local weather was temperate and humid; the Andean Range did not exist, which allowed the humid winds of the Pacific Ocean to blow unchecked in the area. Under these circumstances, huge coniferous trees inhabited the area. Then, suddenly, 150 million years ago, the volcanic activity in the area got intensified and the woods were covered by volcanic ashes. Under this cover, the wood of the trees was petrified by the action of the minerals that replaced their vegetable core. Nowadays, the huge trunks remain spread on the plateau like blind witnesses of ancient ages. You will have the chance to appreciate the largest petrified trees in the world as some of them reach a length of 35 meters. Accommodation.

DAY 6 PUERTO SAN JULIAN

Breakfast. Full day visit to Estancia La María with barbecue lunch. Distance to travel: 300 km (188 miles) on gravel road. At the Archaeological Site of Estancia La María the incredible geological revolutions suffered by Patagonia in the past are clearly unveiled. There you will enjoy not only the Rupestrian art but also a beautiful scenery with deep canyons, plateaus, rocky

prominences created by sediment of volcanic explosions with colours and textures of a singular beauty. The geography of the place gave origin to caves where there are 84 sites with testimonies of primitive art dating from 12,600 years ago that belonged to the Casapadre culture. These almost unknown drawings depict hands, human figures, felines and abstract figures in hunting scenes of red, yellow, black and white colours. At the Estancia you can also see the typical farming activities of the area and enjoy a typical Patagonian lamb barbecue. Accommodation.

DAY 7 PUERTO SAN JULIAN / MONTE LEON NATURAL RESERVE / ISLA PAVON

Breakfast. Visit to the Natural Reserve of Monte León. Lunch at Hostaria Isla Pavón. 176 km (110 miles) south from San Julian there is a spot where the Argentine sea leans over the Patagonian steppe. This place is Monte León. In this sector you can walk in the caves formed by the sea, which is constantly slashing against the high cliffs, a visual scenery that changes according to where the sun is playing with the sky and the salty water. These caves disseminated near Monte León give shelter to colonies of sea birds and mammals, which search for places like this one to mate and breed their offspring. There are imperial and rock cormorants, seagulls, black oyster catchers and biguas among other species. This is the first Marine National Park in Argentina and the first continental national park in the country with marine coast. Pavón Island is the place where Commander Luis Piedrabuena, the defender of Argentine sovereignty in the south lived. There is a simple museum with elements of the times of the sea pioneer; installed in the present replica of its original house. It is worth having a look at the rudimentary but efficient chain pump system used to bring the water from the river to some pools, thus permitting the irrigation of the place. Accommodation.

DAY 8 ISLA PAVON / CALAFATE

Breakfast. Transfer to El Calafate (box lunch on board included). Distance to travel: 288 km (180 miles) gravel road. Accommodation.

DAY 9 CALAFATE

Breakfast. Full day Upsala and Onelli navigation. Departure from the hotel towards Puerto Banderas, located 60 km (38 miles) from El Calafate, to embark on the catamaran which will sail through the northern arm of Argentino Lake to approach the front wall of the Upsala Glacier, crossing the amazing barrier of icebergs constantly floating in front of the glacier. Upsala is the largest glacier within 'Los Glaciares National Park' with a surface of 1,000 km². The glacier is constantly receding, specially during the last decade because of the increasing global warming. From here the navigation continues through Onelli Channel up to Onelli Bay. The only point where the expedition will come ashore this day for a 800-meter hike through the Patagonian-Andean woods towards the lagoon of the

same name where it is possible to the Onelli, Bolado, and Agassiz Glaciers flowing down the surrounding mountain slopes towards the water surface, producing an infinity of icebergs floating on the waters and enhancing the exquisite beauty of the place. Embark towards Spegazzini channel to get an impressive view of Seco, Spegazzini and South Heim glaciers. The most imposing one is Spegazzini since it is the highest glacier in the national park and also because, so far, it does not seem to be receding. On the opposite mountain slope, Seco Glacier, on the contrary, perfectly allows to see this phenomenon. Near this place Puerto de las Vacas is located, where there is a refuge that was once used for the expeditions to the continental icefield. (When weather conditions make impossible to disembark at Onelli Bay, this site will be the disembarking pier for the excursion). Return to Puerto Bandera and transfer to the hotel (arrival at about 7.30/8 PM). Accommodation.

DAY 10 CALAFATE

Breakfast. Full day visit to Perito Moreno Glacier. Departure from the hotel towards Perito Moreno Glacier situated within Los Glaciares National Park, 80 km (50 miles) from El Calafate (half way along a gravel route). From the very beginning this trip will provide pleasant surprises. Departing from El Calafate, the Argentino Lake will appear on the right side of the road with its Bahía Redonda (Round Bay) that shows an interesting and assorted bird species. The first half of the road goes through a landscape typical of the Patagonian steppe, whose characteristic species are the broom sedges (hard, thorny type of grass) and 'calafates' (bushes belonging to the barberry family which is well-known for its yellow flowers and violet fruits), from the national park entrance onwards the landscape drastically changes, the flora grows richer with species that are typical of the Andean-Patagonian Forest such as: ñires, lengas and guindos. Perito Moreno Glacier is an imposing ice river with an area of 195 m², a length of 30 Km and a front which is 5 km wide; the frontal walls rise between 30 and 60 meters high the lake level. In the central area of the glacier the ice reaches a depth between 250 to 350 meters. This frozen river descends from the Southern Patagonian Icefield causing, during its slow advance, ice cracks and thunderous bursts that turned the glacier into a marvel in constant movement. A show that is impressing not only for its beauty but also for the continuous roars that are heard from its innermost recesses. Because of its breathtaking beauty it was declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco. A walk along the paths placed in front of its western wall will let you admire this impressive wonder of nature from different points of view. In due evening, transfer to the airport to board flight.

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SPANISH
AND
ENGLISH