

Big Five Presents
Argentina

Nature has favored Argentina with some of the most lavish and legendary scenery on the continent; from the thunderous Iguassu Falls, to the stunning alpine scenery of the Lake District, to the jagged mountains of Patagonía that stretch south to Tierra del Fuego.

The second largest country in South America, Argentina's northern regions are blessed with an abundance of stellar attributes such as established vineyards, the Amazon's pristine Yacutinga Reserve, and the dramatic Andean deserts dotted with Indian villages. The great central plains of the Pampas hold safe the traditions of the old Wild West as the famed gauchos, Argentine cowboys, continue to practice a way of life that has all but vanished elsewhere. Argentina also claims high marks on the international polo scene. The Peninsula Valdes encompasses vital habitats for penguins, sea elephants, guanacos, rheas and whales. Few cities can outdo Buenos Aires for style and sophistication with its architecture reminiscent of Paris. City lovers will appreciate the vitality of its nightlife and the wealth of museums, cultural venues, elegant boutiques and cafes. It is also the birthplace of the passionate tango dance. Argentina's variety and vitality engage travelers from the very beginning.



Suggested Itinerary

Day 1: Buenos Aires, Argentina

This vivacious city has something for everyone, from football and polo, to theater and shopping.

Days 2/3: Buenos Aires

This city has it all - European-style architecture, the highest concentration of theaters in the world, a thriving arts community, museums and endless book stores.

Day 4: Buenos Aires / Mendoza

This region is recognized for producing nearly two-thirds of the country's distinguished wines.

Days 5/6: Mendoza

The area is popular for mountaineering, hiking, horseback riding, rafting and snow skiing.

Day 7: Mendoza / Iguassu Falls

One of the natural wonders of Latin America, these horseshoe-shaped falls are 3.2 kilometers / two miles long.

Day 8: Iguassu Falls

From the Argentine side, visitors can see some 275 cascades tumbling into Devil's Gorge.

Day 9: Iguassu / Depart

Custom Options

Glaciers National Park (4 days)

Here are some of nature's most dramatic and elegant ice landscapes such as Perito Moreno Glacier.

Pampas (3 days)

At historic estancias, working ranches, gauchos use traditional skills that have disappeared in most areas.

Peninsula Valdes (3 days)

The peninsula provides habitat to wildlife, including sea lion, sea elephant, whale, guanaco and Magellan penguins.

Salta (4 days)

Salta boasts striking Spanish colonial architecture and Humahuaca Gorge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

San Carlos de Bariloche (3 days)

Bariloche reflects the architectural influences of German, Swiss and English in the heart of the Lake District.

Tierra del Fuego National Park (3 days)

At the extreme end of the Americas, a unique train ride travels to the "End of the World."

Yacutinga Reserve (3 days)

Yacutinga Lodge & Wildlife Nature Reserve offers an extraordinary jungle experience.

About Argentina

Buenos Aires: Like most thriving metropolises, the city has something for everyone in its landscaped parks and gardens, sports stadiums, restaurants, racing, golf courses and theaters. But Buenos Aires has one thing no other city has – the tango! Romantic, vigorous, and passionate, the tango is a product of the city where it was born. For those who fancy a turn on the dance floor, professional tango instructors offer lessons, and tango shows can be found in night clubs and at dinner shows. The city is a joy for shoppers with areas such as Florida Street, San Martin Plaza and in San Telmo, where antiques abound. The Italian Boca district, Palermo Park, and Recoleta Cemetery add to the city's charm. The city also boasts the highest concentration of theaters in the world in addition to museums, galleries and hundreds of bookstores.

Glaciers National Park & El Calafate: In 1927, El Calafate was designed as a site to shelter for wool traders, and also with the hope that the fledgling town would attract settlers. Today, the Patagonian village is an ideal base to explore Los Glaciares National Park, including the Perito Moreno Glacier. Patagonia has a splendid menu of outdoor activities: bird watching, hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding.

Iguassu Falls: 'Big Water,' is a massive waterfall that borders Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. Multihued mist rises above the falls, and luxuriant flowers, ferns, tropical plants, butterflies and exotic birds thrive. From the Argentine side, visitors can see some 275 cascades tumbling into Devil's Gorge. The Rainforest Ecological Train ride ends at the gorge. Walkways and overlooks reward visitors with incredible views. The border between Brazil and Argentina runs through the Devil's Throat, with the majority on the Argentinian side.

Mendoza: Founded in 1561, Mendoza is brimming with history. A major road between Argentina and Chile runs through Mendoza, making it a frequent stop for climbers on their way to scale Mt. Aconcagua (highest mountain in the Western Hemisphere). Mendoza enjoys an outdoor attitude with its proximity to the Andes. It is popular for sport enthusiasts interested in mountaineering, hiking, horseback riding, rafting, and, in winter, snow skiing. Two of the main industries are wine making and olive oil production. Argentina's wine-making traditions date back to the 16th century when a Chilean friar planted the first cuttings. Vineyards here thrive at some of the highest altitudes in the world, up to 1,100 meters / 3,610 feet.

Pampas: The great plains in the heartland recall the romance and daring of the Wild West. Gauchos, Argentine cowboys, still work on traditional cattle ranches, estancias, in the Pampas. Some of these historic estancias have added luxurious accommodations for visitors. Guests witness the gauchos in action on horseback. The fit and adventurous can even opt to join a cattle drive.



Salta & The Northwest: Salta, founded in 1582, claims some of the nation's best-preserved colonial architecture. An ancient Inca road leads into the Humhuaca Gorge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its hillsides are cast in horizontal bands of color – rust, yellow, and green for the minerals in the soil. The area is a repository of Indian culture, history, music, religion and art that can be glimpsed in Tilcara's archaeological museum and at an old Indian fortress. From November to March, Salta's countryside warrants a side trip to its scenic villages, vineyards, and the rugged canyons of Cafayate. From April to October, the "Train to the Clouds" travels a thrilling zigzag route through mountain passes up to 3,810 meters / 12,500 feet.

San Carlos de Bariloche: Often referred to simply as Bariloche, it rests on the shores of Nahuel Huapi Lake, with the Patagonian Steppe to the east and the rugged Andes to the west. In the Lake District, Cerro Catedral is one of the best ski centers in South America. From this luxurious landscape, a satisfying menu of adventures includes skiing, fishing, nature hikes, mountain climbing and boating.

Tierra del Fuego National Park: Ushuaia is the world's southernmost city, and is set on the banks of the Beagle Channel. The "Train at the End of the World" chugs through remote forests and snowy peaks to reach the dramatic Tierra del Fuego. A short cruise along Beagle Channel visits the bird-rich Lobos Island.

Yacutinga Reserve: Sights and sounds of the jungle add to the experience of the primitive interior in the Iguassu National Park. Reached only by boat on the Iguassu River, Yacutinga Lodge & Wildlife Nature Reserve sits in the northernmost area of Misiones, a place of wide rivers, reddish clay soil and subtropical weather. Specialized park rangers guide excursions while a resident biologist presents lectures about the fascinating world of the park.

Best Time To Go

Seasons are the reverse of those in the Northern Hemisphere.

Buenos Aires is ideal in fall, March to May; and spring is September to November, when temperatures are mild. Plan a trip to Patagonia and the southern Andes in summer, December to March, when days are longer and warmer. June to August is winter and the best time for Iguassu and the Northwest. Rain and heat subside.

*\$500 - \$1100 per person per day
Land only, double occupancy*

Consider enhancing your adventure by including the following destinations: Brazil (p99-102), Chile (p103-106), Peru (p127-130)



