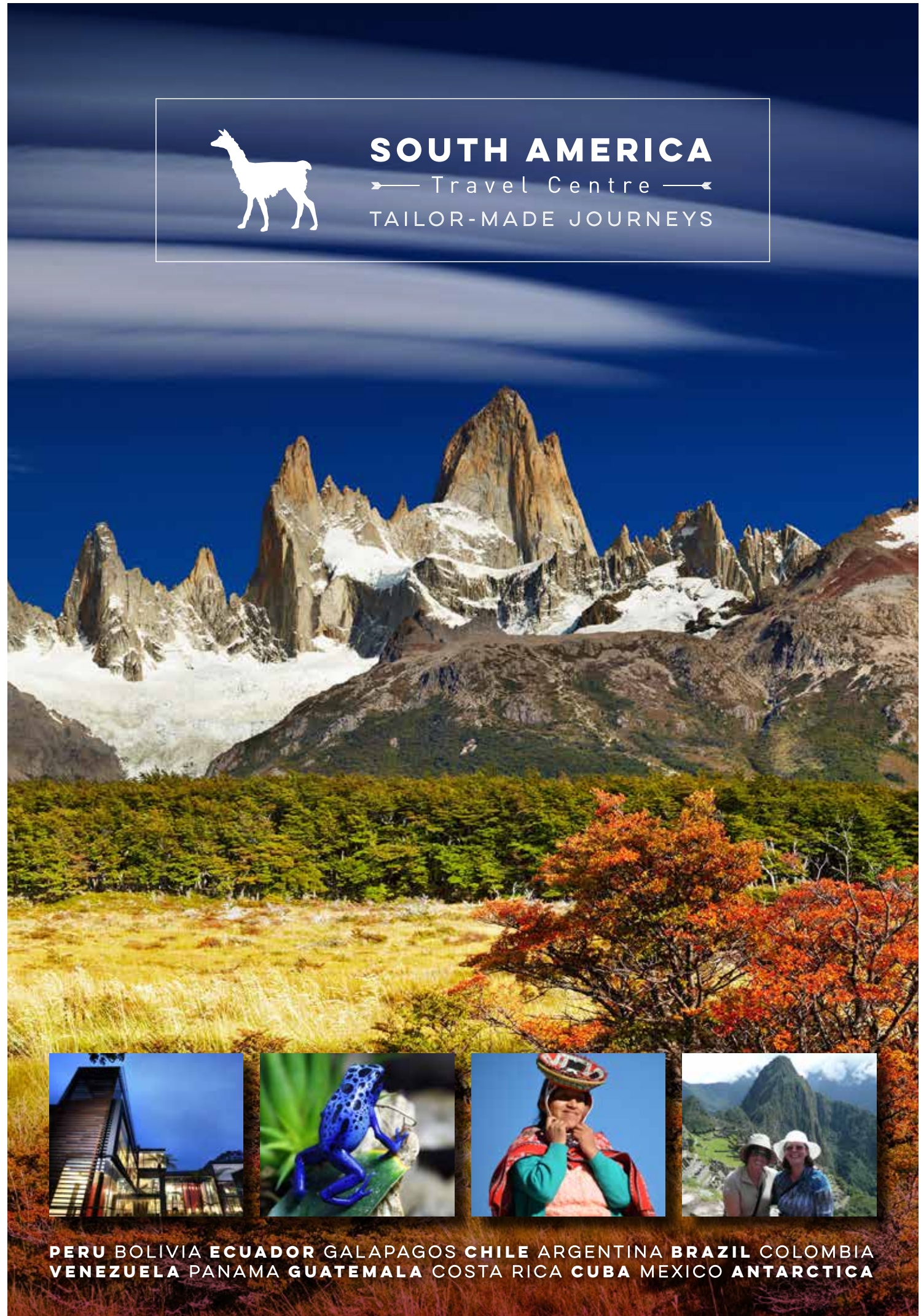




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# THE SPECIALISTS IN LATIN AMERICA TRAVEL

South America Travel Centre specialises in creating tailor-made holidays in Latin America for the discerning traveller. Whether you wish to travel around a specific country or you want to experience several countries in a longer tour, from Mexico to Antarctica, we can design an itinerary for you.

Take a look and discover some of the highlights of South America,  
Central America, Cuba, Mexico & Antarctica.



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# TAILOR-MADE JUST FOR YOU...

This brochure is intended simply to be your starting point. In combination with our website - [www.southamericatravelcentre.com.au](http://www.southamericatravelcentre.com.au) - we hope to provide you with some tantalising ideas and lots of inspiration, along with a small number of sample itineraries so you can see how things might fit together. But these are only suggestions. We invite you to call and let us create the kind of innovative and exciting itinerary for which we have become renowned, tailored entirely to suit your personal requirements and expectations.

Uyuni Salt Flats – Bolivia



## TAILOR-MADE

Each itinerary our specialists prepare is tailored for you

- » Your requirements and interests
- » You choose where, when, and for how long
- » You choose the style and pace
- » Private guides and transportation
- » Hand-picked accommodation

## EXPERT GUIDES

The essential component of any trip, our carefully selected guides offer extensive professional and local knowledge as well as a personal insight into their country and culture.

## SPECIALIST

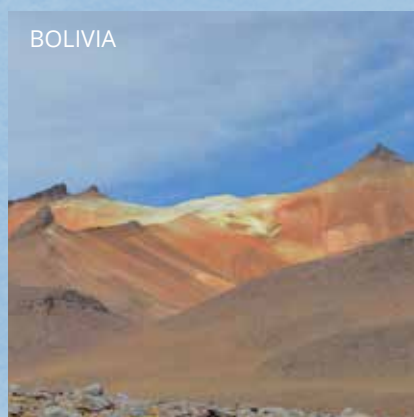
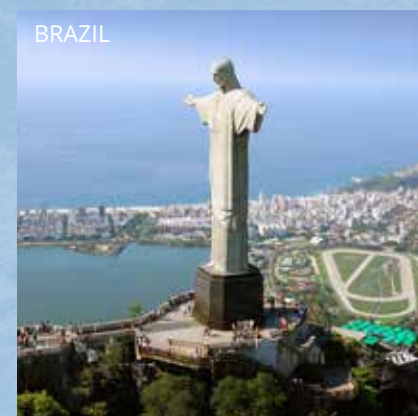
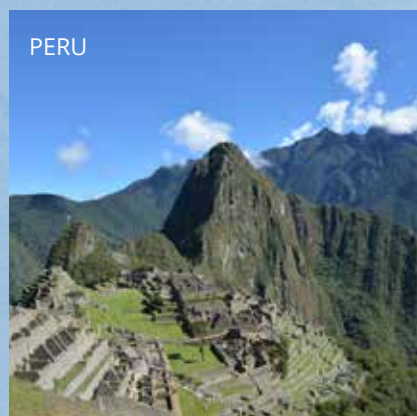
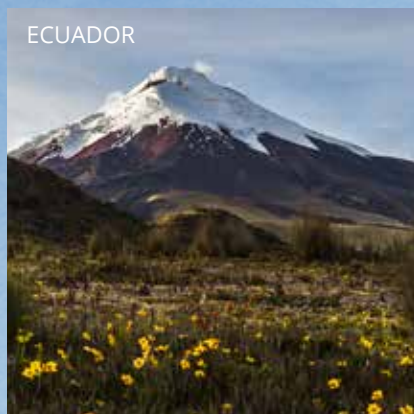
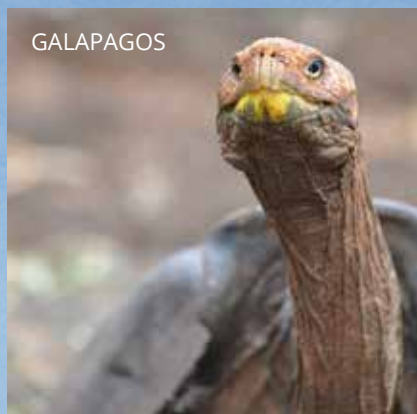
Our staff have travelled extensively throughout Latin America and they know the regions well; their focus is solely on Latin America & Antarctica. Our longstanding in-country partners add another layer of expertise, care and professionalism.

## CONFIDENCE

- » Personal security of 24/7 on-ground support of your guide and our in-country partners.
- » Financial security - member of Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) and accredited by ATAS (AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme) who set the benchmark of quality for the travel industry.
- » Wholly Australian-owned since 1995.



# THE MANY WONDERS OF LATIN AMERICA



## MULTI-COUNTRY ITINERARIES

South America is more than twice the size of Australia (Brazil alone is 11% larger). The diversity of landscapes and places to discover is equally large. Many first-time visitors travel for three to four weeks and combine two, three or more countries. We'd relish the opportunity of creating a tailor-made trip combining all of your individual interests.

## FLIGHTS

We have access to a wide range of wholesale airfares with our partners, LATAM Airlines, Qantas and Air New Zealand, and can book all your flights in conjunction with your tailor-made land arrangements.



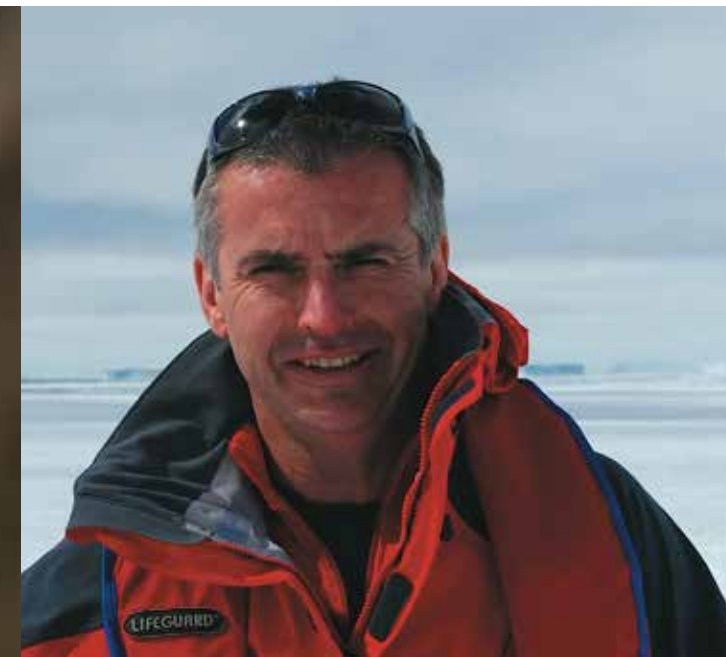
# OUR PASSION

## SPECIALISTS

South America Travel Centre only offers tailor-made holidays to South & Central America, Antarctica Mexico and Cuba. The world is a big place and focussing solely on Latin America allows us to know a lot about this amazingly diverse region.

We delight in the design of innovative and unusual itineraries for discerning travellers. Let us create an itinerary just for you, introduce you to some amazing places, wonderful people and discover what we call 'the changing face of Latin America'; modern infrastructure, excellent customer service, stunning hotels, lodges and river boats and world-leading cuisine.

Hyacinth Macaw Pantanal – Brazil



## PASSIONATE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE EXPERTS.

Our team of experts are on hand to help you plan and bring to reality a holiday of a lifetime in Latin America. They specialise in creating upmarket travel itineraries and have travelled extensively throughout Latin America. So whether your desire is to experience the amazing beauty of the continent's renowned national parks, to swim with sea lions in the Galapagos Islands, shop in Indian village markets, explore amazing ruins, to gaze awe-struck as huge ice slabs sheer off Patagonian glaciers, or simply to party the night away at Rio's Carnival, or all of the above, let us turn the holiday of your dreams into a reality.

The second, and arguably most important, part of our expert team are our in-country partners. We have chosen partners who look after you from the moment you arrive to the moment you are farewelled. With one in-country partner we ensure no matter what happens there is someone on hand to look after you, to change, re-confirm, give advice, to deal with the unexpected, to ensure your holiday is as good as it should be. As the saying goes, 'you get what you pay for'. With our partners and with South America Travel Centre you are getting the best of all worlds – expert planning, knowledge, care and advice from the planning of your holiday through to the feedback and sharing of memories and images.

One last word of advice – please don't hurry your itinerary, Latin America is a very big place.

Take your time, and enjoy.

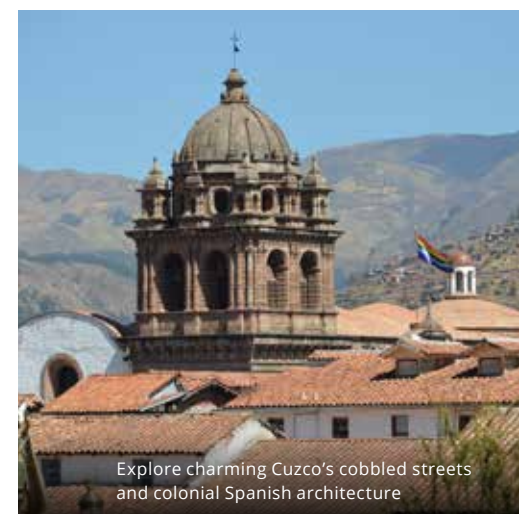
Buen Viajes

*Alex Burridge*  
Managing Director





Peru is steeped in ancient Indian culture from the vast coastal deserts, to the misty ruins of Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of the Incas, and beyond into the dense jungles of the Amazon basin. Evidence of long-ago civilisations remains at the archaeological sites of Chiclayo, Trujillo and in the 'lost world' of the Chachapoyas. Hike the high trails of the Andes, see the mystifying Nazca Lines, visit Arequipa, and see the condors fly over the Colca Canyon.



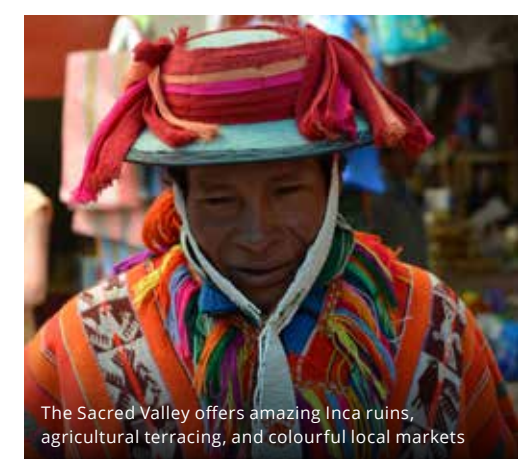
Explore charming Cuzco's cobbled streets and colonial Spanish architecture



Be spellbound by mountain scenery and unforgettable sites as you hike the Inca Trail



Visit the legendary birthplace of the Inca civilisation; Lake Titicaca



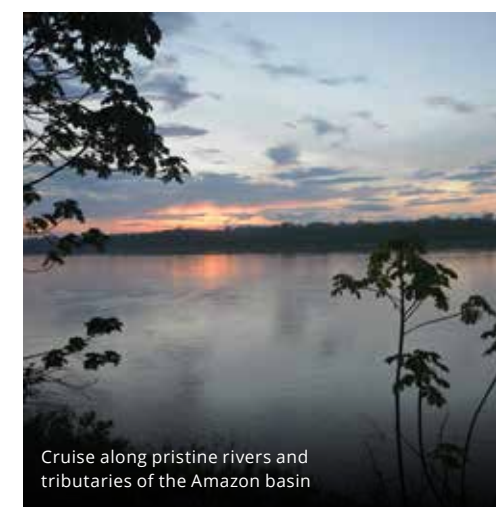
The Sacred Valley offers amazing Inca ruins, agricultural terracing, and colourful local markets



Built by the mysterious 'Cloud People' of Chachapoyas, the walled fortress of Kuelap pre-dates the Incas



Travel to Colca Canyon, one of the deepest canyons in the world



Cruise along pristine rivers and tributaries of the Amazon basin



For avid birdwatchers, a visit to the Manu Biosphere Reserve is a must





## CUZCO

High in the Andes, in the early 13th century, arose one of the greatest empires of the Americas in pre-Columbian times – that of the Incas, the ‘Children of the Sun’.

Their capital was Cuzco, a mountain eyrie of magnificent gold-adorned palaces and temples, which they believed to be the ‘navel of the world’. Here the Inca emperors ruled supreme until the Spanish conquest in 1533. Sacked by Francisco Pizarro but not destroyed, fascinating museums are filled with Inca and pre-Columbian art and artefacts.

All around Cuzco the hills are dotted with Inca sites, including the massive complex of Sacsayhuaman on the northern edge of the city, an astounding feat of architecture that took 20,000 men more than seven decades to construct – it, too, resisted before ultimately falling to the conquistadors. The stonework of the city’s temples provided the foundations for Spanish churches - of which Santo Domingo built atop Koricancha, the former Temple of the Sun, is a great example - while the conquerors’ mansions were erected upon the flawless stonework of the ruined palaces.

Today the combination of Inca and Spanish-colonial architecture has created a truly beautiful city, and Cuzco is a busy and vibrant centre that demands several days to fully experience its many restaurants, galleries and Machu Picchu.

## MACHU PICCHU

The fabled “lost city of the Incas”, was constructed at the height of the empire’s power and is undoubtedly the most recognisable image of Peru – and, indeed, of all of South America!

Long sought by the Spanish invaders but never found, the citadel was abandoned by the Incas after the conquest and lay hidden for almost five centuries, enshrouded by jungle and protected by its mountainous isolation high above the Urubamba River.

It may have been ‘lost’ to the world before being rediscovered by Hiram Bingham in 1911 but the descendants of the Incas have always known its secrets.

You can reach this wonderful site by taking one of the amazing rail journeys from Cuzco or the Sacred Valley to the town of Aguas Calientes that lies at the foot of the mountain, boarding a bus for the short ride up the zigzag road to the ruins. Or you may prefer to follow in the steps of the original inhabitants and trek in along one of the several trails that lead you to the site.



## INCA TRAIL

Your first view of Machu Picchu will literally take your breath away and without doubt the most rewarding way to arrive there is on foot. While the traditional route is along the Inca Trail, there are a number of equally rewarding alternatives. Perhaps tackle the more challenging Salkantay trek - with a choice of camping or staying in very comfortable mountain lodges each night.

Or if you'd really love to hike in but can't spare the time for a full trek, take a one day walk from Kilometre 104.



## SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS

Travel by road or train northwest from Cuzco to the fertile and incomparably beautiful Sacred Valley, almost 600m lower than Cuzco and sheltered by impressive mountains. On both sides of the Urubamba River, small traditional villages and ancient ruins spread out across wide plains and rugged foothills, stretching almost 100km from Pisac to Ollantaytambo. The valley was the spiritual and administrative heart of the empire and a major centre of agricultural production for the Incas who grew native Andean crops in extensive fields and along spectacularly terraced mountain slopes, using farming methods continued virtually unchanged by the Quechua-speaking residents to this day.

The Incas also built several of the empire's greatest estates, temples, and royal palaces here in the valley, and the magnificent ruins are some of the finest in South America. Ollantaytambo's monumental stone fortress dominates the town below, standing in mute testament to the Incas' only victory over the Spanish – short-lived though it was. In Pisac, the spectacular hilltop citadel with its ceremonial centre and aqueducts displays more of the unrivalled precision stonework of the Incas.

The Sacred Valley is also renowned for the colourful local markets where commerce is not only for the benefit of tourists but remains an important ritual between villagers. At Pisac's bustling daily market you can bargain for beautiful textiles and handicrafts, while in the Sunday market at Chinchero, bartering for a wide array of goods is still common practice.



## ‘HIRAM BINGHAM’ LUXURY TRAIN

This is one of the world's great train journeys – so indulge yourself and step aboard the ‘Hiram Bingham’ luxury rail service to Machu Picchu. The sumptuous interiors of the Pullman carriages will take you back to the extravagant era of the 1920s, with musicians playing while waiters serve a delectable three course brunch. On arrival take a short bus ride up to the Machu Picchu citadel for a guided tour of the ruins. Following the tour, a fine afternoon tea is served at the hotel overlooking the site.

On your return journey to Cuzco, departing as twilight descends on the breathtaking mountain scenery, enjoy cocktails in the bar before a wonderful four course à la carte dinner.



## LAKE TITICACA

It lies at more than 3,800m above sea level on the altiplano between Peru to the west and Bolivia to the east, the limpid waters sparkling in the high-altitude sunlight. Titicaca is the largest freshwater lake in South America and one of the highest and deepest of the world's large lakes, thought to be three million years old. It is a sacred place for the Inca civilisation as, according to their mythology, this is their birthplace where the god, Viracocha, rose up to create the sun, the stars, and the first people.

The lake is also the centre of a region where a great many subsistence farmers eke out a living herding llamas, growing potatoes and fishing in the chilly waters.

From the main town of Puno, you can travel to the floating reed islands of the Uros Indians or visit Taquile and Suasi Islands

For a deluxe experience of this mystical region, spend 2-3 nights at the beautiful Titilaka Boutique Lodge, located on a private peninsula jutting into the lake, set between the water, the mountains and the sky.

## THE LOST WORLD OF THE CHACHAPOYAS

Hidden in the remote cloud forests of Peru's northern highlands are some of the most amazing pre-Columbian archaeological ruins. Discover the immense fortress of Kuelap, one of Peru's best-kept secrets. Built by the mysterious ‘Cloud People of Chachapoyas’, this spectacular walled city is perched atop a towering mountain (3,100m). Kuelap was conquered by the Incas in the 15th century and, although it was discovered by Europeans 60 years before Machu Picchu, it is still not as well known to the outside world.

On a 4-day program you can also explore the colourful funeral buildings of Revash, trekking up on foot or on horseback to the site on a long ledge cut high into a cliff. Visit the Leimebamba Museum with its amazing collection of pre-Inca mummies discovered around the ‘Lake of the Condors’. And be one of few travellers to see the Gocta Waterfall, one of the highest waterfalls in the world, discovered only in 2006 (by outsiders, that is – the local people have always known of it).



## AMAZON

Most journeys start with a flight eastwards from Lima, or Cuzco, to Puerto Maldonado (lodges) or to Iquitos in Peru's north east if river cruising, followed by a boat trip upriver to reach your lodge or cruise boat.

### RAINFOREST LODGES

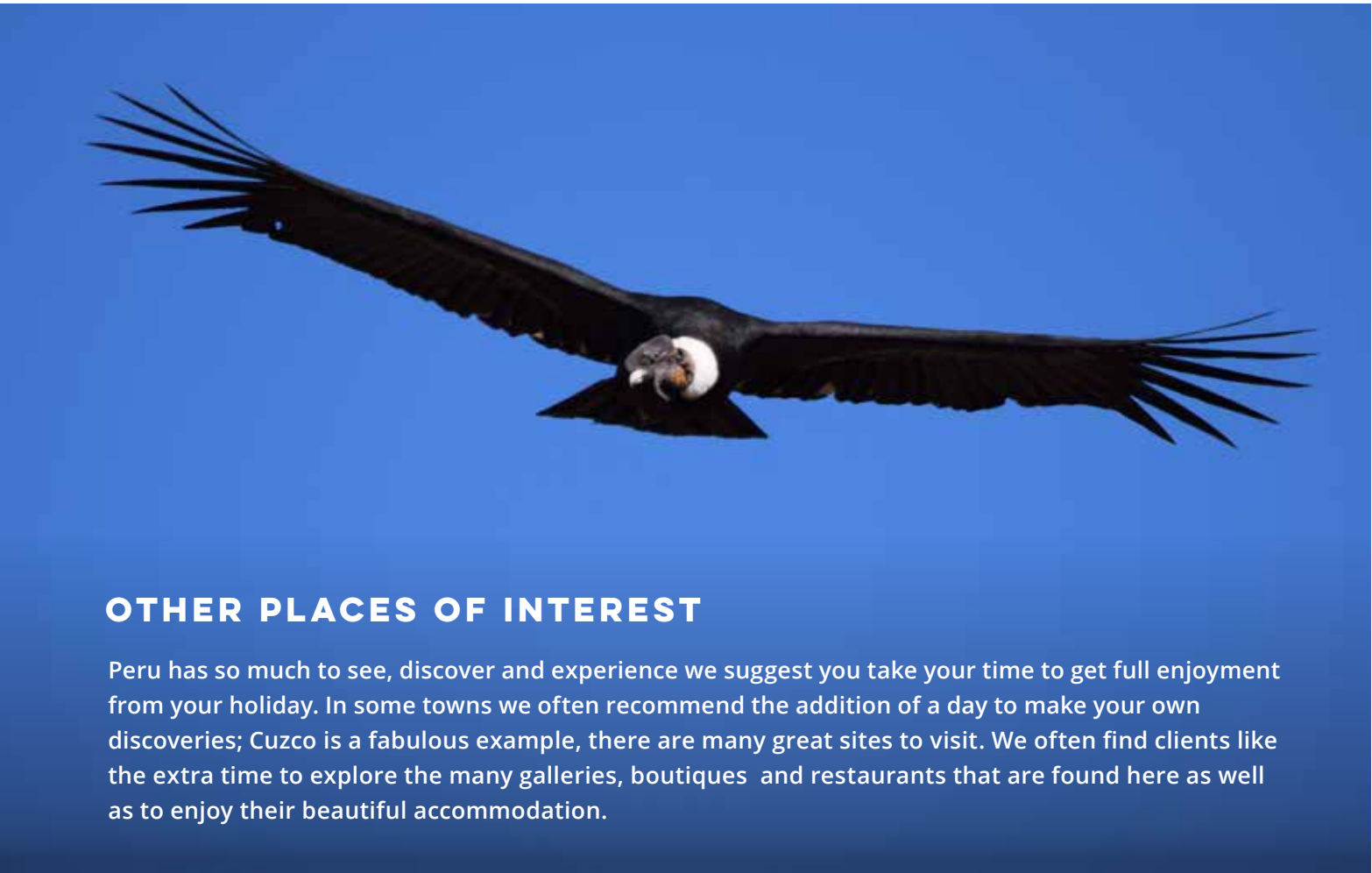
A stay in the heart of the Amazon is a truly rewarding experience and a wonderful way to discover some of the rainforest's secrets. A 3 or 4 night stay is recommended. There are a number of lodges offering very comfortable accommodation. Guided excursions will take you to look for small mammals, reptiles and colourful birdlife, maybe even spotting the elusive sloth. You can explore the jungle along walking trails, high canopy walkways, or in dugout canoes, and visit native communities.

### AMAZON CRUISES

Iquitos in the north-east of Peru is the gateway to river cruising in Peru. There are several small luxury river cruise boats offering 3, 4 and 7 nights cruises through the remote Pacaya-Samiria Reserve, a protected wildlife area deep within the Amazon rainforest.

*See pages 34 – 37 for more information.*





## OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

Peru has so much to see, discover and experience we suggest you take your time to get full enjoyment from your holiday. In some towns we often recommend the addition of a day to make your own discoveries; Cuzco is a fabulous example, there are many great sites to visit. We often find clients like the extra time to explore the many galleries, boutiques and restaurants that are found here as well as to enjoy their beautiful accommodation.

## AREQUIPA & COLCA CANYON

Colonial Arequipa, the second largest city in Peru, rests in a valley at the foot of the snow-capped El Misti volcano.

Known as the ‘White City’ because it is largely constructed from white volcanic rock, Arequipa has many fine Spanish colonial buildings and old and interesting churches including the famous Santa Catalina convent, a walled village where you can wander the myriad corridors and rooms.

Journey by road through the National Reserve of Salinas and Aguada Blanca, passing smoking volcanoes, small villages and ancient Inca terraces, to arrive at the amazing Colca Canyon. Deeper than Arizona’s much more famous Grand Canyon, for almost 100km of its length it has an average depth of 3,400 metres! Visit the main viewing point of ‘Cruz del Condor’ (“flight of the condor”) in the early morning to watch these majestic birds soaring high on the canyon’s thermals.

## SACSAYHUAMAN (CUZCO)

Overlooking the former Inca capital of Cuzco this site it still impressive. Just quite how impressive it would have been prior to the Conquistadors and their followers using some of the stone to build cathedrals and house in Cuzco is still open to debate. A few hours wandering around this site, trying to imagine just how impressive are a part of most visits to Cuzco. For those with a strong interest in festivals we suggest planning your trip to get here for Inti Raymi (the Sun Festival on 24 June each year).



## LALES REGION

Lares is a small town located to the north of the celebrated ‘Sacred Valley of the Incas’ (Urubamba Valley), in a region less visited – and less crowded – than other areas. Only recently has the road from Cuzco been paved and new and comfortable lodges built to offer easier access into this area, formerly the almost-exclusive domain of trekkers.

For those whose hiking days may be behind them, the Lares route (Weaver’s Way) offers opportunities for visiting and learning about remote communities where traditional Andean life continues to this day, with local families still wearing colourful traditional attire and continuing their centuries-old weaving techniques and farming practices.



Sacsayhuaman Fortress



## SALKANTAY TREK

This trek is dominated by the mesmerisingly beautiful, snow-capped peak of Mount Salkantay, all 6,264m of her. The trail takes you over glacial moraine and crosses the unforgettable Incachiriasca Pass (4,950m), Salkantay towering above, then follows the river that runs through the hamlet of Pampacahuana (with more evidence of Inca stonework where they channelled the riverbed into a straight course to protect the pastures) before joining the ‘main’ Inca Trail and continuing towards Machu Picchu.

There are two options for discovering this beautiful area: a 6 day camping trek or a ‘lodge-to-lodge’ trekking option – staying in a series of stunningly-sited mountain lodges – that eventually takes you to Machu Picchu.

## COOKING CLASSES

No matter where you are in the world a meal made from home grown produce, prepared by an experienced cook to traditional recipes, eaten in a typical restaurant and accompanied by a local wine is a lovely way to immerse yourself in a culture.

However, why not go one step further and learn how to cook the food yourself by taking a private cooking class like the one offered by Gonzales, Master Chef at the Runca Hotel in Lima, Peru. It’ll be a gastronomic experience you won’t forget in a hurry!



## AYACUCHO

If you are the kind of traveller who is always looking for “somewhere different” and likes to go beyond the well-trodden routes, one of our personal recommendations is the charmingly authentic Peruvian town of Ayacucho in the south-central Andes. It is an utter delight and, although only an hour’s flight from Lima, is somewhere you will rarely run into another tourist.

Their spectacularly colourful processions and celebrations during Semana Santa (Holy (Easter) Week) are probably the most famous in Peru and over that period the town overflows – although with comparatively few foreigners

## BALLESTAS ISLANDS

Located near the coastal town of Paracas these islands are an important sanctuary for marine fauna including the blue-footed booby, Humboldt penguins and two varieties of seals (fur seals and sea lions).

A trip to the islands will also include ‘El Candelabro’ (the Candelabra), a large-scale geoglyph; mystery as to the origins of this particular geoglyph (much like the Nazca lines) is ongoing.





# LIMA GATEWAY CITY – PERU

Lima is the gateway to Machu Picchu, the Peruvian Amazon, Lake Titikaca and much more.

Lima has developed into one of the world's leading culinary 'hot spots' with four of the world's best restaurants. Lima has also transformed into a safe and cosmopolitan city with, in addition to fine cuisine, excellent museums, first-rate hotels and it is a great place to spend a couple of nights to overcome any jet lag and ready yourself prior to discovering the many wonders of Peru.



## LUXURY AND BOUTIQUE ACCOMMODATION

There are several beautiful hotels in Lima, some are small boutique properties like the elegant Hotel B. Belmond's Mira Flores Park is another equally well run property, with world-leading customer service, with the added benefit of stunning views over the Pacific Ocean. Both book out a long time advance hence we suggest you book well in advance (6-8 months and if considering a trip over Christmas and the New Year closer to 12 months) to be sure we can organise the very best room and itinerary for you.

See pages 22 & 23 for additional examples.



## CUISINE

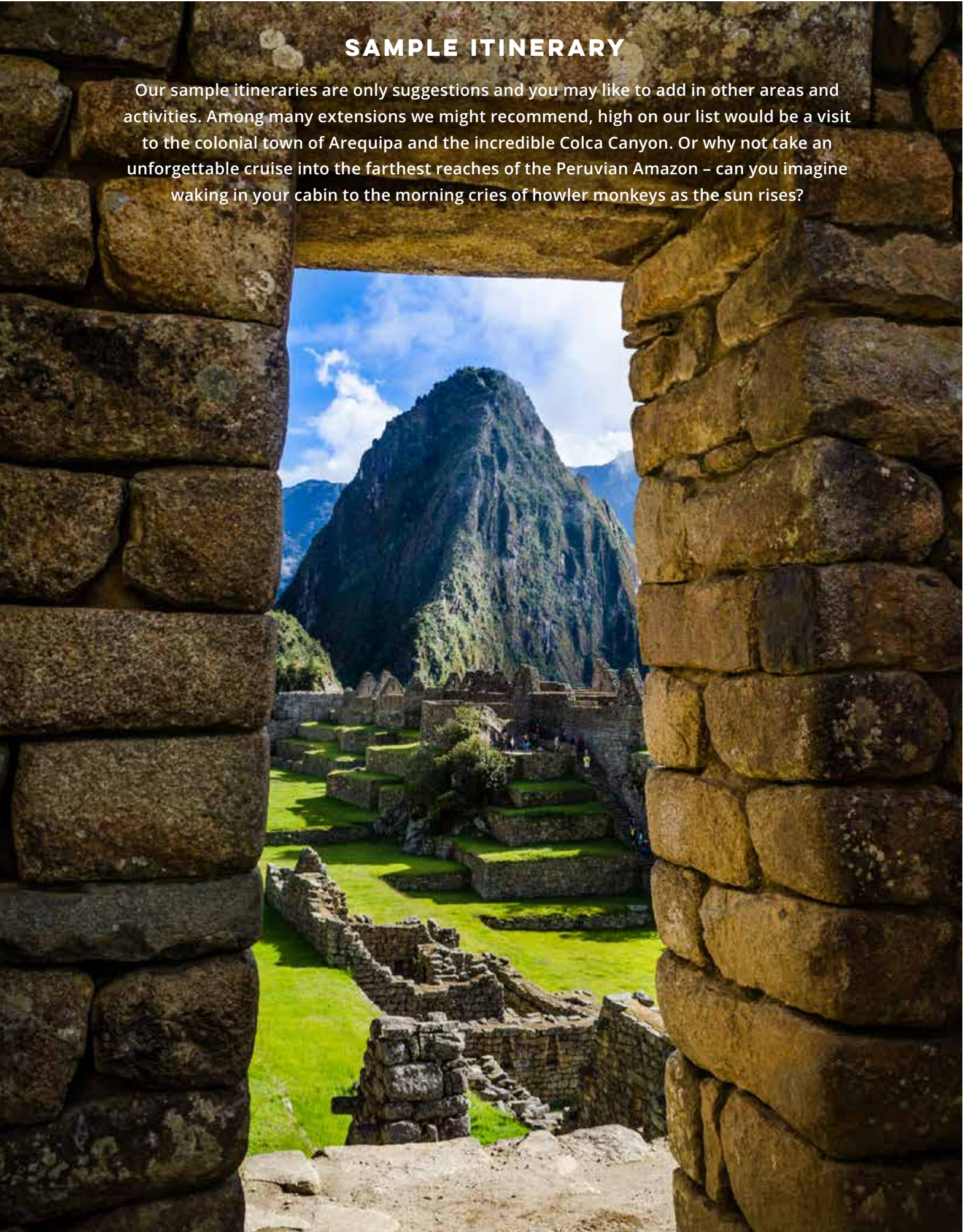
Lima proudly boasts the world's 4th best restaurant Central and has two further restaurants in the world's top 50; Astrid y Gastón #14 & Mado #44. You'll need to make a reservation before leaving Australia (often months prior) to ensure a table – something which we happily do to ensure every aspect of your holiday works out as hoped and planned.

There are many less well known and equally enjoyable restaurants – we'll be happy to recommend some for you to try.

## HISTORY

A guided exploration of the city will uncover many of its secrets. The journey, part on foot, part by private vehicle, will bring Peru's capital alive. Lima is home to one of South America's finest museums Museo Larco, as well as many fine cathedrals and art galleries. As the exploration is private this can also be tailored to your individual interests and time.





## SAMPLE ITINERARY

Our sample itineraries are only suggestions and you may like to add in other areas and activities. Among many extensions we might recommend, high on our list would be a visit to the colonial town of Arequipa and the incredible Colca Canyon. Or why not take an unforgettable cruise into the farthest reaches of the Peruvian Amazon – can you imagine waking in your cabin to the morning cries of howler monkeys as the sun rises?



## SIMPLY PERU

- Day 1 Arrive Lima, the capital of Peru, a city of plazas, churches and museums.
- Day 2 Colonial city and museum tour, afternoon at leisure.
- Day 3 Fly Lima to Puerto Maldonado, transfer by motorised canoe to a jungle lodge. Afternoon at leisure or to take a guided excursion.
- Day 4 Choose from a menu of excursions offered by the lodge.
- Day 5 Enjoy further excursions and activities.
- Day 6 Morning excursion, return by motorised canoe to Puerto Maldonado and fly to Cuzco and transfer to your accommodation in the Sacred Valley.
- Day 7 Explore the Sacred Valley
- Day 8 Catch the train from the Sacred Valley to Machu Picchu, the fabled lost city of the Incas.
- Day 9 In the morning you have the opportunity to return to Machu Picchu or you can enjoy the morning at your leisure. In the afternoon return to Cuzco by train. You may wish to indulge and travel on board the Hiram Bingham Luxury Train.
- Day 10 Cuzco city tour. Visit the Incan ruins of Kenko, Tambo Machay and the renowned fortress of Sacsayhuaman.
- Day 11 Spend the day at leisure. You may wish to relax, visit some local markets and shops or continue to explore this fascinating ancient city.
- Day 12 Catch the Andean Explorer Train from Cuzco to Puno on the shore of Lake Titicaca.
- Day 13 Enjoy a full day tour of Uros, an archipelago of manmade floating reed islands & Taquile Island where you will find some of the highest-quality handicrafts in Peru.
- Day 14 Fly from Juliaca to Lima.



## AREQUIPA & COLCA CANYON 3-4 DAYS

You'll need a couple of days to explore the beautiful 'White City' of Arequipa, its many churches, the museum housing the famous mummy Juanita as well as the walled convent of Santa Catalina. A picturesque drive through Salinas and Aguada Blanca Reserves and later terraced hillsides takes you to the gateway to the Colca Canyon. An early start is necessary to visit Cruz Del Condor, where with a little luck you can see up to 30 Andean condors.



## AMAZON RIVER CRUISE 4-8 DAYS

An alternative for those who enjoy cruising. A short flight north of Lima to Iquitos followed by a short road transfer to Nauta will have you boarding one of several luxury River Cruise boats. There are 3,4 and 7 night voyage options to enable you to discover the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve. Daily excursions in the morning and late afternoon with expert guides on-hand to assist with spotting and identifying the rainforest wildlife. You'll have opportunities to explore by skiff (smaller boat), on foot and from on deck of your cruise boat. The on-board cuisine is an additional highlight of any voyage.



## LOST KINGDOMS OF NORTHERN PERU 10-12 DAYS

Whilst the Incas are the most famous they are by no means the oldest civilisations in Peru. The North of Peru has many fascinating sites that pre-date Machu Picchu by up to a thousand years. Places like Chan Chan, the former capital of the Chimor Empire, and the fortress of Kuelap, a walled city associated with the Chachapoyas culture built in 6th century AD. More recent finds of the tombs and pyramids of Sipan, Sicán and Tucumé mean that anyone with an interest in archaeology would marvel at the diversity of these 'Lost Kingdoms'.

*There are so many fascinating places to discover – Please call one of our expert consultants who will be delighted to discuss your plans.*



## A SELECTION OF PROPERTIES

Here we've set out a small sample of Peru's finest hotels, lodges and river boats. There are many more properties that we know, like, have inspected or stayed at and have guests stay at.

Part of the tailoring of any trip is to match the property with your likes and requirements and that's far more than just budget. There are many reasons why you might prefer one property over another, location, cuisine, additional services and activities; e.g. spa services or horses, number of rooms or all-inclusive tours. That's where we share our knowledge to create the best itinerary.



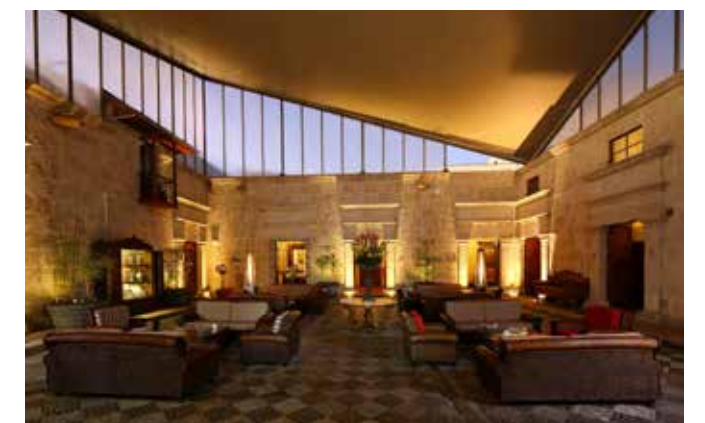
### TITILAKA LODGE

A chic all-inclusive retreat in the most stunning of locations, on a private peninsula on Lake Titicaca, the lodge offers 18 'Dusk' and 'Dawn' suites, each with an exceptional lake view, while its wrap-around terraces provide the perfect vantage to enjoy sunset cocktails.



### INKATERRA MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO

The hotel is set among lush Andean cloud-forest on a private 5-hectare mountainside reserve overlooking the Urubamba River. It has been built as a pueblo (village) of cosy 1 and 2 storey, tile-roofed whitewashed cottages, and to reach their rooms, guests follow stone pathways meandering through gardens, past waterfalls and trees alive with birds and butterflies.



### CASA ANDINA PRIVATE COLLECTION AREQUIPA

Originally the city's Mint, this traditional building dates from 1794 and was remodelled just a few years ago to open as a fine hotel. The restoration uncovered original frescoes, reliefs, and even a chapel, the architecture is now an interesting mix of contemporary and colonial.



### SOL Y LUNA LODGE – SACRED VALLEY

Named "Sun & Moon" for its yellow Andean adobe 'casitas', this charming lodge is enclosed in a walled courtyard and encircled by eucalypts and green mountains, while gardens of white margaritas, purple salvia and red fuchsias crowd around each bungalow.



### PALACIO NAZARENAS – CUZCO

With the Belmond Palacio Nazarenas the old-world meets contemporary. Adjacent to the Monasterio Hotel, this former private residence-turned-convent dates back to 1715 and, after three years of restoration, effortlessly blends original Inca walls and colonial frescoes with 21st-century indulgence.



### HOTEL B – LIMA

The Hotel B was built in 1914 as a private residence. This gleaming white house has undergone a two year restoration that preserves the original opulence and reflects the glamour of the Belle Époque – with a modern twist in its use of vintage and designer furniture.



### DELFIN I – AMAZON CRUISE, IQUITOS

A deluxe 20m long expedition vessel built of tropical woods, whose design is based on the traditional Amazon riverboat, with a chic modern décor throughout. It offers only four large stylish suites, each with a private deck (two with jacuzzis), and the cruise includes gourmet meals and daily guided excursions.

*See page 35 for additional river cruise options and rainforest lodges.*





Cotopaxi

Although the smallest of the Andean countries, Ecuador has probably the greatest natural and cultural diversity. Virgin rainforest reserves, stunning (and still active) volcanoes, riotously colourful Indian markets, a wonderfully preserved Spanish-colonial capital, and off its Pacific coast the incredible Galapagos Islands. Take a thrilling ride on the near-vertical 'Devil's Nose' train, see Cotopaxi, the world's highest active volcano, and wander the cobbled streets of old Quito. Shop for the beautiful textiles and handicrafts of the Ecuadorian Indians – and buy a Panama hat at Cuenca.



## QUITO

At 2,850m, Quito is the highest capital in South America and sits in a valley at the foot of Pichincha Volcano, a setting that few cities can match. Once an Inca city, it was conquered by Pizarro's army in 1534 and over two centuries Spanish architects built formidable temples, monasteries and mansions. The old colonial quarter, a World Heritage site and the largest and best-preserved on the continent, is quite charming with narrow cobbled streets; new Quito is a contrast with modern buildings, parks, galleries, shops and restaurants.

## OTAVALO & HACIENDAS

Ecuador's most famous Indian market is situated in 'the land of the Otavaleños' to the north of Quito, a magical region of terraced farmland, lakes and snow-covered mountains. The market dates back to pre-Inca times and is most renowned for its colourful textiles, intricately woven on backstrap and shuttle looms. To discover the Otavalo region we recommend a 2 or 3 night stay at one of several beautiful Haciendas. Many are still working farms and in the case of Hacienda Zuleta in addition to being a working farm it also has a cheese factory and has fascinating history and very strong links with the local community.

## CUENCA

For most visitors, Cuenca is the prettiest colonial city in the country. Although Ecuador's third largest city, it retains a pleasant provincial air and the red tiled roofs, cobblestone streets, flower filled plazas, and museums make it very special. Home of the famous 'Panama' hat, Cuenca has excellent Indian markets selling all kinds of handicrafts and silver jewellery. A walking tour of the colonial area is the best way to discover its delights and an opportunity to enjoy the warmth and hospitality of its people.



## DEVIL'S NOSE TRAIN

The Devil's Nose Railway was one of the world's most impressive engineering feats of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Built between 1899 and 1908, for 90 years the line ran from Guayaquil on the coast through the Andes to Quito. After large parts of the line were destroyed by a severe El Niño weather event in 1997, most has now been rebuilt. This includes the thrilling 800-metre descent of the 'Devil's Nose' switchback between Alausi and Sibambe, a 1:18 gradient once considered impossible for a train.

## BAÑOS

Located in the northern foothills of the Tungurahua volcano south of Quito, Baños (baths) is a small and lively town of waterfalls (home to more than 60) and the hot springs from which its name derives. It is popular with tourists and Ecuadorians alike for its amazing natural beauty and its importance as a hub for adventure sports and tours into the surrounding national parks.

## AMAZON RAINFOREST & CLOUD FOREST

For opportunities to come close to nature, make your way north into the cloud forests on the western Andean slopes for some of the country's best bird-watching. Or perhaps venture east of the Andes and into 'El Oriente', the Ecuadorian lowlands. Ecuador is considered one of the 25 biodiversity 'hot spots' on the planet, with a greater variety of plants and animals than any other place in the world. Choose one of the eco-lodges in the heart of the rainforests, or cruise the remote rivers that wind throughout the region.



SAMPLE ITINERARY



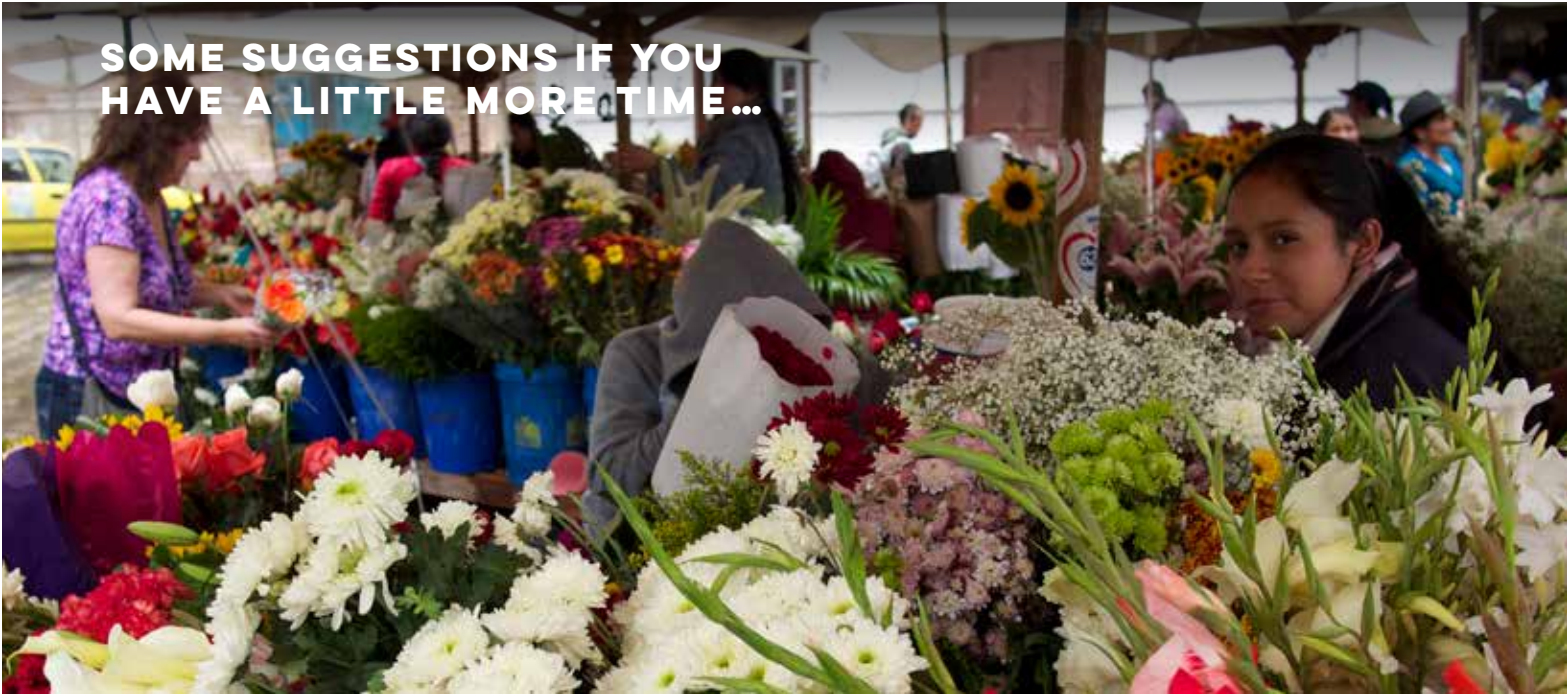
SIMPLY ECUADOR

Perched high in the Andes, Quito was for a time a second Inca capital, ruling its northern empire before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors. Discover the beauty of the colonial heart of Quito’s ‘Old City’, a UNESCO World Heritage site, before descending into the Amazon basin for a first-hand experience of the world’s largest rainforest. Returning to the Andes, travel on to the picturesque town of Baños, nestled in the shadow of the magnificent Tungurahua Volcano, and continue through Riobamba to Alausí to board one of the continent’s famous train rides – the descent of the ‘Devil’s Nose’ switchback! Stopping en route to visit the complex of Inca ruins at Ingapirca, arrive in the charming provincial city of Cuenca where you will enjoy the gorgeous colonial architecture of its public buildings and stately homes.

- Day 1 Arrive and overnight in Quito’s ‘Old City’.
- Day 2 Quito’s historic centre with your local guide, beginning with Independence Plaza that is flanked by the Presidential Palace, the Cathedral and the Archbishop’s Palace. Also visit the temple of La Compañía de Jesús with its awesome gilded interior, and the Monastery of San Francisco. Afternoon at leisure.

- Day 3 A short flight to Coca Amazon basin and continuing by boat to your comfortable jungle lodge set on the banks of the Napo River.
- Days 4–5 Two full days are spent in the jungle, allowing you to immerse yourself among the flora and fauna of the Amazon rainforest. Explore the jungle along walking trails and by motorised canoe, in the company of an expert local guide who will share with you his knowledge of this amazing region.
- Days 6–7 Today you will farewell the Amazon on a short flight back to Quito before making your way to Baños, famous as a centre for outdoor activities and you have time here for activities like hiking, cycling and horse-riding. You can choose to make Baños as relaxing or as energetic as you like as there are also indulgent spas...
- Day 8 The road to Riobamba ascends alongside massive Chimborazo (6268m), the highest mountain in Ecuador. The dramatic landscape changes to rich farming lands dotted with grazing vicuñas, and this beautiful area offers wonderful photo opportunities! Overnight in Riobamba.
- Day 9 At the tiny town of Alausi you will board the train for the thrilling 800-metre descent of the ‘Devil’s Nose’ switchback, one of the most impressive feats of rail engineering in the world. Continue to explore the Andes as you drive towards Cuenca, stopping to visit the Inca ruins of Ingapirca along the way.
- Day10 Cuenca, famed as the home of the Panama hat, is a delightful town of fine colonial architecture, red-tiled roofs, cobblestone streets, flower-filled plazas, and museums, making for a very special stay.
- Day 11 A short flight brings you back to Quito where you have the afternoon free to further explore and make your own discoveries.

SOME SUGGESTIONS IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME...



OTAVALO & HACIENDAS

Less than two hours north of Ecuador’s capital Quito there are several fine Haciendas that offer insight into centuries of Ecuadorian history, steeped in Pre-Columbian, Spanish and Ecuadorian traditions. Some offer horse-riding and a range of hikes and other activities. All offer a very warm welcome and excellent locally produced cuisine.

GALAPAGOS VOYAGE

A short flight from Quito and you’ll be in the paradise that the Galapagos Islands undoubtedly are. We suggest a minimum of 5 nights, with 7 nights being the optimum. It’s our view that two weeks on Ecuador’s mainland in combination with a week in the Galapagos is a journey ‘with the lot’.

See pages 30-33 for more information.



CLOUD FOREST

Basically a rainforest at higher altitude, cloud forests are home to amazing flora, in particular orchids as well as a stunning variety of birdlife (one lodge has recorded over 40 species of Hummingbirds). Their close proximity to Quito make this a very interesting and rewarding extension.

AMAZON RIVER CRUISE

Ecuador’s Amazon claims to have the highest biodiversity of any part of the Amazon. A wonderful alternative to a lodge stay is a voyage on-board a luxury river cruise boat.

See Page 36 for more information.



## A SELECTION OF PROPERTIES



LA SELVA Amazon Ecolodge & Spa

### LA SELVA AMAZON ECOLODGE & SPA

Situated high on Lake Garzacocho, 2½ hours motorised canoe downriver from the town of Coca. Here within a flourishing untouched landscape, you can experience a taste of the wild without sacrificing the modern comforts. The ecolodge's native design, thatched-roof bungalows, built of secondary jungle materials, nestle among the rainforest and house 18 deluxe solar-powered suites.



### CASA GANGOTENA – QUITO

A newly-restored historic mansion overlooking the World Heritage listed Plaza San Francisco. The award winning three-story luxury Casa Gangotena Boutique Hotel is a perfect example of the change that has occurred in many South America cities. Its 31 rooms showcase eye-catching style, a fine mix of classic architecture, contemporary interior design, antiques, fine furnishings, modern technology and quintessential comforts. Found in abundance locally and now grown commercially, orchids adorn most hallways and lobbies.



### HACIENDA ZULETA – OTAVALO REGION

To stay at the lovely Hacienda Zuleta is truly to take that oft-touted step back in time, when you will experience four centuries of Ecuadorian history, steeped in Pre-Columbian, Spanish and Ecuadorian traditions. Yet Hacienda Zuleta is only two hours drive north from the capital, Quito, sheltered by the Andean mountains and blessed with a year-round temperate climate. A colonial working farm of some 2,000 hectares, it dates from the late 16th century and for the past 100 years has belonged to the family of Mr. Galo Plaza Lasso, a former President of Ecuador.



### LUNA RUNTUN – BANOS

This small and beautiful hotel & spa sits high on a hill above the artists' town of Banos on 310 acres of unspoiled Andean forest. The resort's spacious rooms and suites are beautifully furnished with antiques and local artefacts, many have a private terrace, jacuzzi, or fireplace, and all have views of either the mountains or the surrounding lush gardens.

An indoor restaurant extends onto an open-air terrace, and there are lovely social areas throughout, including a bar with a cosy fireplace, library, gallery, and handicraft shop. And as you relax in the Luna Runtun Adventure Spa's 4 volcanically-heated outdoor pools, you can enjoy spectacular views of the town in the valley far below.



### SANTA LUCIA – CUENCA

The original house was built in 1859 by the governor of the province, Don Manuel Vega Dávila and has a wonderful history. The transformation to Hotel Santa Lucía began in 1999; the restoration preserved the charm and architecture of this beautiful house as an example of traditional buildings of the 19th century as well as incorporating everyday comforts.



### PATIO ANDALUZ – QUITO

The Hotel Patio Andaluz is a declared Ecuadorian National Treasure. This small charming Spanish-colonial style hotel in the city's historic heart dates back to the foundation of Quito in the late 16th century. A meticulous restoration and remodelling has successfully combined original aspects with modern amenities. The décor conjures a colonial ambiance with hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings, large arches, balconies, towering attics and long, wide corridors, built around two glass-roofed interior courtyards. An ideal choice for those who prefer a colonial atmosphere over modern flamboyance.



### MASHPI LODGE – CLOUD FOREST

A strikingly contemporary lodge, 3 hours drive northwest of Quito, Mashpi is set on a high ridge within the private 1,300-hectare Mashpi Biodiversity Reserve. It is a deluxe cloud-forest hideaway of only 22 rooms, all with floor-to-ceiling windows to provide as much visual contact with the surrounding forest as possible.





Feeling like the morning of the earth, suspended in a time when only birds and sea creatures existed and man was yet to walk upon the face of the world, the Galapagos Islands have long been protected by their isolation. The archipelago lies 1,000 km off Ecuador's Pacific coast, stretching across an area of almost 8,000 sq. km, and each island abounds with species of birds and animals unchanged over eons and found nowhere else in the world.

Of the 13 main islands, six minor islands and myriad islets that make up the Galapagos National Park, only five are inhabited and even now, human population numbers are comparatively low. As a result, the wildlife - including marine and land iguanas, sea lions, sea turtles and Giant Tortoises, blue- and red-footed boobies, frigate birds and penguins - remains amazingly unafraid of predators.

A trip to the Galapagos is so many things rolled into one - a cruise, a relaxing holiday and, foremost, a wildlife extravaganza. It truly is the experience of a lifetime, not only for birdwatchers or wildlife obsessives but for every traveller who has any interest in seeing the incredibly diverse and often absolutely unique species of birds, reptiles and mammals.

We believe the best way to see all this is aboard one of the cruise vessels that sail between the islands, on an inclusive voyage with on-board naturalists guiding you ashore to explore and experience memorable 'close encounters' with the birds and the wildlife. Park regulations stipulate that only 16 guests can venture ashore with a single guide - larger vessels all have enough guides to ensure everyone goes ashore and often have a guide to client ratio of just 12 which can afford more choices.

We've been fortunate enough to experience many of the vessels and look forward to sharing our knowledge with you to select the right one.

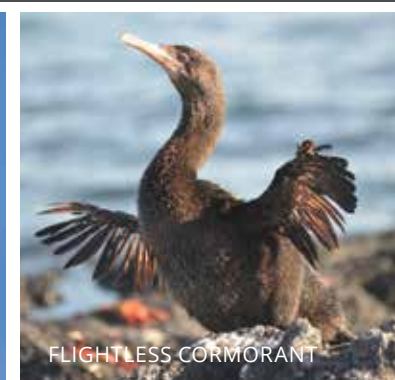
## GALAPAGOS ISLANDS 'BIG' 15



GALAPAGOS SEA LION



RED FOOTED BOOBY



FLIGHTLESS CORMORANT



LAND IGUANA



GIANT TORTOISE



BLUE FOOTED BOOBY



GALAPAGOS ALBATROSS



GALAPAGOS FUR SEAL



GALAPAGOS HAWK



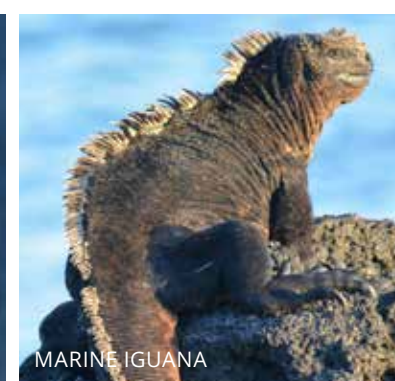
FRIGATE



SANTA FE LAND IGUANA



NAZCA BOOBY



MARINE IGUANA



AMERICAN FLAMINGO



GALAPAGOS PENGUINS





## CRUISE BOATS

Most cruise boats offer 3-7 night itineraries, with 10-14 night options for wildlife enthusiasts who want to try to see all the endemic species, some of which are confined to specific islands.

We have featured three of our favourite cruise boats in the three main vessel sizes – 16, 48 and 90 berths.

But there are many other excellent boats from which to choose and we will select the best vessel and cruise itinerary to meet your personal requirements and to fit in with the rest of your travel plans.

### M/V OCEAN SPRAY/PETREL OR CORMORANT

max. 16 passengers

The Ocean Spray (sister vessels MV Cormorant and Petrel) is a sleek catamaran specifically designed to cruise the Galapagos Islands in style, providing greater comfort, superior speed and excellent stability. It also offers the generous space and comfort of larger boats while maintaining the intimacy of a smaller vessel. On-board facilities include large air-conditioned cabins, each with a private bathroom and a private balcony.



### M/Y LA PINTA

max. 48 passengers

La Pinta is the culmination of four decades of experience in the Galapagos – a high-class vessel that maintains a stylish yet informal ambience. Its 24 staterooms are among the largest cabins of any Galapagos vessel, all exterior cabins with floor-to-ceiling windows and located in the middle deck. Spacious public areas include a comfortable lounge, a small library, conference room for nightly briefings, separate dining areas both inside and out, and a choice of deck bars. In addition its outside deck areas are havens for relaxation with a sundeck featuring a jacuzzi, and an observation platform on the top deck.



### M/V SANTA CRUZ II

max. 90 passengers

The 72.5m Santa Cruz II, a First Class expedition cruise ship, emerged from a complete renovation in late 2015, refreshed, revamped and ready to provide an experience its guests will never forget. With capacity for 90 guests, you may choose from a variety of options, which include single, double and family cabins. However, if you desire something more lavish, the exclusive Darwin Suites, which meet an exceptional standard of accommodation on the boat's Panorama Deck are an option. The vessel's elegantly appointed communal facilities include a dining room, lounge and bar, and a reading room/natural history library. A cruise gastronomy director ensures the food is also of a very high standard.

Contact us for your tailor-made itinerary and detailed quote.



## DIVING IN THE GALAPAGOS

Due to official regulations, scuba diving is seldom available on regular cruises. There are specialised fully-equipped dive boats which visit the best dive sites, usually on 7-night programmes going to the more remote islands. Or if you allow extra days on Santa Cruz Island before or after your cruise, we may be able to arrange a shorter package through one of our operators.

## GALAPAGOS HOTELS & LODGES

There are a small number of high quality hotels that offer a bed that doesn't move, if you're really not a sailor, and day trips to nearby islands. Another popular option is to add a few nights at the end of a cruise – quite literally the best of both worlds.



### FINCH BAY ECO-HOTEL

Set in a quiet location on a private beach across the bay from the Town of Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz Island), this 4 Star hotel incorporates all natural elements into its contemporary design. What you do whilst at Finch Bay is up to you, relax or explore, or a little of both.



### GALAPAGOS SAFARI CAMP

An African-styled tented camp is a creative alternative to exploring the archipelago. Nestled in the wild highlands of Santa Cruz Island with stunning views of the Pacific Ocean and the National Park, this stylish camp offers a panoramic lodge, nine charming tents, a family suite and an infinity pool under a canopy of endemic trees.



# THE AMAZON RAINFOREST



The Amazon is the largest rainforest in the world, spanning an enormous 5.5 million square kilometres. It is one of the great wild places left on earth, home to thousands of species of fauna and flora shared by settlements of indigenous inhabitants.

Here, too, is the mighty Amazon River, the world's longest, snaking across Peru and Brazil for thousands of kilometres and drawing on many major tributary rivers like the Rio Negro (Colombia), Napo River (Ecuador) and Madeira River (Peru) and from more than 1,500 tributaries in total.

You can choose to experience the Amazon – in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Venezuela. Whilst the majority of the Amazon Rainforest is in Brazil it's our opinion that Peru and Ecuador offer not only easier access, but also have a greater range of options (both river cruising and lodges) than Brazil.



## RAINFOREST LODGES

There are many fabulous eco-lodges from which you are escorted by expert guides who will help you interpret the forest and will undoubtedly help you locate the occasionally elusive rainforest wildlife. Around the lodges there are many walking trails whilst some lodges have canopy walkways or towers – which are a wonderful way of accessing the rainforest canopy where you have the opportunity to view several monkey species and some truly spectacular and colourful bird-life. Excursions are also taken in motorised launches or canoes.



### RESERVA AMAZONICA – PERU

Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica lodge is situated deep in the heart of a private rainforest reserve, just an hour by boat from Puerto Maldonado. This rustically elegant lodge is a complex of 35 thatched and lantern-lit cabañas built in traditional indigenous style and each with a large attractively furnished bedroom, private facilities and a screened porch with hammocks. The heart of the lodge is the central Amazon Pavilion, a beautiful two-storey building with a lounge and spacious dining room. Its upstairs loggias, with big balconies overlooking the Madre de Dios River and the surrounding forest, are ideal for relaxing at day's end and enjoying a pre-dinner cocktail.



### HACIENDA CONCEPCION – PERU

The delightful Inkaterra Hacienda Concepcion is the answer for nature lovers seeking an authentic jungle experience in a very comfortable environment and who may be a little more constrained by time and budget. In a serene rainforest setting beside a natural lagoon, the main house with its high ceilings and palm-thatched roof is surrounded by wide verandahs decked out with furniture crafted from reclaimed timber. The lodge has generously-sized rooms spread around the upper floor of the main house and seven individual cabanas that are built in the style of the traditional Ese Eja communities with covered porches, screened windows, and a beautiful view across the lagoon.



### NAPO WILDLIFE CENTRE – ECUADOR

Located inside the Yasuni National Park, within the ancestral lands of the Anangu Quichua community, this highly-regarded wildlife centre offers 16 comfortable cabañas featuring modern amenities. The centre actively protects 212 sq. km of pristine rainforest and offers the easiest access to two nearby parrot clay licks. A high viewing tower provides a 360° view of the surrounding wilderness, where flocks of colourful tanagers and blue-and-yellow macaws pass through the canopy, and large toucans call in the early morning.



### LA SELVA ECOLODGE – ECUADOR

Fly to the jungle port town of Coca and board your boat for a journey down the Napo River to this comfortable eco-lodge located on the shore of Lake Garzacocha. La Selva's thatched-roof bungalows are entirely made of secondary rainforest materials, designed to blend with the rainforest. Walkways connect traditional rooms and family suites, as well as the 12 exclusive Eco-suites, to the lakeside bar/lounge. A spacious dining room serves delicious Ecuadorian-fusion cuisine using organic ingredients from the lodge's own garden.



## RAINFOREST RIVER-CRUIISING

In Peru and Ecuador there are several luxury riverboats which cruise long stretches of the Amazon or its larger tributaries. Excursions are made daily (some at night time) in smaller boats with your naturalist guides to search out flora and wildlife, to fish for piranha, or visit native communities. These cruises are wonderful experiences offering excellent cuisine, comfortable, air-conditioned accommodation and an insight into the Amazon. Brazil has a more limited range of vessels, despite having more of the Amazon.

In Peru there are several first class and luxury vessels (including Delfin I & II, MV Aqua & MV Aria) offering 3, 4 and 7 night Amazon river cruises from Iquitos. In Ecuador the MV Anaconda offers similar duration voyages along the Napo River.



### MV ARIA – PERU

Aria Amazon is the epitome of luxury Amazon river-cruising. Launched in 2011 the vessel incorporates generous dining and lounging areas as well as an outdoor jacuzzi. Floor to ceiling windows are a unique feature of each the 16 spacious suites. Each cruise includes a range of nature-oriented excursions with jungle walks, small-boat river explorations and visits to local communities.



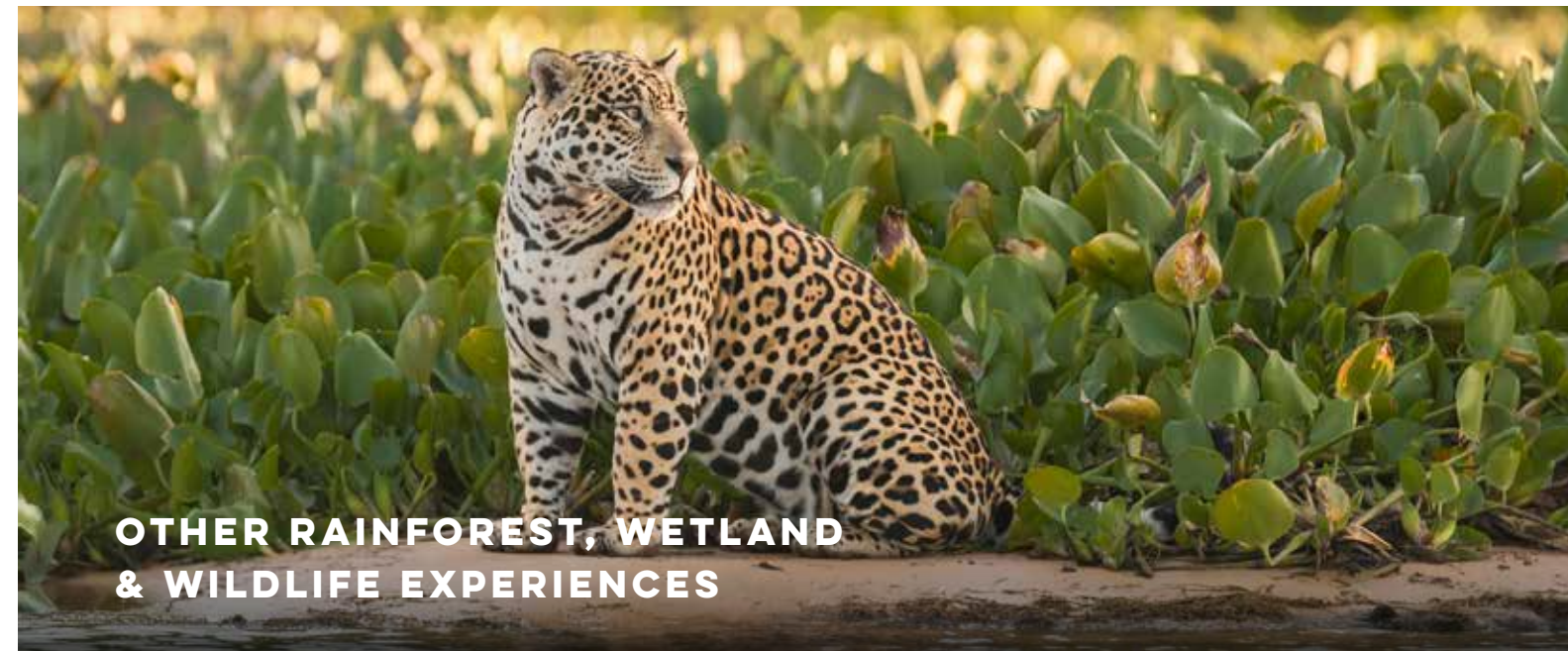
### DELFIN I – PERU

The Delfin I is built of fine tropical woods and has a chic décor highlighted by native and contemporary artworks. It is the culmination of its owners' dream to combine luxury and tradition on the Amazon. The deluxe Delfin I defines pampering, carrying only eight guests in four stylish king size suites with private decks, two of which boast their own jacuzzis. The renowned local chef prepares Peruvian Creole cuisine and regional specialties. And when not out on river and shore excursions, the boat's upper observation decks with their cushioned sofas and reclining chairs are perfect for day time viewing and night time star gazing.



### M/V ANAKONDA – AMAZON RIVER CRUISE ECUADOR

This sleek 45m long expedition vessel is the newest and perhaps the most upscale of the riverboats cruising Ecuador's Amazon. It boasts 20 deluxe ensuite cabins – four with balconies – and generous social areas including an al fresco lounge and an observation deck featuring two jacuzzis. On guided explorations in the three excursion boats, navigate through untamed wilderness, flooded forests, and black-water rivers. Hike jungle trails to encounter varied wildlife and unusual flora, and visit local Amazon communities.



## OTHER RAINFOREST, WETLAND & WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES



### CLOUD FOREST RESERVES

Peru and Ecuador have cloud forest reserves which offer yet another option to discover forest flora and fauna. Cloud forest are more about wonderful flora, in particular orchids, that love the damp atmosphere. Spectacular birdlife is another reason to visit including one of South America's most colourful birds the cock-of-the-rock.

Cloud forest accommodation: Mashpi Lodge – Ecuador, Bellavista Forest Lodge – Ecuador, Cock-of-the-Rock lodge - Peru

### PANTANAL – BRAZIL

The Pantanal is a mixture of forest and wetland that is home to abundant wildlife and flora, including numerous species of mammals, reptiles and over 600 types of birds. You can hike, ride horses or make photographic safaris into the area by boat, canoe and jeep, and if you're fortunate you might get photos of tapirs, anteaters and capybaras.

One of the wildlife highlights of the Pantanal is the possibility of seeing jaguars, hyacinth macaws, and maned wolves. There are a small number of specialist lodges where you have a very good chance of seeing the rainforest's most elusive inhabitant – the jaguar. The dry season (June to October) is the best time for wildlife viewing.

Amongst the best are Cristalino Lodge, Araras Eco Lodge, Fazenda Barranco Alto, Southwild Jaguar Flotel, Pantanal and Wolf Camps. Standards vary and the wildlife experiences are excellent.



### MANU NATIONAL PARK – PERU

The biological diversity found in Manu National Park exceeds that of any other place on earth. The park is 5-6 hours upriver from Manu Wildlife Centre, itself some six hours from your starting point at the port town of Puerto Maldonado. A small lodge affords access into the pristine rainforest found in Manu National Park. You might find 13 species of monkey, hundreds of species of Birds including macaws, toucans, hawks and vultures feeding or resting along the edges of the meandering river, as well as caimans (both black and white), turtles, capybaras and, for the really fortunate, jaguars.

Manu NP (Peru) & Yasuni NP (Ecuador) and the Pantanal (Brazil) offer some of South America's most rewarding wildlife viewing.

Talk to one of our team about tailoring a trip to include one of these very special places or visit [www.southamericatravelcentre.com.au/amazon](http://www.southamericatravelcentre.com.au/amazon)

### IBERA MARSHLANDS – ARGENTINA

The Ibera Marshlands in north-eastern Argentina are a complex system of freshwater wetlands, marshes and lagoons that reach up towards the southern end of Brazil's Pantanal and cover a vast area (15-20,000 sq. km) that boasts 350 different bird species.

Accommodation options include Rincon Del Socorro and Aguape Lodge.





Laguna Verde (Green Lagoon)

**Bolivia, the highest and most isolated country in South America, presents amazing extremes of scenery – from altiplano and arid desert, to lowland Amazon rainforest, from the vast whiteness of the world’s largest salt flat to the soaring heights of the snow-capped Andes mountains. Relive centuries of colonial history as you wander the streets of La Paz, Potosi and Sucre, and observe the little-changed traditional Indian culture when you visit the market at Tarabuco. What Bolivia lacks in luxury it easily makes up for in diversity.**



CONTACT US FOR YOUR TAILOR-MADE ITINERARY AND DETAILED QUOTE



## LA PAZ

Situated at an altitude of 3,636m, La Paz is Bolivia’s commercial capital and the highest city of its size in the world. Founded in 1548, it lies in a natural basin surrounded by imposing snow-covered mountain peaks. The city is a fascinating place to explore and, as the central area is relatively compact, the best way to do it is on foot. A visit the famous Witches’ market is a must, as is an excursion to the natural wonder of Moon Valley with its weird lunar landscape and eroded earth pillars.

## UYUNI SALT FLATS

To enter the spectacular Salar de Uyuni, the highest and largest salt lake in the world, is to find yourself on a vast blindingly white expanse stretching to the horizon. If there has been rain, the thin mirrored surface becomes almost hallucinogenic, so perfectly reflecting the clouds and dazzling blue sky that it’s hard to know which way is up! To add to the strangeness, as you progress you will encounter rocky volcanic outcrops - like Isla Incahuasi (also known as ‘Fish Island’), supporting gigantic cacti.

## LAKE TITICACA

Straddling the Peru-Bolivia border in the heart of the altiplano north-west of La Paz, Lake Titicaca is a focal point not only for visitors but for many of the indigenous inhabitants who still consider it sacred. Whether crossing into Bolivia from Peru or travelling out of the country from Copacabana, cruise across the lake’s azure waters to the ‘Island of the Sun, the most famous of more than 30 islands in the lake and believed by Andean civilisations to be the birthplace of the Incas.



## SUCRE

The official and judicial capital of Bolivia, the enchanting city of Sucre (2,790 m) was founded by the Spanish in the early 16th century. Long isolation has helped to preserve its charm, with its many beautiful churches and museums, its university (the oldest in Bolivia) and the distinctive architecture of white-washed, terracotta-tiled, colonial buildings for which it’s often called the ‘White City’ - local laws now require all buildings to be painted in the original colonial white.

## POTOSI

Potosi (4,070 m) was once the largest city in the Americas and echoes of its fabulous colonial past can still be seen in the plazas, churches and municipal buildings. The city is dominated by the mountain that was known as Cerro Rico (rich mountain), the main source of silver in the days of the Incas and later of the Spaniards. Potosi’s mines were once the richest in the world and some are still being mined today using the primitive methods of old.

## EDUARDO AVAROA ANDEAN FAUNA NATIONAL RESERVE

The dramatic scenery alone encountered whilst reaching this remote National Reserve makes the journey worthwhile. When you add in Laguna Verde and Laguna Colorada (Green & Red Lagoon), rheas, Andean foxes and three species of flamingos and it’s a place worth including in any trip to Bolivia. It is easily combined with the Atacama Desert in Chile.



## SAMPLE ITINERARIES



Salar de Uyuni



### SALT FLATS, POTOSI & SUCRE

**Depart from the regular tourist circuit and visit the world's largest salt flats, the Salar de Uyuni, stretching across 10,000 sq. km of the altiplano between La Paz and Uyuni.**

Fly to Uyuni, explore the village of Colchani before venturing into the salt flats. Visit Isla Incahuasi, a surprising outcrop rising out of the surrounding white flatness, and continue to Tahua. Take in the views from Tunupa volcano and see the mummies of Coquesa, before returning to Uyuni. Travel to the colonial cities of Potosi and Sucre. The contrast of the vast and sparsely populated 'Salar' - where you will stay in a hotel made almost entirely of salt!

- Day 1 Fly La Paz to Uyuni, visit train cemetery and Colchani, explore the salt flats and Isla Incahuasi, continue to Tahua.
- Day 2 Explore Tahua, visit Tunupa volcano and see the mummies of Coquesa, return to Uyuni to overnight in a 'salt hotel'.
- Day 3 Drive to Potosi, tour this city once famed for its silver mines.
- Day 4 Option to tour one of the mines, drive on to Sucre.
- Day 5 Sucre city tour.
- Day 6 Depart Sucre.

*If you're in Sucre at the right time, a visit to the traditional Sunday market at Tarabuco, two hours away, is a highly recommended addition to your arrangements.*



### NORTHERN ARGENTINA, SOUTHERN BOLIVIA & CHILE

**A rugged journey from colonial Salta in Argentina's northwest, up through the Humahuaca Gorge to the Bolivian border and the great expanses of the altiplano. The white salt plains of the Salar de Uyuni provide an unforgettable experience as you cross this remote area of southern Bolivia and then turn to make your way down into Chile's Atacama Desert.**

- Day 1 Salta is Argentina's most 'colonial' city. We suggest including the Cathedral, San Francisco Church and the nearby convent. At the beautiful colonial residence of 'Casa Hernandez' you can imagine the life of a bygone era.
- Day 2 Drive north following the spectacular Humahuaca Gorge to the small picturesque village of Purmamarca where you will stay overnight. Visit the old adobe chapel and enjoy sunset over the magnificent Seven Colours Mountain that backdrops the village.
- Day 3 The scenery on the drive to the Bolivian border is breathtaking. Along the way, visit the pre-Inca ruins at Tilcarra before crossing the border at Villazon and continuing to the town of Tupiza for an overnight stop.
- Day 4 After an optional morning horse ride in the colourful hills surrounding Tupiza, drive to Uyuni where you will spend the night.



Days 5-7 As you leave Uyuni by 4WD vehicle, stop to visit the train cemetery with its old steam locomotives, and then head for the great Salar de Uyuni (Uyuni salt flats). These are the largest (10,580 sq. km) and highest (3,656m above sea level) salt flats in the world. You will actually drive on the salt flats which are smooth and glaringly white against the blue skies, and there are excursions to Fish Island and the Cave of Mummies. The landscape, and especially the sunsets, are dramatic. Comfortable salt hotels are a feature of a stay on the salt flats.

Day 8 Head south to Villa Mar, known for its colonial Church of San Cristobal. Along the way visit the Stone Valley with beautiful rock formations, remote cave paintings and the Fort of Tomas Lakjas. Overnight at Villa Mar in a 'cave' hotel.

Day 9 The landscapes throughout this journey are stunning, the drive today is possibly the most spectacular of any in South America. As we head to the border with Chile and the Atacama desert we pass the red-coloured Laguna Colorada. Later we pass the Sol de Manana geysers, Chalviri thermal waters, Laguna Verde (Green Lagoon) with the back-drop of the perfect cone of Licancabur Volcano. Late in the day we cross into Chile and head to the historic desert town of San Pedro de Atacama.

Day 10-12 There are many wonderful properties, some luxurious, to use as a base for exploring the surrounding desert. Visit hidden villages among the deep valleys, or relax in a thermal pool surrounded by geysers - the choices are many and are yours to make.

Day 13 Transfer from San Pedro to Calama airport for your flight to Santiago and the completion of your exhilarating three-country adventure.

*Note: Travelling in the south of Bolivia is not for everyone - the altitude (the salt flats are over 3000m above sea level and this journey takes you over 5000m) and the more simple accommodation in some places (albeit the best available) need to be considered. A robust 4WD vehicle and excellent guides are essential.*





Chile is a fascinating and diverse country, stretching 4,290km from Peru to Patagonia. Highlights include the extraordinary Atacama Desert, the high ski fields of the Andes, renowned Chilean wineries, the picture-postcard Lakes District, and the magnificent glaciers and national parks of Patagonia. Or if time allows spend a night or two in the stunning surrounds. Some traditional wineries date back to the mid-19th century with beautiful colonial houses set amid lush gardens, while others offer the latest architect designed modernity, with chic and stylish accommodation.



## LAKES DISTRICT

The Lakes District, stretching from its northern end at the inland city of Temuco to Puerto Montt at the southern end, and from the Pacific coast east to the Andes, is often likened to Switzerland but this region can easily stand on its own merits. Just an hour's flight from the capital, it is famed for its spectacular scenery of deep blue mountain lakes, snow-capped volcanoes, and the beauty of its ancient forests. It is aptly named, with 12 major lakes and dozens more dotting the landscape. In between are rivers, waterfalls and thermal springs, and the Andes range, including six volcanoes, of which Villarica is the highest (2,847m). Aside from the region's sheer beauty, there is no shortage of outdoor activities including hiking, biking, sailing, fishing and skiing (in season) – not forgetting its other attraction, great food and wine to satisfy fresh-air induced appetites!

## ATACAMA DESERT

The Atacama in northern Chile is the driest desert on earth, a virtually rainless plateau, with starkly beautiful landscapes of sand dunes, salt pans, lava flows and soaring volcanoes. Here you might wander archaeological sites with traces of barely remembered civilisations dating back millennia, and visit typical Atacama Indian ayllus (small farms). Explore the arid Valley of the Moon with its dramatically shaped formations, picnic alongside volcanic hot springs, and make a dawn excursion to see high plateau geysers erupting. Or just relax by turquoise salt lagoons and watch the sunset as twilight descends.



## EASTER ISLAND

Easter Island (Rapa Nui) is a place of magnetism and mystery, a remote volcanic speck in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, 3,800km west of the coast of Chile. While an important archaeological centre with obvious Polynesian overtones, the origins of the island's past inhabitants are still an enigma; all that remains of their culture is the extraordinary spectacle of giant stone statues (moai) scattered around the island and across the slopes of the quarry site on Rano Raraku Volcano. Curiously, the ancient stonework at the many different sites includes a wall that is strikingly similar to those built by the Incas in Peru.

## PATAGONIA

This region spans the Andes and two countries – Chile and Argentina. It was once solely the domain of the adventurous trekker. More recently beautiful lodges that complement the rugged landscapes that enable the traveller to enjoy the stunning beauty of this area without the necessity to trek.

Given the region covers two countries and the diversity of options we've given Patagonia its own section. Please see pages 48-51 for more details on the many options for exploring this wonderful region.



## CHILOE ISLAND

Chiloé Island is situated around 1,000km south of Santiago and can be accessed by a road-and-ferry trip from Puerto Montt or via Chiloé's new airport at Castro, the largest town on the island. Chiloé is the second largest island in Chile (after Isla Grande Tierra Del Fuego) and until recently was visited only by a few more 'adventurous' travellers. The island is famous for its many UNESCO-protected churches, an almost unchanged way of life and outstanding natural beauty.



## HIDDEN VALLEYS & LAUCA NATIONAL PARK

In far northern Chile you will discover the incomparable natural beauty and environmental extremes that begin at the Andean volcanoes of the altiplano as you travel to Lauca National Park. While lesser known and far less visited by tourists than Patagonia's celebrated Torres del Paine, Lauca is one of Chile's most accessible parks. At an average altitude of 4,000m, this "land lost in time" with its magnificent scenery and exotic flora and wildlife, is a World Biosphere Reserve and a bird-watcher's paradise, with more than 150 bird species including ñandus (rheas) and condors.



## CRUISING THE CHILEAN FJORDS

Some areas of Patagonia are only accessible by sea and several cruises navigate the channels and archipelagos to emerge amongst icebergs and floes, taking you close to incredible blue ice walls of huge glaciers that slide down mountains into the sea.

Fjord cruising commences in the Chilean town of Puerto Montt, Puerto Natales or from Ushuaia in Argentina. There are a range of voyages 3, 4 or 7 nights sailing through the channels and archipelagos, past tiny fishing villages and thickly wooded slopes below snow-capped mountains, to emerge among the ice floes of sensational Glaciers. Daily Zodiac excursions and shore visits provide opportunities to observe close up the stunning glaciers and the diverse flora and wildlife of this amazing region.



## SANTIAGO

Founded in 1541, Santiago has been the capital city of Chile since colonial times. The Andes Mountains can be seen from most points in the city. The city outskirts are surrounded by vineyards and Santiago is within a few hours of both the mountains and the Pacific Ocean. The city is now home to a growing theatre and restaurant scene, a rising skyline, including the tallest building in Latin America, the Gran Torre Santiago. Santiago is the cultural, political and financial centre of Chile and is home to the regional headquarters of many multinational corporations.

## DINING

Like many other countries in South America, Santiago is now home to several fine restaurants. Boragó was recently voted the world's 8th best, and with two tasting menus wrought from the finest produce the country has to offer. Boragó offers a sumptuous, 'edge of the world' dining experience for those seeking creative, unhurried cooking.

## WINE & WINERIES

Chile has long been renowned for fine wines and a great number of wineries can be found throughout the valleys between 1-3 hours drive south and west of Santiago – among them Maipo, Colchagua and Casablanca Valleys. The wine growing climate has been described as midway between that of California and France. The most common grapes are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Carmenère. The many wonderful 'viñas' are worth a visit, perhaps just to enjoy lunch in their excellent restaurants, or to learn about the wine-making and taste a drop of the vintage, maybe paired with local cheeses.

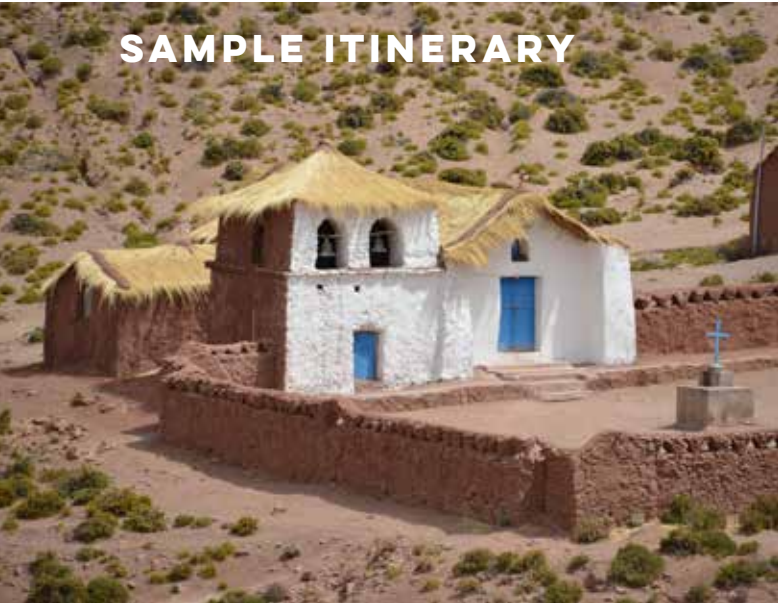
Or if time allows spend a night or two in the stunning surrounds. Some traditional wineries date back to the mid-19th century with beautiful colonial houses set amid lush gardens, while others offer the latest architect designed modernity, with chic and stylish accommodation. Among our recommendations for somewhere to visit or stay is La Casona Matetic, once a family home set within the vineyards, and Viña Casa Silva, a typical Chilean farmhouse of the 1920s, exquisitely restored and still owned today by the same family.



## VALPARAISO

Chile's main port city is a little over an hour from Santiago's international airport and is well worth considering as an addition or even an alternative to Santiago. The city is widely known for its bohemian culture, brightly coloured houses, and beautiful sea views. In addition to many art galleries and craft stores, Valparaíso has become one of South America's best destinations for street art – with walking tours arranged to showcase the city's best art. The city was also home to Nobel prize-winner for literature Pablo Neruda, his former home, La Sebastiana is now a museum with far-reaching Pacific views.





SAMPLE ITINERARY

CHILE IN DEPTH

Chile is a fascinating and diverse country, stretching more than 4,000 kilometres from Peru to Patagonia. Highlights include the picture-postcard Lakes District, the magnificent glaciers and national parks of Patagonia, the quaint fishing village of Chiloe, the extraordinary Atacama Desert and renowned Chilean wineries.

- Day 1 Arrive San Pedro de Atacama, an oasis town in the middle of the Salar de Atacama.
- Day 2-4 Choose from a variety of guided half and full-day explorations and activities to explore Atacama – cultural and archaeological tours, easy walks and more challenging treks, mountain-biking, visits to salt flats and thermal geysers, wildlife and bird-watching.
- Day 5 Fly back to Santiago, Chile's bustling capital.
- Day 6 Tour Santiago's historic centre and enjoy a spectacular view over the city from San Cristobal Hill.
- Day 7 Day tour to coastal towns of Valparaiso and Vina del Mar and Emilina Winery
- Day 8 Fly to the quaint fishing island of Chiloe, home to 150 intricately-shingled wooden churches.
- Day 9 Enjoy a day of included activities around the Island of Chiloe.
- Day 10 Transfer via ferry and private vehicle to Puerto Varas in the Chilean Lakes District.
- Day 11 Tour around the spectacular Lake Llanquihue and Osorno Volcano.
- Day 12 Fly to Punta Arenas, the gateway to Chilean Patagonia.
- Day 13 Transfer by private vehicle into the spectacular Torres del Paine National Park and stay at a lodge with impressive views of the majestic rock mountains.
- Day 14-16 Enjoy your choice of half or full-day excursions that, depending on the property, may include a range of treks, mountain-biking, guided adventures by vehicle, horse-riding, bird-watching, cultural tours, and visits to nearby estancias to see and experience the seasonal activities.
- Day 17 Journey back to Punta Arenas and fly on to Santiago for a final night.
- Day 18 Depart Santiago.



SOME SUGGESTIONS IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME...

ANDES CROSSING

An alternative to the renowned Lakes Crossing, this journey takes you from the capital, Santiago, across the mountains to Mendoza in Argentina. Travel north from Santiago through rich farming and wine-producing country before climbing high into the Andes mountain range on an incredible switchback road. Cross the border into Argentina and travel through wild and rugged mountain terrain before descending to the Argentine town of Mendoza, famous for its wine production.

LAKES CROSSING

The bus-and-boat route from Puerto Varas in Chile, across the Andes and into Argentina is a scenic sensation. Cruise across Lake Todos los Santos, considered the most lovely lake in southern Chile, its emerald waters surrounded by thick forests and views of snow-capped volcanoes, including Osorno's perfect cone. An overnight stop midway, in the remote settlement of Peulla, allows time to really absorb the region's beauty before continuing once more by bus and cruise to the town of Bariloche - legendary for its chocolate shops!

EASTER ISLAND

Easter Island is unique, an enigma. It's also a long way from anywhere – even Santiago (3,800km). To discover Rapa Nui requires a five hour flight from Santiago and it's our view that a minimum of two nights, ideally three, are needed to make the most of this beautiful, remote, island.

FJORD CRUISING

There are three excellent smaller cruise ships (Skorpios II & III and Stella Australis) offering several marvellous voyages through the Northern & Southern Icefields through the channels and archipelagos, past tiny fishing villages and thickly wooded slopes below snow-capped mountains, to emerge among the ice floes of sensational glaciers. Other cruises visit the Strait of Magellan and the Beagle Channel and cruise around the island of Tierra del Fuego and visit Cape Horn. Daily Zodiac excursions and shore visits provide opportunities to observe close up the stunning glaciers and the diverse flora and wildlife of this amazing region.

A SELECTION OF PROPERTIES



THE SINGULAR SANTIAGO

The Singular Santiago, newly emerged in the city's historic Lastarria neighbourhood, has been designed to embrace the area's cultural and artistic heritage while adding a cutting-edge modernity. It maintains an old-world feeling with 19th century French influences, while incorporating a contemporary elegance and high level amenities. All rooms are traditional in styling, with a timeless décor that mixes limited edition prints, hand-crafted furniture and polished parquet floors.



TIERRA CHILOE

Located in a hilltop setting at the edge of the sea, Tierra Chiloe is the perfect retreat, an all-inclusive lodge that has been inspired by Chiloe's iconic palafito stilt houses – elevated on a glass-and-concrete base, with exterior larch-wood shingles and inside walls lined with native cypress paying tribute to the local mastery of woodcraft. The contemporary hotel comprises 12 rooms, a cosy living room with fireplace, dining room, bar and a terrace, as well as a spa. From every room and all communal areas and terraces, there are magnificent views of the sea, as well as some of the islands and the imposing Andes mountains.



ALTO ATACAMA

In a spectacular setting on the outskirts of San Pedro, this striking hotel has been laid out in the style of a traditional adobe settlement. The 42 spacious rooms are designed in a 'modern- minimalist' style and each has a private terrace on which to relax and enjoy the great views.



AWASI PATAGONIA

Located in a 6,000-hectare private nature reserve just outside Torres del Paine's north-eastern boundary, this lodge offers impressive views from each of the 12 independent deluxe villas (inspired by old Patagonian shelters) that are dotted throughout luxuriant native beech forest.



VIRA VIRA

Vira Vira, set in 23 hectares of native park along the shores of the Liucura River, is the culmination of the on-site Swiss owners' dream to introduce guests to a true hacienda experience of this beautiful region. The hotel is made up of 21 rooms and suites, designed to be spacious, luxurious and, above all, very cosy and comfortable. All are traditionally decorated with Chilean rugs and whimsical local furnishings, and wood-clad to reflect the natural surroundings.



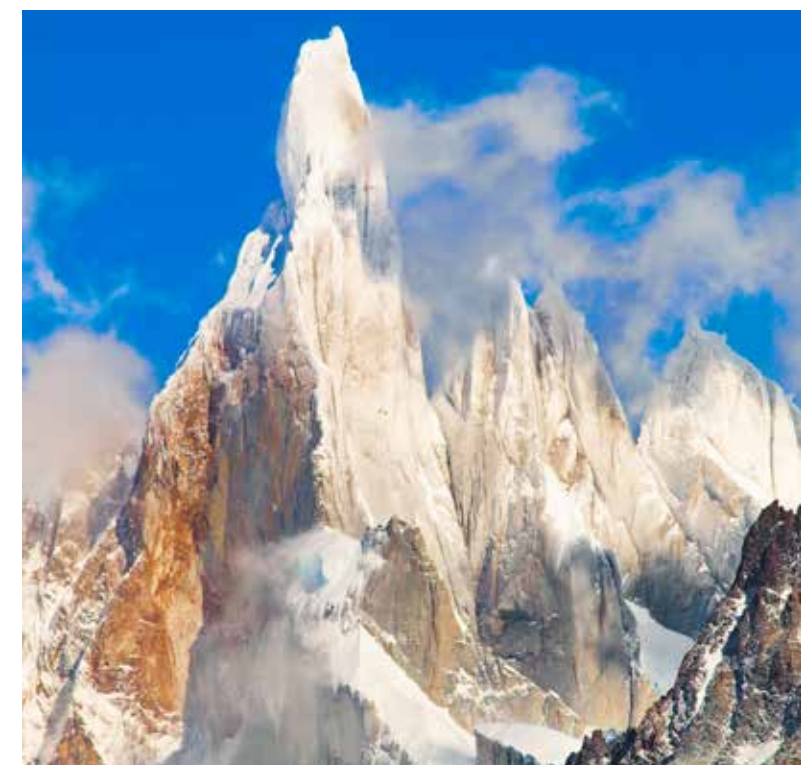
POSADA DE MIKE RAPU – EASTER ISLAND

On a hill overlooking the ocean and carefully designed for minimal impact, the lodge has been constructed of dark volcanic stone, glass and light woods, each material chosen to emulate the natural surrounds. All 30 guestrooms have panoramic windows and sea views.





The wild and stunning landscapes of Patagonia will remain imprinted on your mind forever – incredible mountain peaks, spectacular lakes, glaciers and forests. This wilderness is so remote and unspoiled that a walk within its landscape is sure to change your view of the world. Separated by the continental ice fields, two regions comprise Chilean Patagonia – the northern regions of Aysén and the Carretera Austral, and the southern regions of the famous Torres del Paine National Park, Magallanes, and Tierra del Fuego (shared with Argentina). Among the unforgettable images of Argentine Patagonia are the amazing lakes and glaciers of Los Glaciares National Park, the exceptional marine life of the Valdés Peninsula, and Tierra del Fuego, “the end of the world” and gateway to the Antarctic Peninsula.



## TORRES DEL PAINE, CHILE

Torres del Paine National Park is considered one of the most beautiful natural areas in the world. It is home to 15 peaks over 2,000m, the most famous being the vertical granite spires that give the park its name, the ‘Towers of Paine’. And Torres is not just for trekkers but for anyone with a sense of adventure who likes to experience the outdoors – there are walks suitable for people of all ages and all levels of fitness. Birds and wildlife abound in this UNESCO designated World Biosphere Reserve: armadillos, guanacos, rheas, black-necked swans, condors, eagles, grey foxes, and even the occasional puma may be spotted.

Imagine staying in the heart of these wonders, trekking in virgin beech forests, standing on the edge of an azure lake gazing up at towering peaks – or just sitting in total silence under the stars, sharing a glass of wine with new friends.

Spend 3 or 4 nights in one of a number of sublime lodges (see page 51) located either right inside the park or just on its boundaries, setting out each day on explorations carefully selected with the advice of your naturalist guide to suit your own interests.

## LOS GLACIARES NATIONAL PARK, ARGENTINA

This is one of the largest national parks in the country, stretching over 200km from north to south. It offers you the opportunity to see a part of the huge ice sheet of the Continental Ice Cap, origin of the area’s 47 ice flows. Among them are 13 of the world’s most impressive glaciers that descend from the Andes mountains to end at the Argentino and Viedma lakes. And the most spectacular of all is the Perito Moreno Glacier, a river of ice 5km wide and 60m high – a series of walkways facing the glacier head-on allow you to watch as each day colossal slabs of ice shear from the front of the glacier to collapse in a thunderous roar and create icebergs in the lake.

Take a cruise across to the northern arm of Lago Argentino from where you can view the park’s largest glacier, the massive Upsala, 50km long and 9km wide at the lake’s edge. In the northern sector of the park, looming over the small village of El Chaltén, is the Fitz Roy massif, a wild, isolated and scenically dramatic area of legendary peaks that attract climbers and walkers from all over the world.





## TREKS & ACTIVITIES

All of the hotels and lodges in and around Torres del Paine National Park can arrange daily tours and many have packages fully inclusive of accommodation, meals and guided excursions. A range of different activities is offered each day, depending on weather conditions and your own particular interests. Well-informed bilingual guides will accompany you on your choice of easy walks, hikes, horseback and mountain-bike rides, tours by van or by launch.

The active hiker seeking a greater challenge can trek the classic 'W' route along some of the best trekking trails in the world - those with limited time may tackle a shorter version. And for the more adventurous and very fit trekker who is willing to camp and hike in possibly adverse conditions, there is the demanding and deservedly renowned complete circuit around the Paine massif.

## EL CHALTEN – ARGENTINA

The small and remote town of El Chalten is the gateway to the northern section of the Los Glaciares National Park and the awe-inspiring Fitz Roy massif offering a range of treks that will take you through still more of the most unforgettable natural scenery. The accommodation options are not quite as advanced as you'll find in Chile and the scenery is quite literally breath-taking.

Contact us to put together for you the best combination of hotels and activities.



King penguins Tierra del Fuego (Chile)



## VALDES PENINSULA – ARGENTINA

Located on the windswept Atlantic coast of Argentina and accessed via the Welsh-settled port town of Puerto Madryn, the peninsula is home to impressive marine wildlife including vast colonies of Magellanic penguins, sea lions and elephant seals. But, with white sandy beaches and clear waters providing a designated breeding ground, the biggest attraction are the southern right whales that visit from June to mid-December with September and October the best months for sightings.

## PATAGONIA CROSSING

CHILE to ARGENTINA or vice versa

Often travellers like to combine Chile's Torres del Paine and Argentina's Los Glaciares National Parks and there are many options that allow you to explore each of these two major highlights. Comfortable transport is arranged to take you across the border and on to the small town of El Calafate, situated on the shores of Lago Argentino and gateway to the Los Glaciares National Park. It provides the ideal base from which to visit the Upsala and Perito Moreno Glaciers.

## USHUAIA & TIERRA DEL FUEGO

Gateway to the Antarctic Peninsula, Tierra del Fuego (Land of Fire) is an archipelago at the southern tip of Patagonia that Argentina shares with Chile (to the west and south). The main town, Ushuaia, overlooks Ushuaia Bay and the Beagle Channel and is Argentina's – and arguably the world's – most southerly city. With a great many of the houses built of wood, the city is especially picturesque; it is the main tourist centre for Tierra del Fuego and departure point for many Antarctic cruises.

## SAMPLE ITINERARY



## PATAGONIA IN DEPTH (ARGENTINA & CHILE)

Day 1	You will be met on arrival at Puerto Montt Airport for private transfer to your hotel in the nearby town of Puerto Varas on the shores of Lake Llanquihue.	starting point for a wide range of treks around the legendary peaks of the national park.
Day 2	Begin your two-day scenic Lakes Crossing by travelling along the south side of Lake Llanquihue. Arrive at Vicente Perez Rosales National Park and embark on a cruiser boat ride across Todos Los Santos Lake concluding at the remote settlement of Peulla.	Day 6-7 Spend the next two days at leisure to enjoy hikes that lead to spectacular peaks and hanging lakes.
Day 3	Today you will travel through the Andes before arriving at Puerto Frias. Continue by boat across the lakes to Puerto Panuelo and then on to Bariloche.	Day 8 Return to El Calafate and visit Perito Moreno Glacier, considered one of the natural wonders of the world.
Day 4	Enjoy a full day tour that will introduce you to Bariloche's stunning surrounds, with beautiful lakes and forests, and some amazing rock formations.	Day 9 Travel across the Patagonian steppes to the Torres del Paine National Park. You have the afternoon to either relax or enjoy an afternoon excursion.
Day 5	Fly South to El Calafate where you will be met and transferred to El Chalten. This small town is the	Day 10-13 Over these four days you will be able to explore Torres del Paine National Park. The park is renowned for its unique formations of mountains, glaciers, lakes and waterfalls as well as the abundance of birds and wildlife.
		Day 14 After breakfast your private transfer will take you to Punta Arenas in time to connect with your onward flight.

## A SELECTION OF PROPERTIES



### TIERRA PATAGONIA

The Tierra Patagonia is situated on a bluff where the pampas meets Lake Sarmiento, on the north-eastern edge of Torres del Paine National Park. This stunning hotel is almost invisible until you arrive, the contemporary design blending so perfectly with the rugged surroundings in its use of the natural materials of the region. Casually luxurious with lovely public spaces and guestrooms boasting handcrafted furniture and uniquely Patagonian details – and everywhere those incredible big-sky views.

Gourmet chefs wine and dine you, and after your excursions into the wilderness, take advantage of the Uma Spa with an indoor swimming pool, an outdoor Jacuzzi, sauna and steam bath.



### THE SINGULAR PATAGONIA – CHILE

Only 5km beyond Puerto Natales, this deluxe contemporary hotel occupies a meticulously converted former cold-storage plant dating from 1915, and its warm and spacious rooms feature 6m-wide windows overlooking the fjords of Ultima Esperanza (Last Hope) Sound.



### LOS CERROS, EL CHALTÉN – ARGENTINA

On the outskirts of El Chaltén, the hotel's guestrooms are decorated with a warm simplicity that perfectly harmonises with the natural environment, and their large windows allow you to enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding valleys, lakes and mountains.



# ARGENTINA

Argentina serves up a taste of everything, from the magnificent Iguazu Falls in the sub-tropical jungle, to Quechua Indian villages, and colonial towns like Salta and San Juan. Travel up into the mountains across beautiful valleys and canyons, visit a wildlife lodge, or indulge yourself with the elegance and charm of a stay on a traditional Argentine estancia.



## IGUAZU FALLS

In a tropical region of magnificent rainforest and deep flowing rivers in the far north-east, you'll see 'the Great Waters' – the mighty Iguazu Falls. The thundering waterfalls are an incredible sight-and-sound sensation, 3km wide and plunging 70m into the gorge that divides Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. You can see the wide-angle view of the falls from the Brazilian side and more close-up detail from the Argentine side.

## IBERA MARSHLANDS

A thick jungle envelops all of eastern and southern Brazil, running from the Cordillera de la Costa to the Parana River reaching into north-east Argentina. The vast wilderness of the little-known 'Esteros de Ibera' (Ibera Marshlands), more than 1.3 million hectares, is still largely unexplored. A complex system of freshwater wetlands, marshes and lagoons, no other region in Argentina can boast a comparable number of plant or animal species. It has become a natural refuge for abundant and varied wildlife, including the largest rodent on earth, the capybara, two types of caiman, the largest deer native to South America, howler monkeys and 350 different bird species.



Black howler monkey – Ibera Marshlands



## MENDOZA GOURMET FOOD & WINE

Mendoza is an attractive city of tree-lined avenues and pretty plazas that today, due to its mild and dry climate, is the principal wine-producing area of Argentina, home to nearly 2,000 vineyards. You might arrange to visit for tastings and a delicious lunch, or perhaps make an overnight getaway to, say, one of Cavas Wine Lodge's lovely adobe-walled apartments dotted among the vines; or maybe Posada Salentein which offers rooms in two traditional country houses on the estate of its ultra-modern winery.

## ESTANCIAS

A stay on an estancia offers you a chance to 'step back in time' and experience a traditional Argentine lifestyle that, despite the advances of the 21st century, still continues little-changed today. Argentina boasts very many fine estancias – several little more than an hour's drive from Buenos Aires – and while those that are closer may be visited just for the day, a two night stay is ideal. Guests can explore the estates on foot, sometimes by bicycle or on horseback.



## OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST



Hongo Mushroom in the Valle de la Luna

### NORTHERN ARGENTINA

Featuring much less often on the regular tourist route, the far northwest of Argentina is a fascinatingly diverse region, the high arid foothills of the Andes characterised by multi-coloured mountains, 'lunar' landscapes, giant cacti, deep gorges and small traditional Quechua Indian villages. In stark contrast are the misty hillsides of the low valleys on the western slopes of the Andes, covered in dense subtropical vegetation, the trees draped in vines and mosses.



### PURMAMARCA & VINEYARDS

To experience just a taste of the region, you might journey from the city of Jujuy to picturesque Purmamarca at the foot of the magnificent 'Seven Colours Mountain', continuing past pre-Columbian ruins and tiny churches, to the 400-year-old village of Humahuaca, surrounded by still more fantastically coloured hills. Delightfully complementing this experience are explorations of the vineyards of Cafayate, and the lovely Spanish-colonial city of Salta, one of the oldest in Argentina and still retaining the most wonderful colonial architecture in the country.



### VALLE DE LUNA & TALAMPAYA (DINOSAUR COUNTRY)

A spectacular region of the Argentinian Andes that sees far fewer foreign visitors than the country's more heavily promoted natural areas and is little known except perhaps among palaeontologists and fossil-hunters, are the dry desert valleys, canyons and bizarrely-shaped rock formations of the Ischigualasto Provincial Park (including the World Heritage site of Valle de la Luna) and Talampaya.

Worldwide attention was drawn to the region when fossils were discovered from the Triassic period when the dinosaurs first emerged (so these are some of the oldest known dinosaur remains). The Talampaya National Park covers 2,150 sq. km and, in addition to its scientific importance, contains outstanding natural attractions with sheer cliffs and geological formations of variegated colours and strange shapes carved by centuries of wind erosion.



## BUENOS AIRES GATEWAY CITY - ARGENTINA

A seductive port city with a strong European influence and culture and cosmopolitan residents (porteños – 'people of the port'), Argentina's capital is a combination of the colonial and the contemporary, a dazzling mix of cutting edge design, chic restaurants, old-world cafés, and lively outdoor markets.

Despite its wide boulevards and grand architecture, a blend of Spanish, French and Italian, Buenos Aires is essentially a city of barrios (neighbourhoods), each with their own highly individual colour and character. You might trawl the many antique shops in bohemian San Telmo or make a precious find in its Sunday market, stop for a street-side coffee in working class La Boca, and stroll the trendy avenues of Recoleta and Palermo.

### LA BOCA, SAN TELMO & RECOLETA

Buenos Aires is divided into a number of wonderfully diverse barrios (neighbourhoods) making it a fascinating city to explore.

Unique and colourful La Boca has an unusual history having seceded from Argentina in 1882. Originally the inspiration of local artist Benito Quinquela Martín. In 1960 he painted the walls of what was then an abandoned street and erected a simple stage for performances. La Boca quickly became a haven for artists and still maintains a bohemian air with local artisans selling their wares amongst bars and cafes.

Another haven for creatives, the San Telmo barrios, is a lively and entertaining place to spend a couple of hours. Each Sunday a huge street market popular with travellers and locals alike transforms Calle Defensa with performers and hundreds of stalls selling mostly hand crafted art and antiques.

The grand suburb of Recoleta has become famous for its huge cemetery, the final resting place for many of Argentina's famous. Visit the graves of Eva (Evita) Perón, several presidents of Argentina, Nobel Prize winners, the founder of the Argentine Navy and a granddaughter of Napoleon. Peron was finally laid to rest in the cemetery more than 20 years after her death, and Argentinians love for her is such that many locals make a weekly visit to her grave to lay flowers.



### EXPERIENCE THE TANGO

A dramatic display of dance mastery, tango's impassioned physical portrayal of seduction and despair draws devotees from around the globe. There are many ways to enjoy this mesmerising dance in Buenos Aires – for a gritty and authentic experience visit a Milonga where locals gather for the 'real' tango and give it a go yourself, or admire a fabulous show by expert dancers over dinner at one of several excellent options including our favourite, Esquina Carlos Gardel.



### HACIENADA STAYS

An integral part of South American history, estancias and haciendas show their European roots with English and French styles, often beautifully furnished and retaining their elegant colonial air. There are several on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, one of the finest is Estancia La Bamba de Areco which is one of the few places you can witness firsthand gauchos practising the art of 'horse whispering', a strange and almost mystical way to tame and train horses.



# SAMPLE ITINERARY



Estancia Cristina, El Calafate

# SOME SUGGESTIONS IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME...



Seven coloured mountains, Purmamarca



# URUGUAY



# BEST OF ARGENTINA

- Day 1 Arrive in Buenos Aires, a charming, sophisticated city with a strong European influence and culture. With its blend of Spanish, French and Italian architectural styles, its great variety of nightspots, and its cultural life, it is often referred to as the 'South American Paris'.
- Day 2 Enjoy a guided city sightseeing tour of Buenos Aires. Highlights include Plaza de Mayo (May Square), El Cabildo (City Hall), the Cathedral and Casa Rosada (Government House) and the colourful district of La Boca.
- Day 3 Spend the day at leisure and in the evening enjoy dinner and Tango Show.
- Day 4 Fly to the spectacular Iguazu Falls, one of the world's most impressive natural wonders.
- Day 5 See the falls up close whilst enjoying the various paths that meander through the national park.
- Day 6 Fly to the famous wine making town of Mendoza. Spend the afternoon at leisure.

- Day 7 The morning will be spent on a tour of Mendoza city, and in the afternoon taste some Malbec on a winery tour.
- Day 8 Fly to picturesque Bariloche, the gateway to the Argentine side of the Lakes District, located on the southern shore of Lake Nahuel Huapi.
- Day 9 Explore Bariloche's stunning lakes and forests on a full day tour.
- Day 10 Fly to El Calafate, situated on the shores of Lago Argentino, the gateway to Los Glaciares National Park.
- Day 11 Enjoy a day trip to a traditional estancia, located in an isolated valley within the National Park, accessible only by catamaran which passes glaciers and icebergs.
- Day 12 Visit Perito Merino Glacier in the morning and in the afternoon transfer to El Chalten.
- Day 13-14 Enjoy two days at leisure to take hikes through the well signed tracks that lead to spectacular peaks and hanging lakes, or if you prefer simply relax at your accommodation taking in the spectacular scenery.
- Day 15 Transfer back to El Calafate for your flight to Buenos Aires and depart Argentina.

# IBERA MARSHLANDS

A three or four day (necessary given the distances involved) stay at Estancia Rincon Del Socorro is so much more than just experiencing Ibera Marshlands and its excellent wildlife. You'll also be enjoying traditional Argentine hospitality at a beautiful Hacienda complete with resident Gauchos. With excellent guides and their own boat, you can discover part of the wildlife-rich 13,000 sq. km flooded area of the marshlands. Rincon del Socorro is owned by The Conservation Land Trust, a group of biologists and veterinarians dedicated to caring for this environment through restoration and reintroduction programs for species under threat.

# SALTA & PURMAMARCA

A flight from either Buenos Aires or Iguazu will easily enable you to include this less visited and exceptionally beautiful area of northern Argentina. A couple of nights in Salta, or just outside the city at an estancia (perhaps House of Jasmine) combined with two or three nights in Purmamarca or one of the nearby wineries, would add intriguing variety to any trip to Argentina. Then, if you wish, continue on north into Bolivia (see page 41).

Easily accessible from Buenos Aires by hydrofoil across the Rio de la Plata, the tiny country of Uruguay offers visitors much, including the capital Montevideo, the beautiful 17th century Portuguese town of Colonia, and the glamorous Monaco-style resort area of Punta del Este.

If you have two or three days to spare, travel to Montevideo and explore the broad boulevards, parks, and many fine buildings of the city. Later the following day, you might continue west to visit the lovely colonial port of Colonia del Sacramento, perhaps one of the undiscovered delights of South America with its quaint cobblestone streets and delightful plazas. Small, compact and ideal for further exploration on foot, you can easily enjoy another morning wandering this wonderful city at your own pace before returning on the afternoon hydrofoil to Buenos Aires.



## A SELECTION OF PROPERTIES



### LEGADO MITICO – BUENOS AIRES

An urbane three-storey townhouse in the city's bohemian Palermo Viejo neighbourhood. The hotel's style might be called 'aristocratic Argentine'; and 11 beautiful themed guestrooms are sensitively decorated to evoke the spirit of Argentina's cultural and historical icons. Refinement is the key word here, with dark tones, period furniture, leather sofas, towering bookshelves and fireplaces featured in the luxurious lounge and dining areas. Rooms have spacious bathrooms, king-size beds and a full range of contemporary facilities. Behind the hotel is a small, outdoor garden area that provides a tranquil retreat.



### LA BAMBA DE ARECO – BUENOS AIRES

Estancia La Bamba de Areco is a beautifully renovated estancia located 120km north-west of Buenos Aires. It lies in the heart of the 'Pampa' and is one of the oldest estancias in Argentina. Renovated with great care, this boutique property combines luxurious comfort with colonial elegance. The feeling of being welcomed into a private home that is steeped in history and tradition makes this estancia a very special place. Exquisite cuisine, refined service, gaucho traditions and equestrian sports all add to the unique magic of Estancia La Bamba de Areco.



### LOI SUITES IGUAZU – IGUAZU FALLS

Loi Suites Iguazu may not be right at the falls but this beautifully designed hotel, only 20 minutes' drive away and set on the Iguazú River's edge surrounded by butterfly and toucan-filled rainforest, is a hidden gem! Five stone-clad buildings scattered among clusters of native trees and a series of split-level pools are linked by bridges and a network of paths. Rooms and suites, some with balconies, are modern with hardwood furniture and traditional artefacts.



### ENTRE CIELOS – MENDOZA

Inspired by the outstanding natural beauty of the region, Entre Cielos lies in the foothills of the spectacular Andes, surrounded by vineyards that produce the world's finest Malbec wines. All aspects of this extraordinary luxury wine hotel, with 15 stylish rooms (named after different styles of wine – Classic, Gran Reserva, Gran Cru...) and the 'Limited Edition' vineyard loft, combine to blend the principles of harmony and adventure that define this frontier of wine-making.



### RINCON DEL SOCORRO – IBERA MARSHLANDS

The classic Spanish homestead of Rincon del Socorro was originally built in 1896 and has a long and interesting history. Sensitively transformed into very stylish accommodation for 30 guests, with six rooms in the main house and three nearby bungalows, a stay is inclusive of home-cooked meals and a range of activities including wildlife safaris into the surrounding wetlands by boat and by horse.



### SILEO HOTEL – RECOLETA – BUENOS AIRES

A contemporary and smart hotel with a delightfully light and airy feel – in a great location next to the beautiful Recoleta Cemetery, resting place of the city's famous daughter, Evita Perón. The décor throughout Sileo Hotel is colourful and bright which ties in well with its small art gallery. Add in a fabulous roof top terrace, a heated plunge pool and combine it with warm and friendly service and you'll understand why this new hotel has become a favourite with our clients.



### LOS CAUQUENES RESORT & SPA – USHUAIA

Situated on the Beagle Channel beach, with the snow-capped peaks of the imposing Andes mountains behind it Los Cauquenes is perfectly placed to be your home whilst exploring Tierra del Fuego or for before heading south to Antarctica. A free hotel shuttle provides easy access into Ushuaia just 7 km away. The hotel's restaurant offers an excellent dining option whilst overlooking the Beagle Channel, serving Patagonian dishes like lamb and king crab.



# BRAZIL



## RIO DE JANEIRO

Nothing really prepares you for your first sight of Rio, sprawling down a narrow strip of land pressed between granite mountains and the sea, its white-sand beaches contrasting with the lushly forested peaks. Stand atop Corcovado beneath the iconic statue of Christ the Redeemer and drink in the views across Guanabara Bay; or be whisked aloft in a cable-car to step out onto the Sugar Loaf to watch the sunset cast a golden glow across the beaches of Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon.

Rio's beauty and natural attractions are spectacular and the more than six million Cariocas (the residents of the city) have an energy that is palpable. At no time is this more evident than during Rio Carnival, the biggest and most famous carnival on the globe, held over five days (Fri to Tue) just before Lent, when the city goes wild with street festivals and Samba schools compete fiercely for the quality of their music, dancing and fantastic costumes.

But Rio is not only beaches, bars and 'caipirinhas'. First settled by the Portuguese in the mid-16th century, their architectural legacy can be seen in the city's historic downtown, with colonial palaces and churches and beautiful neoclassical buildings revived as vibrant galleries, cultural centres, museums and theatres – a side of Rio less often considered.



## IGUASSU FALLS

The falls, where the borders of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay meet, are no less awe-inspiring from the Brazilian side - while Argentina offers a closer experience of the cascades, Brazil will show you a panoramic view of the totality of the 275 separate falls. And if you'd like to complete the experience with the ultimate perspective, it is only from the Brazil side that you can splurge and take a helicopter ride to sweep across the breadth of this wild wonder of unleashed nature.

Come back down to earth and visit the marvellous 5-hectare Parque das Aves (Bird Park) constructed in the forest close to the entrance to the falls. Entering huge 8m high aviaries, you can get amongst more than 175 different species of rare and colourful birds – and perhaps learn the names of those that you may spot in their natural habitat outside the bird park. There are also exhibits where you can see native alligators, anacondas, pythons, marmosets and butterflies.

Contrasts abound in Brazil - the exhilaration of Rio, home of the samba and bossa nova, the colourful folklore, rich traditions and delicious cuisine of Salvador, the beaches and Baroque architecture of the cities in the northeast. And, at the opposite extreme, there's the natural wonder of the Amazon Jungle and the vast Pantanal, each a haven for Brazil's diverse wildlife.





## PARATY

This delightful tiny colonial port, on the coast southwest of Rio, is a reminder of a bygone era. It once shipped huge amounts of gold and diamonds to Portugal and this brought pirates, smuggling and intrigue that all played their part in Paraty's colourful history. When new overland routes were found to avoid the pirates, Paraty lost its importance - but none of its allure. Surrounded by tropical rainforest, the town's well-preserved buildings, beautiful churches and cobbled streets remain just as they were in colonial times.

## SALVADOR

For a different view of Brazil, spend some time in Salvador, the country's original capital. The city is rich in Afro-Brazilian culture and colourful folklore and offers a great variety of Brazilian arts and crafts. The vibrant colonial area of Pelourinho in the historic 'upper city' is well worth visiting – as much for the exotic tastes of the local Creole-style cuisine, the all-pervading rhythms of Bahian music that mingle with the cries of street vendors, and the enchanting sight of Bahian women in their traditional white lace dresses.



Jabiru stork – Pantanal

## BRAZILIAN AMAZON

The Amazon region is vast, relentless and incredible. More than half of it is in Brazil where it encompasses almost half that country – over 3.6 million sq. km of wild rivers and jungle. One of the best ways to see the Amazon's wonders and to closely experience the jungle environment is to stay at one of the numerous lodges, taking guided trail walks and canoe trips to explore the tributaries and visit indigenous villages.

Accommodation may range from a complex of rustic thatched bungalows to a small exclusive lodge such as the simple yet elegant Anavilhanas Lodge, lying along the bank of the black-water Rio Negro. Most cruises will offer 3-4 nights exploring the Rio Negro or the yellow waters of the Solimões that merge to become the Amazon River.

If the Amazon is a place of specific interest please go to pages 34-37 as Peru and Ecuador are arguably better places to discover the wonders of the Amazon.

## PANTANAL

Might the Pantanal be the world's best kept secret? While everyone has heard of the Amazon and it attracts the greatest renown, fewer people know of this fascinating area. A vast area between Cuiaba in Mato Grosso state and Campo Grande in Mato Grosso do Sul, the Pantanal covers 230,000 sq. km and is said to be the largest wetlands on earth. It is richly forested and abounds with wildlife and flora, home to numerous species of mammals, reptiles, plants, and over 600 types of birds. You can hike, ride horses and make photographic safaris into the region by boat, canoe, on horseback and on foot. If you're fortunate you might snap photos of tapirs, anteaters and capybaras, see hyacinth macaws, and even maned wolves.

With a little more luck and a visit to the northern Pantanal, you have a very good chance of capturing on film South America's most exciting and elusive big cat, the jaguar.



## A SELECTION OF ACCOMMODATION

### HOTEL DAS CATARATAS, IGUASSU FALLS

An elegant Portuguese-colonial building set in immaculate gardens and encircled by tropical rainforest, this is the only hotel located inside Iguassu National Park, just a two minute stroll from the falls. The 193 guestrooms combine sumptuous colonial furnishings with modern amenities.



### COPACABANA PALACE HOTEL – RIO DE JANEIRO

A landmark of Rio, this legendary Art-Deco hotel overlooks Copacabana beach and has attracted the rich and famous since the 1920s. With French-inspired interiors, rooms that are of 'palatial' size, and impeccable service, the hotel well deserves its enduring high status.



### ARARAS ECO LODGE – PANTANAL

With a homely atmosphere and built in regional rustic style this lodge offers 19 comfortable rooms with air conditioning, screened windows, ceiling fans, and private bathrooms (hot showers). Araras provides an excellent base from which to explore the Pantanal.



### CASA TURQUESA – PARATY

A former family home, Casa Turquesa offers nine comfortable and spacious suites. Each room is unique with furniture designed by Brazilian craftsmen, works of art by both local and international artists and offer views of; the inner courtyard, Paraty Bay, the tiled rooftops and mountains, or the dome of the Santa Rita Church.

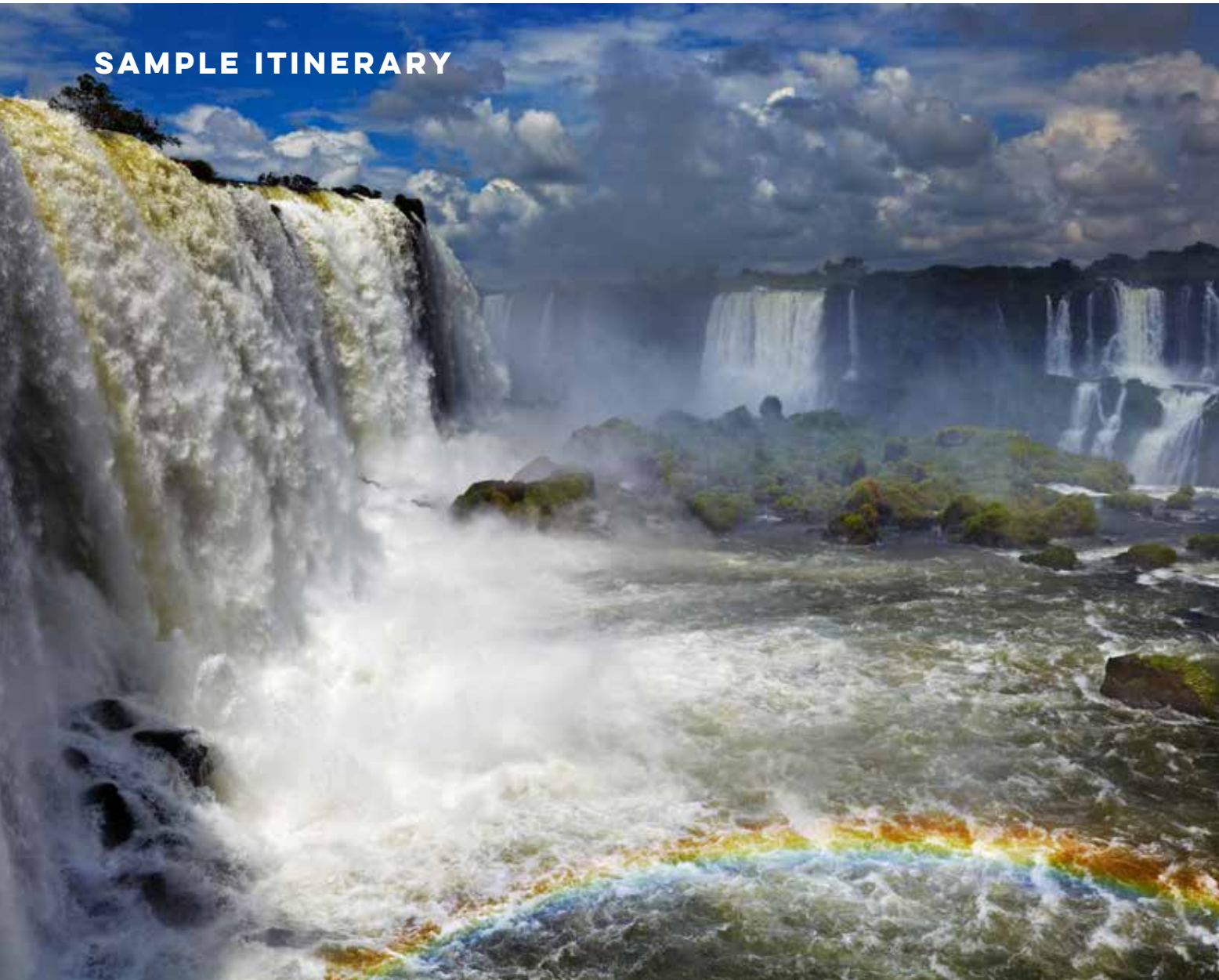


### CRISTALINO LODGE – SOUTHERN AMAZON

This lodge is located within a private forest reserve in the southern part of the Brazilian Amazon. Built of wood, with cool ceramic tile flooring, the bungalows and premier rooms blend into the local environment. It was recently chosen as one of the 25 best Eco-lodges in the world by National Geographic Traveller.



## SAMPLE ITINERARY



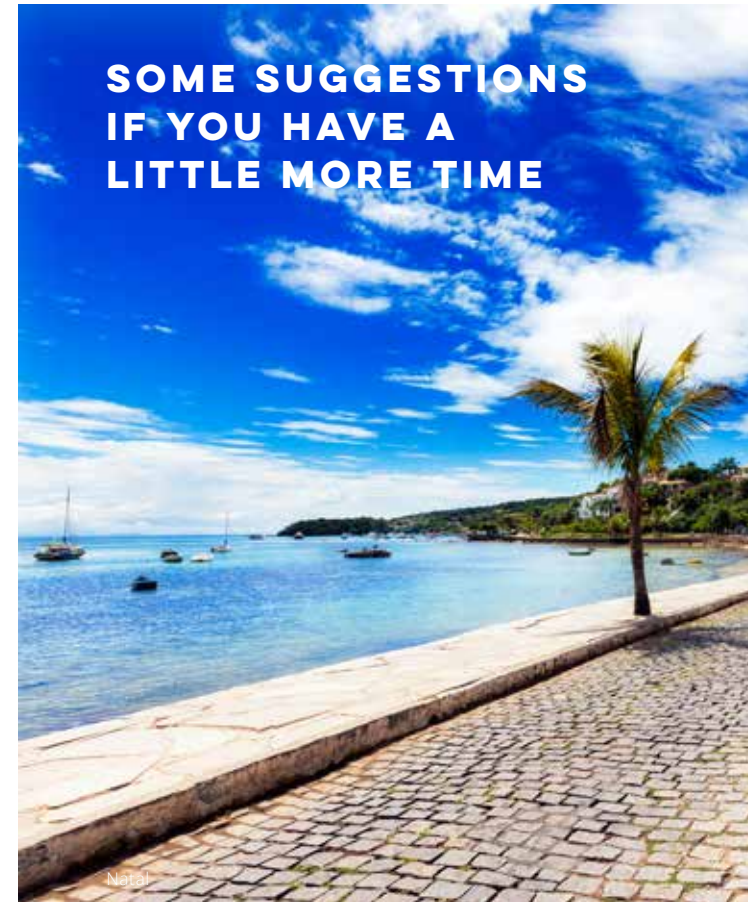
### IGUASSU, RIO & SOUTH ATLANTIC COAST

Experience the majestic Iguassu Falls, spectacular seaside city of Rio de Janeiro, island paradise of Ilha Grande, and the delightful UNESCO colonial town of Paraty.

- Day 1 Arrive at Iguassu Falls, Brazil.
- Day 2 Full day tour of Brazil and Argentine side of the Iguassu Falls.
- Day 3 Rio de Janeiro. Spend the afternoon exploring the vibrant beaches.
- Day 4 Full day tour to Corcovado and Sugar Loaf Mountain.
- Day 5 Rio de Janeiro, day at leisure.
- Day 6-7 Explore the pristine Atlantic Rainforest, walking trails, waterfalls, tranquil villages and secluded beaches on the island of Ilha Grande.
- Day 8-9 Explore Paraty, the UNESCO heritage listed colonial town where the Atlantic Forest meets the beauty of the islands and beaches.
- Day 10 Transfer back to Rio de Janeiro.



## SOME SUGGESTIONS IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME



### NATAL

Located on the north-eastern bulge of the continent is Natal, situated between a river and the ocean and best known for its beaches and for gigantic sand dunes, especially at Genipabu Beach where the highest and most impressive reach imposing heights of 50m.

### BUZIOS

For another short beach escape between travels, head for the Buzios peninsula 180km northeast of Rio. With no high-rise buildings, Buzios still retains the atmosphere and charm of the fishing village it once was.

### PANTANAL

Discover one of Brazil's secrets, the Pantanal offers a wide variety of experiences in addition to the opportunity to see some amazing wildlife. Given the distance we recommend a minimum of three nights, longer stays will afford greater opportunity to see some of the region's amazing animals like the maned wolf, giant anteater and for the fortunate, the jaguar.



### BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA)

Combining Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires offers an insight into these wonderful yet very different cities. The landscapes, language, food, history are all different. Our advice – give yourself adequate time – there is a lot to explore.





The only country in South America to have both an Atlantic and a Pacific coast, Colombia has a great cultural diversity and a topography that includes Amazon jungle in the south and long mountain ranges stretching up from Ecuador to the lowlands of the tropical northern coast.

## CARTAGENA

One of Colombia's colonial gems is the old Spanish fortress town of Cartagena, a World Heritage site only a 40 minute flight from the capital, Bogota. Once a lively Caribbean port that was often plundered by pirates for the Spanish gold held there, Cartagena today is famous for its walled Old Town where you can walk the narrow cobblestone streets, look at the monuments, churches and Spanish colonial buildings, and enjoy the warm breezes as you pass through the many squares and plazas.

## COFFEE TRIANGLE

This region is a real surprise to many, especially for its impressive landscape and coffee farms. The higher elevation, cooler climate and rich volcanic soil of this area in the mountains of western Colombia determined it would become the cradle of Colombian coffee culture. It is seductively aromatic, with a laidback lifestyle, and aside from the chance to see, taste, and learn everything about the almighty bean, this region has also become a centre for great eco-activities - it must be all that caffeine!

## COCORA VALLEY

To prevent exploitation of the wax palm and the threat against the endemic species dependent on the palm, mainly due to the celebrations of Palm Sunday, the government of Belisario Betancur proposed the creation of a wildlife sanctuary and the preservation of the wax palm as the national symbol of Colombia. Law 61 of 1985 was ratified on 16 September 1985.



## SAMPLE ACCOMMODATION

### ANANDÁ BOUTIQUE HOTEL- CARTAGENA

"Anandá" – in Sanskrit 'a state of bliss'... A restored 16th century colonial house, this small luxury hotel is located within the walls of the Old Town. Discreetly featuring the most modern amenities, the 23 beautiful suites are complemented by the hotel's patios and terraces, a small courtyard pool and a rooftop pool with a jacuzzi overlooking the city, and an exclusive Mediterranean-style restaurant offering indoor and al fresco dining.



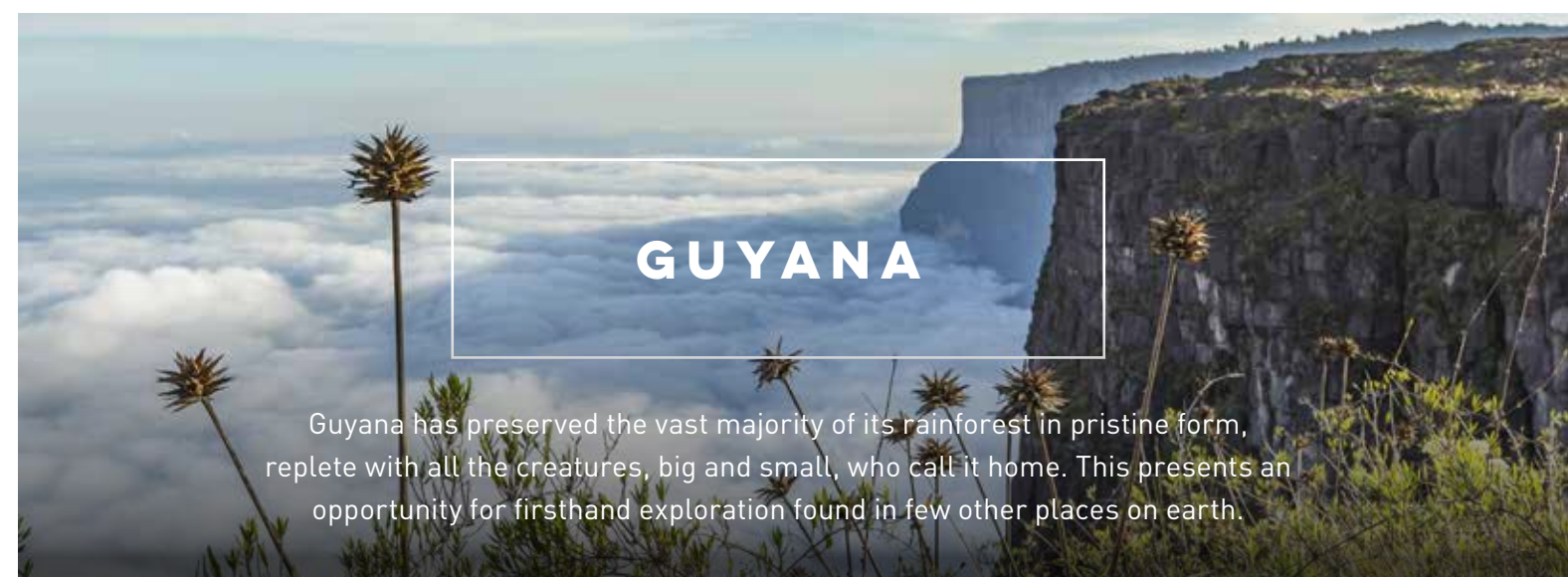
The land of high places, where the Andes begin! Venezuela is at the top end of South America, its coastline lapped by the Caribbean



## CAINAMA NP & ANGEL FALLS

Highest on any visitor's list of 'must sees' is the Cainama National Park where there is an incredible variety of tropical wildlife, including monkeys, poison arrow frogs, prolific birdlife, and hundreds of species of orchids. Mammals include porcupines, armadillos, otters, three-toed sloths, jaguars, pumas, tapirs and capybaras.

Weather permitting, take a flight over Angel Falls, the world's highest uninterrupted waterfall that spectacularly tumbles 979m in one unbroken cascade from Auyantepui (Devil's Mountain).



Guyana has preserved the vast majority of its rainforest in pristine form, replete with all the creatures, big and small, who call it home. This presents an opportunity for firsthand exploration found in few other places on earth.



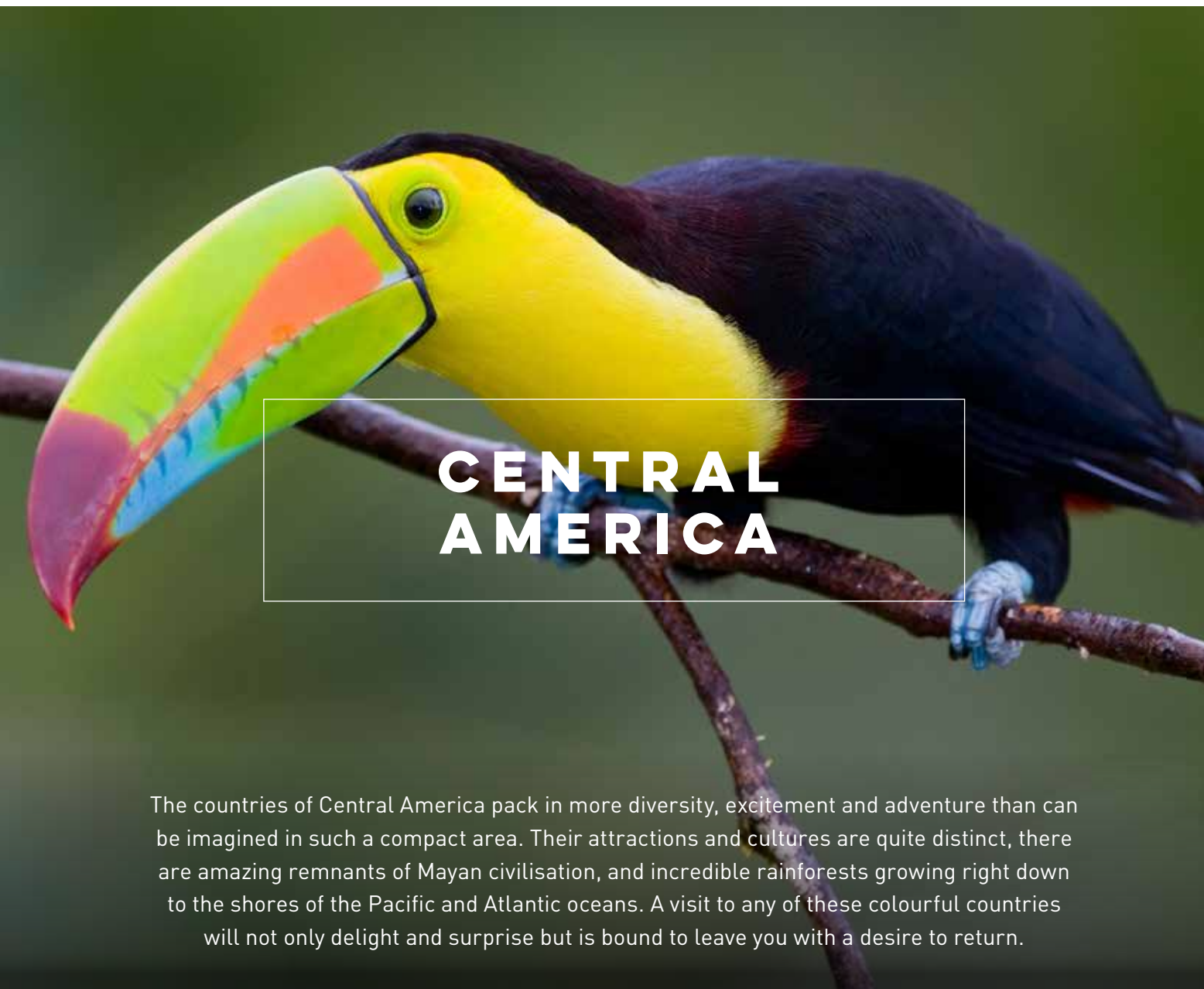
## KAIETEUR FALLS

The world's widest single drop waterfall, located on the Potaro River in the Kaieteur National Park.

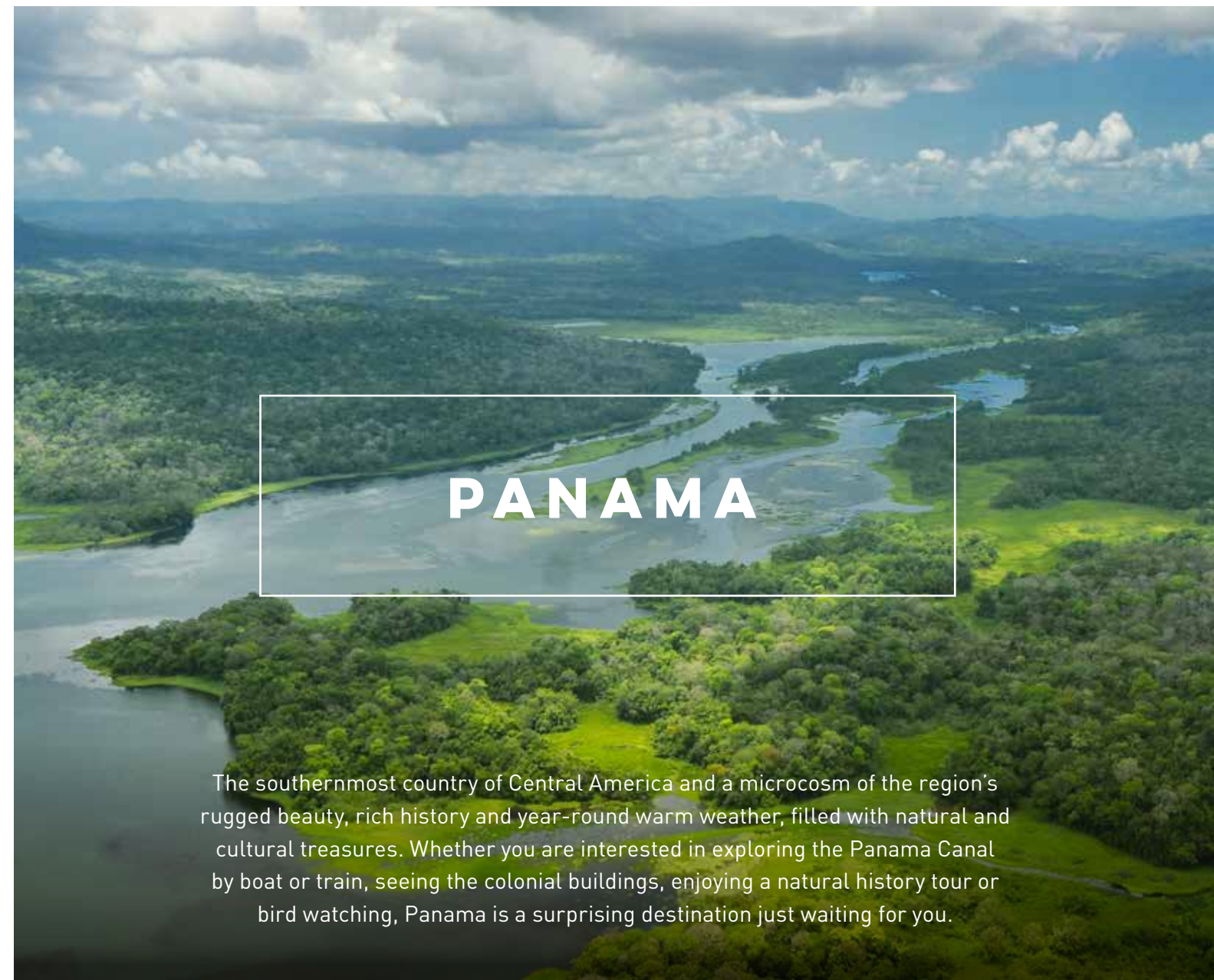
## GIANTS OF GUYANA

Guyana is a land where everything is on a supersized scale; aside from its giant trees and epic waterfalls, it is home to many of the continent's biggest creatures. Among them are the giant river otter, giant anteater, arapaima, at more than 3m long and weighing up to 180kg, one of the world's largest freshwater fish, harpy eagle, the biggest and most powerful raptor in the Americas; and anacondas and jaguars, respectively the largest reptile and feline in the western hemisphere.





The countries of Central America pack in more diversity, excitement and adventure than can be imagined in such a compact area. Their attractions and cultures are quite distinct, there are amazing remnants of Mayan civilisation, and incredible rainforests growing right down to the shores of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. A visit to any of these colourful countries will not only delight and surprise but is bound to leave you with a desire to return.



The southernmost country of Central America and a microcosm of the region's rugged beauty, rich history and year-round warm weather, filled with natural and cultural treasures. Whether you are interested in exploring the Panama Canal by boat or train, seeing the colonial buildings, enjoying a natural history tour or bird watching, Panama is a surprising destination just waiting for you.



## PANAMA CANAL

One of the world's greatest engineering marvels – a major shipping canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, obviating the need for the long and treacherous voyage via the Drake Passage and Cape Horn.

## SAN BLAS ISLANDS

Home of the Kuna Indians who were granted regional autonomy to protect their unique culture, forming the comarca (autonomous territory) of Kuna Yala where to this day an indigenous congress rules.

## SAMPLE ITINERARY

### BEST OF PANAMA

- Day 1-2 Arrive Panama City and enjoy a historical tour of this beautiful colonial city.
- Day 3 Board the Panama Canal 250 passenger ferry for your partial transit cruise through Pedro Miguel Locks and Miraflores Locks (two of the three lock sets of the Panama Canal).
- Day 4-5 Spend two days at San Blas Islands where turquoise waters surround white-sand beaches dotted with palm trees and thatched-roof Guna villages. Enjoy activities such as snorkelling, rainforest walks and sailing around in a typical Guna dug-out canoe visiting Guna villages.
- Day 6 Return to Panama City.



# COSTA RICA

A small, tropical country with a tradition of hospitality and a long history of peace – it has had no army for almost 60 years – Costa Rica is most renowned for its great natural beauty and astonishing diversity. Pacific beaches stretch down its coastline, active volcanoes are dotted throughout amazing cloud forests, and you will find turtle nesting sites and an incredible variety of flora and fauna in the numerous national parks and wildlife reserves.



Arenal volcano

## MONTEVERDE CLOUD FOREST

This is one of the richest and most diverse cloud forests in the New World. It is perhaps best known as the home of the resplendent quetzal but also shelters hundreds of other birds, mammals and plant species, as well as reptiles, amphibians and insects.

## MANUEL ANTONIO NATIONAL PARK

Easily accessible from San Jose, this park offers activities that include hiking through the rainforest, looking out for the prolific birdlife (more than 350 species reported in the park), several species of monkeys, and other wildlife like armadillos, peccaries and sloths; guided walks to learn about the abundantly varied flora; and swimming and snorkelling from the tranquil beaches.

## CORCOVADO NATIONAL PARK

This park on the south-western corner of the Osa Peninsula has been called “the most biologically intense place on earth” and is home to tapirs, peccaries, giant anteaters, jaguars and ocelots, as well as incredible birdlife. You can hike or ride horses along the extensive beaches, snorkel or scuba-dive among volcanic rocks, and explore the tidal pools.

## SAMPLE ACCOMMODATION



## ARENAS DEL MAR HOTEL

This luxurious resort at Manuel Antonio combines deluxe accommodation, wonderful views, access to its own secluded beach, and a setting that blends effortlessly into the surrounding rainforest without disturbing the wildlife.



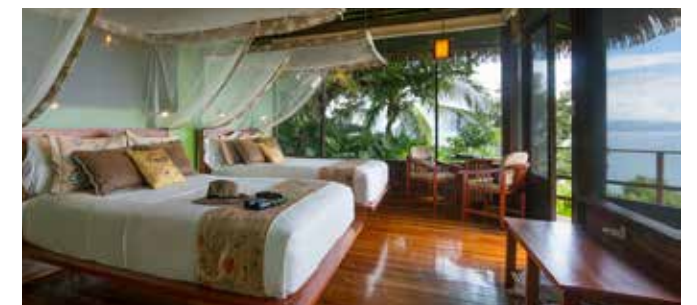
Violet Sabrewing Hummingbird

## SAMPLE ITINERARY

### WILDLIFE, MOUNTAINS, FORESTS AND BEACHES

What better combination can there be – the Caribbean jungle waterways of Tortuguero National Park, rich with wildlife and the most important breeding site of green sea turtles; the lava flows and fuming volcano of Arenal; and the cool Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, abounding with birds, reptiles and butterflies and finally the beautiful Osa Peninsula and Corcovado National Park.

- Day 1 Upon arrival at San Jose Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel.
- Day 2 Drive through Braulio Carrillo National Park to the Tortuguero Canals. Board a small boat to Tortuguero National Park.
- Day 3-4 From your lodge in the national park enjoy excursions by boat with your local guide and explore the lagoons and natural waterways of Tortuguero National Park. Here it's possible to see spider and howler monkeys, white-faced capuchins and sloths.
- Day 5 Enjoy a scenic trip to the Arenal volcano. After an afternoon of hikes and the option to take a dip in the thermal pools.
- Day 6 Relax on a scenic lake crossing to Monteverde followed by an optional afternoon of adventure at the Sky Trek Zipline & Tram tour.
- Day 7 Fly to Osa Peninsula, followed by a wonderful boat ride to your lodge. The Corcovado National Park is the last remaining Pacific lowland rainforest of sustainable size in Central America.
- Day 8-9 Enjoy a selection of tours within Corcovado National park including hiking, snorkelling, night walk.
- Day 10 Morning transfer back to airport. Take local flight to San Jose airport.



## LAPA RIOS ECO LODGE, OSA PENINSULA

A wonderful mix of comfort and conservation, these 16 private thatched bungalows have wooden-decked garden terraces that allow you to watch out for passing monkeys, toucans in the trees, and plenty of the famed scarlet macaws.





With perhaps the most friendly people in Latin America, this is the perfect place to escape crowds of tourists – on the international circuit, it is almost an undiscovered paradise! Mayan ruins hidden deep in the jungle, beautiful colonial cities like Antigua, small villages little touched by time, hotels that were once old monasteries, lakes, mountains, volcanoes – and just so much more ...



## TIKAL

This magnificent site contains some of the most fascinating archaeological remains of the Mayan civilisation – more than 3,000 pre-Hispanic temples, plazas, ceremonial platforms, and countless sculptures.

## SAMPLE ITINERARY

### BEST OF GUATEMALA

This compact trip can show you the highlights of Guatemala, not only the magic and mystery of the Mayan world but also the echoes of its impressive colonial past in its architecture, and the colour and culture and friendliness of its indigenous people.

- Day 1 Arrive Guatemala City, where you will be met and driven to Antigua, a city of colonial relics, pastel facades full of history and vibrant culture.
- Day 2 Your personal local guide will take you on a tour of Antigua – visit the old convents, churches, the museums, main plaza and the Palace of the Captains General.
- Day 3 Drive through the Guatemalan highlands to the lively town of Panajachel, located on Lake Atitlan, a collapsed volcanic cone.
- Day 4 Enjoy a boat ride across the beautiful Lake Atitlán stopping to visit traditional villages along the way.
- Day 5 Enjoy a scenic drive to Chichicastenango a small village in the highlands famous for its colourful market.
- Day 6 Morning visit to the “Chichi” market. This market reflects the customs of the ancient Maya who dedicated themselves to trade. Indians from all around the region stream into town to sell, buy, socialise and worship. Spend the evening in Guatemala City.
- Day 7 Today transfer to Guatemala City airport for the flight to Flores where you will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel in the jungle, on the shores of Lake Peten Itza.
- Day 8 Spend the day at Tikal National Park for a guided tour of the magnificent archaeological site of Tikal, dated 700 A.D.
- Day 9 Depart Flores and fly to Guatemala City.



## ANTIGUA

One of the best-preserved colonial cities in Central America, in a wonderful location overlooked by three soaring volcanoes, magical Antigua is the epitome of colonial splendour with some of the region’s most architecturally intact churches, houses and plazas.

## LAKE ATITLAN, PANAJACHEL & CHICHICASTENANGO

Beautiful Lake Atitlan is a spectacular crater lake dominated by volcanoes and surrounded by forested slopes. The lakeside and hillside settlements, such as Panajachel and Chichicastenango, are very colourful with lively Indian markets and are rich in Mayan culture.

## SAMPLE ACCOMMODATION



### PALACIO DE DOÑA LEONOR, ANTIGUA

Comprising 13 ornately decorated, colonial-style rooms arrayed around a luxuriant courtyard. Individually distinctive rooms feature antique furniture, with carved four-poster beds, chandeliers and hand-painted ceilings.



### EL CONVENTO HOTEL, ANTIGUA

A luxury all-suites boutique hotel, in a very quiet area in front of the superb 18th century Capuchinas Convent on one of Antigua’s beautifully aged cobblestone streets and only six blocks from the main square.





Cuba is the home of hot rumba rhythm, cool mojitos and Havana cigars, of flashy old American cars, cobblestone streets and charming Baroque architecture. It is also a country of white sand beaches and coral cays, forested mountains and lush, expansive wetlands. And above all Cuba is a land of friendly, generous and high-spirited people.



## HAVANA

Built around a deep natural harbour, Cuba's capital is one of the best surviving colonial cities in the Americas. Modern day Havana is a mixture of restored and crumbling architectural marvels. Art deco style buildings provide a backdrop for cruising 50s' American Cadillacs. The old district (Habana Vieja) has beautiful neoclassical and Baroque buildings.

## TRINIDAD

Little changed over centuries, Trinidad is reminiscent of the Spanish colonial era with Baroque church towers, wrought iron gates, cobble streets and pastel-painted traditional buildings with tiled rooftops. The surrounding countryside was one of the main areas of sugar plantation and slavery, and was frequented by smugglers until the late 1700s.

## SANTIAGO DE CUBA

Known as the 'birthplace of the revolution', Santiago has many imposing monuments marking events in the city's 500 year history, and attractions like the 17th century Spanish fortress, 'El Morro'. Santiago's inhabitants are a mix of Caribbean, Haitian and Spanish backgrounds, resulting in a strong music and dance culture.

## SAMPLE ITINERARY

### DISCOVER CUBA

- Day 1-2 Arrive Havana, enjoy a walking tour of old Havana.
- Day 3 Full day tour to Vinales Valley in Pinar del Rio province.
- Day 4-5 Fly to Santiago de Cuba and enjoy a city tour including El Morro Castle.
- Day 6 Drive to Bayamo where you will discover the rebellious spirit of Bayamo on a city tour. Afterward continue to Camaguey.
- Day 7 Spend the morning on a walking tour of Camaguey, a labyrinth of winding streets and white-washed houses. Drive to Trinidad, stopping on the way to explore Sancti Spiritus on a city tour.
- Day 8 Spend the morning on a tour of the Sugar Mills Valley. In the afternoon return to Trinidad for a walking tour and visit to museums.
- Day 9 Drive to Cienfuegos a beautiful city that displays both its Spanish colonial history and a strong French influence in its fine neoclassical architecture. Enjoy a city tour then return to Havana.
- Day 10 Depart your hotel this morning on a half-day tour through old colonial Havana in a vintage car.
- Day 11 Depart Havana.



## SAMPLE ACCOMMODATION



## HOMESTAYS

Homestays are an excellent option in Cuba and allow travellers to experience authentic Cuban hospitality. Although not as grand looking and without as many facilities as some hotels, they are usually spotlessly clean with excellent customer service. Travellers get insight into the local culture through the host family, as well as the opportunity to try classic Cuban and Creole home cooking.



## PARQUE CENTRAL HAVANA

Located on beautiful Central Park in the heart of Havana, the Parque Central comprises two buildings, a colonial section and modern tower. Whilst quite a large hotel, with 427 rooms, the service is very good and the location perfect.





A land of extremes, of vast deserts and lush rainforests, snow-capped volcanoes and tropical beaches, stretching south from the US border to the distant Yucatán Peninsula, and west from the Pacific Ocean across to the Caribbean. Mexico provides an exceptionally rich cultural experience, with visits to colonial cities, delightful artisans' towns, and breathtaking Mayan and Aztec ruins vying for your attention alongside tours to massive ancient pyramids and a spectacular train journey through the Copper Canyon.

### MEXICO CITY

A teeming cosmopolitan city sprawling across a valley in the central highlands, the capital is both exciting and somewhat overwhelming. It may not be everybody's favourite city, but there's no question that it is a wonderful centre for pre-Hispanic and colonial art and is the base for trips to Taxco, the Pyramids of the Moon and Sun, and the Shrine of Guadalupe. And you could easily spend many days visiting the museums and galleries in and around the city.

### COPPER CANYON

An unforgettable train journey through deep gorges, over 37 bridges and through 86 tunnels, is a wonderful way for you to discover north-western Mexico's Copper Canyon. This remarkable area comprises not one but more than 20 canyons which together are four times bigger than the Grand Canyon. Travelling through pine forests skirting the very edges of the canyons, all the way from the coastal plains to the arid heart of Mexico, you can spend each night in a village inn, giving you the opportunity to experience some of the local colour.

### PALENQUE

Looming out of the dense Chiapas jungle and covering an area of 15 sq. km, the exquisite Mayan ruins you see here today date from the empire's peak in the 7th century and represent barely 10% of the spectacular complex of palaces, temples and terraces still to be excavated. During Palenque's peak, they would have been painted a vivid red with embellishments of yellow and blue and the effect would have been dazzling against the dark foliage. Many visitors believe Palenque to be Mexico's most alluring and beautiful archaeological site.

### OAXACA

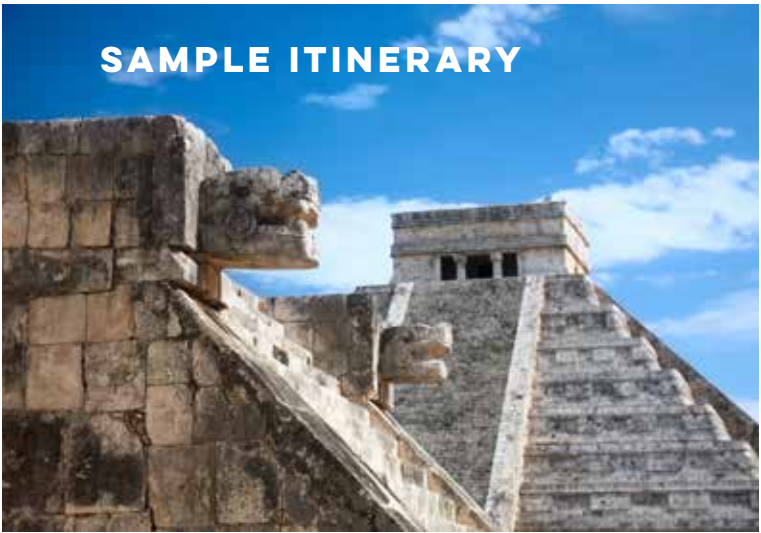
A world away is beautiful Oaxaca, founded in 1529 in a valley encircled by the Sierra Madre del Mountains. Once the centre of Mixtec and Zapotec civilisations, the city's historic centre and the archaeological zone of Monte Alban have been declared World Heritage sites. Downtown is easily explored on foot, there are first class museums and galleries, and the main square is the place for promenading, eating and people-watching. Oaxaca has arguably the finest handicrafts in Mexico and traditional markets which have existed for hundreds of years.

### YUCATÁN PENINSULA

Located at the south-eastern tip of Mexico and surrounded on three sides by water (the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea and Yucatán Channel), the Yucatán Peninsula offers thousands of years of fascinating Mayan history and amazing ruins (boasting more archaeological sites than Belize and Guatemala together), beautiful colonial cities, stunning beaches and natural beauty. The main areas of interest are Merida, Uxmal, Chichen Itza and Tulum.

### MERIDA

Built more than 470 years ago on the site of the ancient Mayan city of T'ho, Merida is the capital of the Yucatán state. Sometimes known as the 'White City' because of its abundant use of limestone, it is a prosperous and bustling centre of narrow streets, colonial architecture, and horse-drawn carriages. Although now home to almost a million people, it still retains its colonial charm and is an excellent base for exploring some of the most renowned of the Mayan archaeological sites, like remarkable Uxmal and Chichen Itza.



### SAMPLE ITINERARY

### BEST OF MEXICO

Colonial cities, markets, historic ruins and vibrant colour – this tour has it all! You'll see Teotihuacan and the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon in Mexico City, the beautiful town of Oaxaca, and the archaeological ruins of Monte Alban and Mitla. Visit San Cristobal de las Casas with all its charm; travel to the Mayan site of Palenque. Fly to the colonial city of Merida and visit the renowned Mayan sites of Uxmal and Kabah. Travel overland to the impressive Chichen Itza ruins, and on to the famous beach resort of Playa del Carmen for some Caribbean sun and fun.

- Day 1 Arrive Mexico City, set in a highland basin surrounded by towering mountains.
- Day 2 Enjoy a full day city tour with your personal local guide and visit to the Museum of Anthropology.
- Day 3 Experience the ancient sites of Teotihuacan, Sun and Moon Pyramids and the impressive Temple of Quetzalcoatl and the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe on a full day guided tour.

- Day 4 Fly to Oaxaca, an attractive and colourful city. The streets in the historic centre are lined with superb examples of Spanish colonial architecture.
- Day 5 Visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of Monte Albán, one of Mexico's most spectacular archaeological sites with wonderful 360-degree views over the city, valleys and distant mountains.
- Day 6 Visit the Mesoamerican site of Mitla which features exquisite architecture and stone mosaics then continue to the ancient Tule tree, approximately 2,000 years old.
- Day 7 Fly to Tuxtla Gutierrez, then embark on a boat ride down the Grijalva River to see the impressive Sumidero Canyon. Spend the night at the highland colonial town of San Cristobal de las Casas.
- Day 8 Begin today with a guided walking tour to the colourful market and the colonial centre before visiting the surrounding indigenous villages.
- Day 9 Drive to Palenque via Tonina, a pre-Columbian archaeological site and ruined city of the Maya civilization located in what is now the Mexican state of Chiapas. Overnight Palenque.
- Day 10 Visit the ruins of Palenque, situated on the fringe of the Chiapas jungle.
- Day 11 Fly to Merida, the capital city of Yucatan State, and known as the 'White City' because of the extensive use of white limestone.
- Day 12 Tour to ancient Mayan ruins of Uxmal. Visit the Nuns' Quadrangle, the House of Governors and the House of the Turtles before continuing on to the smaller ruined city of Kabah.
- Day 13 Today you will have a tour of Chichen Itza, the most spectacular Mayan temples, and then continue to Playa del Carmen.
- Day 14 Enjoy a day at leisure to enjoy the sun in Playa del Carmen.
- Day 15 Transfer from Playa del Carmen to Cancun Airport.







# MULTI-COUNTRY ITINERARIES

Most of our clients will combine several countries into one longer journey and here is just one way of linking Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Bolivia. Any section of this sample itinerary can be done separately, combined with other different tours, or extended to include particular activities and areas of interest to you.

## SOUTH AMERICAN CIRCUIT - 37 DAYS

Offering an exceptional opportunity to experience the diversity and highlights of South America, this trip really has everything. Journey across the lakes and mountains of the Chilean Andes to Argentina's alpine areas, tango in Buenos Aires, gaze in wonder at the mighty Iguazu Falls. Enjoy a bird's-eye view of Rio from atop Corcovado mountain, cruise the Amazon River, fly over the curious Nazca Lines etched deep into the dark surface of a desert. Feel the ancient magic of Peru's Inca cities, explore colonial Cuzco and the Sacred Valley, and stand awestruck on the misty eyrie of Machu Picchu. And cross the high altiplano on a remarkable train journey to the shores of Lake Titicaca before travelling on to La Paz in Bolivia.

South America is so much more than you might expect! An extraordinary diversity of cultures, of ancient ruins, stately colonial cities and colourful Indian villages, of spectacular landscapes, amazing wildlife and wilderness, art, handicrafts and cuisine. Each country has its own identity and attractions and the breadth of experiences awaiting you is almost limitless. We know the joy of travelling to these fascinating destinations and, with so much to discover, a dedicated specialist with first hand knowledge can design a holiday created around your personal preferences.

- Day 1 Arrive in Santiago
- Day 2 Santiago sightseeing Tour
- Day 3 Fly to Rio de Janeiro
- Days 4-5 Full Day Rio Tour
- Day 6 Fly to Iguassu Falls - explore the Brazilian side
- Day 7 Iguazu Falls Argentine side
- Day 8 Fly to Buenos Aires
- Day 9 City Tour and Tango show in the evening
- Day 10 Day at leisure
- Day 11 Fly from Buenos Aires to Mendoza

- Day 12 Mendoza Winery
- Day 13 Fly to Santiago/ connect to Atacama
- Days 14-15 Explore Atacama
- Day 16 Fly from Atacama/Santiago/Lima
- Day 17 Lima Sightseeing & optional cooking class
- Day 18 Fly from Lima to Puerto Maldonado - Amazon Lodge
- Days 19-20 Explore Amazon AM & PM excursions
- Day 21 Fly from Puerto Maldonado to Cuzco - transfer to the Sacred Valley
- Day 22 Full Day tour of the Sacred Valley
- Day 23 PM Train from Ollantaytambo to Machu Picchu - overnight stay
- Day 24 Machu Picchu 2nd day entrance, afternoon train to Cuzco
- Days 25-26 Explore Cuzco
- Day 27 Andean Explorer train from Cuzco to Puno
- Day 28 Taquile and Uros Islands
- Day 29 Fly from Juliaca to Lima/overnight at airport hotel
- Day 30 Fly from Lima to Quito - Transfer to Otavalo - overnight at Hacienda
- Day 31 Otavalo touring and return to Quito
- Day 32 Quito Sightseeing
- Day 33 Fly to Galapagos Islands 5 day cruise
- Days 34-36 Galapagos
- Day 37 Return to Ecuador - overnight in Guayaquil
- Day 38 Fly Guayaquil to Santiago

Please call us and we will design an itinerary to meet your personal travel requirements.



# TAILOR-MADE JOURNEYS

Whether you wish to travel around a specific country in Latin America or you want to experience several countries in a longer tour, from Mexico to Antarctica we can design an itinerary for you. Our staff have travelled extensively throughout these regions and we can look after all aspects of your holiday, including flights and travel insurance.

## THE ART OF TAILOR-MAKING

We start by asking you lots of questions – where to, when, for how long, what standard and style of accommodation (it can be a combination – for example, you may wish to celebrate a special occasion while you're away by staying in a very special property or place), and whether you have any particular personal interests you might like to incorporate. Once we have a good understanding of just what you're looking for, only then can we begin to create a holiday to meet your time and budgetary requirements and, most importantly, that will deliver interest and enjoyment in an experience to exceed your expectations.

Our sample itineraries are just that – suggestions, based on our extensive knowledge and experience – and all of them can be changed around, pulled apart or added to, in almost any way you might want!

The overall cost will depend on what you'd like to do, where and when you go and for how long, as well as the standard and style of accommodation you'd prefer, the included activities, high or low travel seasons, private or shared guides and transport – an infinite number of variables. No two travel plans will be alike.

Our itineraries use a range of accommodation from 3 to 5 Star and we can recommend all kinds of delightful and interesting properties – chic-modern or Old World-opulent, rustic lodge or colonial hacienda, cosy boutique or 21st century-wow!, or a combination of any of these – depending on your personal tastes and financial parameters.

## A GUIDE TO THE WEATHER

Latin America is a huge area and straddles both hemispheres. You can travel to Latin America year-round and there's no single 'best time to go' – major attractions and regions will be at their best at different times, according to the seasons and the country or area. Please go to the specific Country pages of our website for relevant weather information and our useful advice particular to that country.

[www.southamericatravelcentre.com.au](http://www.southamericatravelcentre.com.au)

## PLEASE BOOK EARLY

Many of the hotels, lodges and cruise vessels we recommend are relatively small. This exclusivity combined with high demand means they can be booked out up to 6-8 months in advance. If you're thinking of travelling during any major holidays like Christmas, New Year and Easter, or during any festivals, our advice is simply to book as early as you can, even 12 months or more ahead, and we can add flights as soon as they become available.

## HOW TO BOOK

Once you have made your final decision about your arrangements, contact our office or your travel agent to place your reservation. You should carefully read the Booking Conditions (Page 83) and complete our booking form – available on our website or it can be sent to you on request. At this time a non-refundable deposit of 10% of the total holiday cost or \$550.00 per person, whichever is the greater, will be required. Additional deposits may be required for some cruises and some accommodation reservations and these will be advised to you at time of booking. Please note that all reservations are subject to availability.

## SUBSCRIBE

If you would like to keep in touch with news from Latin America and Antarctica, subscribe to our online quarterly newsletter 'The Llama's Tale'.

[www.southamericatravelcentre.com.au](http://www.southamericatravelcentre.com.au)



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# ANTARCTICA

## FALKLAND ISLANDS & SOUTH GEORGIA

Discover the sheer magic that is Antarctica, the Falklands and South Georgia – unquestionably a life-changing experience! A stunningly beautiful wilderness with dramatic mountains, magnificent icebergs, glaciers and fjords, endless expanses of ice and snow, and amazing wildlife – penguins, seabirds, whales and seals. The vivid images you will take away from this pristine continent will ensure it becomes your most unforgettable travel adventure.



### ANTARCTIC PENINSULA & SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS

Astonishing landscape and close encounters with an abundance of wildlife including penguins, whales, seals, sea lions and albatrosses. There are over 100 sites that can be visited on the Peninsula – if early season icebergs allow access, two highlights are the Lemaire Channel, an 11km-long strait between the Antarctic continent and Booth Island, and Deception Island, the flooded caldera of an active volcano accessed through a narrow gap.



### FALKLAND ISLANDS

Longer voyages include the Falkland Islands archipelago, very different to both the Peninsula and South Georgia. A few days here are well spent with some great walks, interesting history and diverse wildlife. There are many scattered reminders of the 1982 Falklands War and an excellent museum in Port Stanley. But it is the wildlife that is the highpoint of any visit here: five species of penguins and two endemic bird species, as well as sea lions and elephant seals – making it well worth the extra time to visit!

### SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND

One of the most stunning places on earth, this small archipelago literally rears up from the Southern Ocean to a height of almost 3,000 metres. The rugged landscape forms a dramatic backdrop to the many beaches and coves which are home to millions of penguins and petrels, thousands of elephant and fur seals and hundreds of albatrosses. The island is also the resting place of the great explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton. It's hard to choose one highlight – King penguins are hard to beat – but our advice is South Georgia's a must.



## ANTARCTIC SHIPS

Antarctica, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia provide extraordinary experiences for all who visit. We've selected seven of the best ships to deliver you to these wondrous wilderness areas, organised into four categories:

#### LUXURY:

SILVER EXPLORER, SILVER CLOUD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION, LE BORÉAL, LE LYRIAL & LE SOLEAL

These ships combine more traditional style 'cruising' with an Antarctic adventure. They offer large, very comfortable cabins with en-suite facilities; many suites have private balconies. And they also offer excellent cuisine.

#### EXPEDITION:

AKADEMIK IOFFE, AKADEMIK SERGEY VAVILOV, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER

These ships, and their clients, generally have a greater emphasis on maximising time off the vessel or out on deck. The expedition team work closely with the ship's captain and crew. Cabins are comfortable, the food excellent and the crew passionate and knowledgeable.

#### FLY-CRUISE:

OCEAN NOVA, HEBRIDEAN SKY

A flight from Punta Arenas in Chile to King George Island (the largest of the South Shetlands Islands) on the Antarctic Peninsula allows guests to avoid the sea crossing of Drake Passage, as well as affording a visit to Antarctica in a shorter period of time.

While different styles, all vessels have key characteristics in common:

- All ships and their operators are well known by us and we know they will safely deliver a high quality operation
- For the safety of the guests and crew and the safety of the environment, all vessels have two engines (or, in the case of Ocean Nova, an auxiliary engine that can bring the ship back to port)
- All are IAATO members (as are we)
- All operate with a high ratio of crew to guests



#### One of your toughest decisions will be which voyage to choose?

Most ships offer variations of the following three voyages from Ushuaia (durations may differ slightly and some may include a pre-voyage night in Ushuaia):

#### Antarctic Peninsula - 10 nights

(Fly-Cruise - 7-nights; if short of time or prefer not to cross Drake Passage)

#### Antarctic Circle - 13 nights

#### Falkland Islands, South Georgia & Antarctic Peninsula - 18 nights

Our advice is to seriously consider if your time and budget will stretch to a longer voyage that includes South Georgia with all its stunning beauty and accessible wildlife. But whatever your choice, it will be an exceptional experience and we are confident you will certainly have that 'trip of a lifetime'.

For detailed information and full details of the cruise itineraries, the vessels, and dates and prices, please refer to our dedicated Antarctica website:

[www.antarcticatravelcentre.com.au](http://www.antarcticatravelcentre.com.au)

Or call to speak with one of our Antarctica experts on: **1300 668 112**

Antarctica Travel Centre is a division of Tailor-Made Journeys Pty Ltd





Together, further.



## LATAM Airlines, South America's leading airline.

Offers the best network and connectivity in the region and has one of the most modern and diverse fleets in the industry. From Sydney, LATAM operates a Boeing 787-9 seven days a week to Santiago, Chile, via Auckland and four direct services to Santiago in codeshare with a **oneworld** partner.

LATAM Airlines offers an unparalleled network servicing more than 135 destinations across 25 countries, including 115 South American locations within Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Uruguay and Paraguay as well as the all time favourites Cuba and Mexico.

## BOOKING CONDITIONS

**Please read the following booking conditions carefully and make sure you understand them before booking your holiday. By paying your non-refundable deposit, or by making full payment, you acknowledge you have read, understand and agree to be bound by these Booking Conditions.**

### TOUR COSTS

Costs will be based on ground costs, airfares and exchange rates at the time of booking. While we make every effort not to increase prices, in the event of exchange rate fluctuations, increases in hotel rates, airfares, entrance fees, fuel costs or increases in ground operator fees, we reserve the right to amend our prices, with or without notice, at any time up to and including the day of departure. Acceptance of this arrangement is an express condition of making a booking.

### NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR TOUR COSTS

Airfares unless otherwise stated, visa and passport costs, travel insurance, excess baggage, airport departure and ticket taxes, laundry, postage, telephone calls and items of a personal nature, vaccination and medical expenses, meals not mentioned on itinerary, beverages, and gratuities.

### INSURANCE

It is a condition of booking with South America Travel Centre that you take out comprehensive travel insurance for the full duration of your holiday. We suggest that you take out insurance at the time of booking and that the policy should include, but not be limited to, the following features: loss of deposit through cancellation; injury; death; theft; loss of luggage and personal items; curtailment of tours en route; medical expenses; cancellation of advance purchase airfares; additional expenses to cover hotel accommodation and repatriation costs to Australia should your tour need to be extended or curtailed due to illness while overseas, or due to a need to return because of an unexpected death or illness of a close relative.

### CHANGES AND TRANSFERS

Should you wish to change your booking after confirmation has been advised, a fee of \$75.00 per booking will be levied on each change made. Any changes requested by you after final documentation has been issued will incur a fee of \$150.00 per booking plus any other fees levied by hotels, ground/ cruise operators and/or airlines. We will do our best to process and obtain confirmation for your changes but it is important to realise that changes, especially close to departure date, can take some time to confirm and some may not be possible. If you wish to transfer to another tour operating within 12 months of your original departure date, the following charges apply:

- Transfers made more than 60 days\* prior to departure
- \$220.00 per person plus any applicable airfare charges
- Transfers made from 59 days up to original day of departure - charged as per cancellation fees

\* Many cruises, in particular to the Amazon and Antarctica, require transfers to be made at least 90 to 120 days prior to departure; you will be advised of the individual conditions at time of booking.

### ITINERARY VARIATIONS

It is possible that circumstances beyond our control may necessitate a route or itinerary change and, in the event of such an occurrence, we reserve the right to cancel or re-schedule tour departures and itineraries. Where it is necessary to change a hotel, we reserve the right to substitute accommodation of a similar standard. No refund will be available in the event of an itinerary or hotel change.

### CANCELLATION

If it becomes necessary for you to cancel your tour, you must notify us in writing. Upon receipt of your notification, cancellation will take effect. If cancellation occurs more than 60 days\* prior to the scheduled departure you will forfeit your deposit and be liable for any penalties levied by hotels, ground/ cruise operators and/or airlines. If cancellation occurs between 59-30 days prior to the scheduled departure, a fee of \$550.00 or 50% of the cost of the tour, whichever is the greater, will be charged per person, plus any additional hotel/ operator/airline penalties. No refund will be made for cancellations within 30 days prior to the scheduled departure.

\*Many cruises, in particular to the Amazon and Antarctica, require cancellations to be made at least 90 to 120 days prior to departure; you will be advised of the individual conditions at time of booking.

### FORCE MAJEURE

South America Travel Centre has the right in the case of force majeure (e.g. war, uprising and, natural disasters, abnormal/exceptional weather and ice conditions, legal stipulations of the local/ regional authorities, and other "acts of God") to cancel your trip. South America Travel Centre or its representatives will try to offer you alternative arrangements, and if the price of your alternative booking is of lower value than the original booking we will refund the difference to you. If you do not accept the alternative arrangements, we will refund all payments you have made to South America Travel Centre, less any unrecoverable costs. South America Travel Centre will not be liable for any additional costs incurred by you.

If situations of force majeure occur during the trip, South America Travel Centre or its representatives will try to offer an alternative program. If this should prove impossible, either South America Travel Centre, its representative, or you are entitled to cancel the trip. In such a case, South America Travel Centre may not be held financially liable.

South America Travel Centre or your travel agent is obliged to assist you in obtaining a return trip/flight; however, in such a case, you are responsible for any costs incurred. South America Travel Centre is not liable for costs incurred by you in preparation of the tour, nor for reservations of travel components (such as, but not limited to, flights, hotels, connecting programs, travel insurance), which are booked elsewhere in combination with the trip booked with South America Travel Centre.

### REFUND/UNUSED SERVICES

No refund is available for cancellation after travel has commenced. If you make any alteration to any portion of your holiday while you are away, costs incurred by such alteration will be at your own expense. After the holiday has commenced, no refunds are available for any services/ground content provided in the tour price but not utilised by you for any reason.

### HEALTH AND IMMIGRATION

It is your responsibility to inform South America Travel Centre of any pre-existing medical conditions and/or disability that could reasonably be expected to affect your booking, as well as the enjoyment of others on the trip. You may be asked to provide an evaluation of your medical condition and/or disability by a certified medical practitioner (it is a condition of booking a trip to Antarctica that all clients complete a Medical Form). Based on this evaluation South America Travel Centre reserves the right, at its reasonable discretion, to refuse your participation on a trip and/or cancel your booking.

You should familiarise yourself with any health or visa requirements that may be applicable in the areas you intend visiting, and you shall be responsible for all exit, entry, health and other documents required by laws, regulations, orders, demands or requirements of the countries visited or transited. You shall carry a valid passport at all times. Passport, visa and vaccination requirements are not our responsibility or that of your agent and we are not liable for any loss or expense due to your failure to comply with the above.

### CONSULAR ADVICE

We recommend you contact the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for current official travel advice concerning the countries you will visit.

### COMMON SENSE

Common sense and ordinary care before and during travel must be exercised. We cannot be held responsible for problems, damage or loss of enjoyment brought about by a lack of reasonable care, understanding or attention by you.

### DOCUMENTATION

It is your responsibility to check all air tickets and vouchers immediately upon receipt and to contact us immediately if you believe any bookings have been made incorrectly or necessary documentation has been omitted. Please note that route maps provided by us are for general information and may not necessarily indicate exact routes. South America Travel Centre has done its utmost to ensure that all tour descriptions, information and documentation issued is accurate in any printed or online media, brochure or publication. This information provided is given in good faith; however, things change and some of the information may become out of date. South America Travel Centre shall not be liable for any injury, damage or loss caused by any unintended inaccuracy.

### AIRLINE RESPONSIBILITY CLAUSE

This brochure is not issued on behalf of and does not commit any airline whose services are used in the course of our tours, such services being subject to the airline's conditions of contract.

### RESPONSIBILITY

These booking conditions form part of the general conditions. Payment of a deposit is an acknowledgement that you have read, understood and accept the terms and conditions of South America Travel Centre and that we act only as an agent for carriers, hotels, ground operators, coach companies and suppliers of other travel services (suppliers) used on these tours. All bookings are subject to the terms and conditions of the liability imposed by the other suppliers, some of whom limit or exclude liability in respect of death, personal injury, delay, loss of or damage to baggage.

All tickets, vouchers and documents are issued subject to the terms and conditions under which the suppliers provide the services. We accept no responsibility for carrier-caused delays, schedule changes, sickness or accidents. You accept that you may be travelling through areas of political or climatic instability, high altitude and remote areas, and areas without proper medical services, and you accept the associated risks. Should we deem it desirable for political, climatic or other reasons to amend or vary any itinerary, we may do so by shortening, varying or completely re-routing the trip in which case no objection will be made by the participant. You authorise the company and its suppliers to take all necessary action in respect of medical treatment and emergency evacuation and agree that all associated costs are to be paid by you. The terms and conditions are incapable of alteration or waiver by us or any agent and by making a booking you, your next of kin, heirs, administrators and executors accept all the conditions of contract and are bound by them.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

In the unlikely event that you should have a complaint about your services offered by South America Travel Centre, we urge you to bring this up with your guide, the tour/expedition leader or company representative immediately so that we can attempt to rectify the issue.

If at the end of the trip you feel that your complaint has not been adequately dealt with, you must notify us in writing no later than 30 days after the end date of the services South America Travel Centre has provided.

### PRIVACY & PUBLICITY

You agree that South America Travel Centre may use images taken of you, without recourse and/or compensation to you. Such images will only be used for promotional and publicity purposes in whichever media South America Travel Centre finds appropriate. In order to supply services to you South America Travel Centre needs to collect certain personal details from you. This information will be disclosed to our suppliers and representatives for the purpose of organising and operating your tour or expedition but will not be used for any other purpose. More information on publicity and privacy can be found at: <http://southamericatravelcentre.com.au/privacy-policy>

### LAW OF CONTRACT

This contract shall be governed by the laws of the state of Victoria, Australia and any legal action arising from it shall be only under the jurisdiction of Victorian courts.

### Tailor-Made Journeys Pty Ltd trading

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