



ARGENTINA TOURS

MENDOZA, SAN JUAN, LA RIOJA & CATAMARCA IN 14 DAYS

We add the Catamarca province travelling up to the Cuesta del Portezuelo, we enter a magical and charming site: Laguna Brava (Lake) visiting the two wonders of the region: The Talampaya and the Valle Fértil, in La Rioja and San Juan respectively. We visit the capital cities of these 4 beautiful provinces of the center-north in Argentina.

14 DAYS - 13 NIGHTS

- Accommodation in double room with breakfast
- Transfers detailed itinerary
- Regular excursions listed in the itinerary (except optional)
- Bilingual English Spanish Guide
- Permanent coordination

Day 1 - Knowing Mendoza

Welcome to Argentina. Reception and transfer from Ezeiza International Airport (Buenos Aires City) to Jorge Newbery Airport. Transfer from Mendoza Airport to the hotel.

We dedicate half a day to visit the city of Mendoza, famous for its legendary trees, wide sidewalks and its great order and cleanliness. Founded over 400 years ago by the first colonists, this city offers a lot of history and culture. We will visit La Alameda, the historical zone where Pedro del Castillo founded this large city in 1561, where most shops and civic life was concentrated until it disappeared with the 1861 earthquake. The town council was, in the old days, where the Foundational Area Museum is nowadays. There are still remains of what once was the San Francisco church. We continue to the new city, post-earthquake. We visit its principal avenues, the downtown, the Plaza Independencia

(Independence Square), the civic neighbourhood with the Government House, the Law Courts and the General San Martin Park going along the Civit Avenue, entering the park through the Portones (Gates). We can enjoy the beautiful woods in the park, as well as the Rosedal (rose garden) next to the lake and the clubs located in the area. We also meet the Caballitos de Marly (Marly Little Horses, replica of the ones in Paris), the Fuente de los Continentes (the Fountain of the Continents), etc. Then we climb the Cerro de La Gloria (The Glory Mount) where there is a monument to the Ejercito Libertador (the Liberator Army) and very near it, the Greek theatre Frank Romero Day.

Day 2 - The Wine Road: Wineries in Mendoza

We will see the true transformation of the place during this program. The wine industry, with the man's effort, has made the desert disappear and turn into an oasis thanks to canalization and ditches which were the irrigation systems that the Huarpes and Incas natives created. Nowadays the computerized watering technique is used, being Argentina one of the most important producers worldwide.

We will go through the first wine-region in Mendoza which spans on Maipu and Lujan de Cuyo departments. Along our road, we find family wineries producing handcrafted wine such as the one of the Cecchin Family or Cavas de Don Arturo that produce organic wines. There are also industrial wineries in the zone such as La Rural, Finca Flichman, Cavas de Weinert o Zuccardi. We visit one to two wineries where experts receive us, teach us about the wine manufacture process and then we taste wines of international quality. Depending on the program we might also visit a factory that produces olive oil.

Note: This program can be performed during the morning or the afternoon. Depending on the time we visit an industrial production winery and another one of organic production. If we go in the afternoon we also go to an olive oil factory, if we go in the morning, we don't. The possible wineries could be: La Rural, López, Cavas de Weinert, Cavas de Don Arturo, San Huberto, Zuccardi and Cecchin Family. In Winter, the tour depends on the snow and the conditions of the roads as long as National Gendarmerie authorizes

the vehicles to go by. The ascent to the Cristo Redentor (Christ The Redeemer) is performed between January and February.

Day 4 - Atuel Canyon

Breakfast at the hotel. We set off from San Rafael towards the Cuesta de los Terneros to go to Dique Valle Grande and the Atuel river. We stop at the San Francisco de Asis lookout point to enjoy a terrific sight of the city and the canyon. After several kilometres we enter El Nihuil which is impressive for the depth of its lake. We rest and may have lunch (not included). We set off to the Atuel Canyon, to be trapped by a landscape of pure beauty, typical of the andean ecosystem, due to the erosive action of winds and water creating natural sculptures becoming awesome landforms, fanciful shapes of mother nature such as Museo de Cera (Wax Museum), el Lagarto (the Alligator), Los Monstruos (the Monsters), Los Jardines Colgantes (The Hanging Gardens) or La Ciudad Encantada (The Haunted City), etc. The canyon is formed by the Atuel river, Valle Grande Reservoir and El Nihuil. We make a short

walk along the canyon to arrive at the Valle Grande. The ones who want adventure tourism, can enjoy rafting, rappel or a boat voyage (all these activities must be booked at destination).

Optional: Rafting in Mendoza

Breakfast at the hotel. The Cañon del Atuel river is a synonym of rafting and is famous in all the country for its rapids and the transparency of its water which combine with the beauty of the place. The river is navigable every month except June with a difficulty level 2, based on the international scale from 0 to 6, its average depth is 1,20 meters. The rapids of Atuel and Diamante rivers are excellent to practise this sport, Grande river is another option.

Day 4 - By the Andes Mountain Range bordering the Rio Mendoza

Breakfast at the hotel. This program takes us to the limit with Chile crossing the Cordillera de los Andes (Andean Mountain Range) along the Routes 40 and 7 bordering the Mendoza river. We go by the Potrerillo Reservoir which contains the Mendoza river waters and along the Uspallata Valley dividing the foothills from the mountain range. We make a short detour to visit the Picheuta Bridge, a real milestone as General Jose de San Martin crossed it with The Andean Army when crossing the Andes. We will visit the most imposing Andean massif, the Aconcagua Mount, with its 6.962 meters over sea level and we watch the Puente del Inca (Inca Bridge), which is a natural bridge with a famous history and thermal waters. We stop at the entrance of the park to make a short walk to be able to watch the southern side of the Aconcagua and enjoy the sight of the Horcones Lake. The journey continues along the Route 7 and takes us to the ski resort Los Penitentes, up to the border town of Las Cuevas and with good weather we climb to the Cristo Redentor Monument (Christ The Redeemer). We can optionally have lunch (not included) to return later to Mendoza city.

Day 5 - Visiting Mendoza Wineries: Malbec Wine Tradition

Breakfast at hotel. To go after a good Malbec we must travel up to Lujan de Cuyo, there we go. We stop at the Lagarde Winery with an exquisite gourmet lunch washed down with wines from the winery. The road is among vineyards, fruit trees and olive trees towards another winery, but of handicraft production. This family business is dedicated to organic wines production. Then we continue our wine route but now to know an industrial winery. Then we continue to visit an olive oil factory. In the background we can enjoy the beautiful Cordon del Plata mountains.

Note: The possible wineries to be visited are principally Lagarde, Lopez or Flichman and as handicraft wineries, Cecchin Family, Cavas Don Arturo or San Huberto, among others. The program covers a visit to 2 wineries.

Day 6 - The wine Route of San Juan: Vineyards and wineries

Traslado desde el hotel a la terminal de buses de Mendoza. Recepción en la terminal de buses de San Juan y traslado al hotel. Por la tarde vamos a visitar las bodegas más importantes de la provincia de San Juan, degustaremos algunos de los vinos premiados a nivel mundial, conociendo el proceso de elaboración desde su inicio en la misma tierra hasta su llegada a la mesa de los hogares. Hay dos rutas del vino en San Juan, la ruta sur donde se destacan vinos, champaña y licores, ellas son Viñas de Segisa, Fabril Alto Verde, Miguel Más y Las Marianas. La otra ruta es la oeste, aquí conocemos la historia del vino sanjuanino, sobresalen Bodegas y Museo Santiago Graffigna, Merced del Estero que es una bodega boutique, además de establecimientos para la producción de frutos secos, oliva y aceto.

Day 7 - Barreal, Valle de Calingasta & Pampa del Leoncito (Astronomical Observatory)

We set off to Pampa del Leoncito, then we go to the Astronomical Observatory and the Cerro Alcázar. During this mountain road, we see the cerro Villicúm, the Quebrada de las Burras, Talacasto town, entering Calingasta up to the Barreal. From there we go to Pampa del Leoncito where wind-car is practised thanks to the sustained winds that blow more than 80km per hour. The wind-car is a small vehicle with 2 car wheels at the back and a motorbike wheel at the front, it has a fuselage and a mast made of aluminium to be light and be able to move with great impulse. The Pampa del Leoncito also called Barreal Blanco is a geological structure next to the Barreal town, where a natural reserve has been created. It is a plain with arid and cracked soil 15km long per 5km wide, which before was the bottom basin of a lake, without vegetation of any kind, similar to a spider web.

The vision is atypical and the white colour is very deep. We can observe the impressive Mercedario Mount 6,772m high and then have lunch at the Barreal. It is the most important tourist centre of the valley, a town with dirt streets and beautiful poplars, where we will also visit the astronomical complex El Leoncito. It is an observatory located at the foot of the mountain range, 2,500m over sea level, in the San Juan Astronomical Reserve, occupying almost 70,000 hectares, being an excellent place to observe the space. Once again in San Juan, we will enjoy a spectacular view of the Cerro Alcázar.

Day 8 - North of San Juan: Jáchal, Cuesta del Viento and Rodeo

Breakfast at the hotel. We take the Ruta 40 towards the north of San Juan province, leaving the San Juan river behind, going through towns like Albardón, Matagusanos, Talacasto and next to Villicúm Mount we arrive at San José de Jáchal city, where we learn about its indigenous cultures. We change direction to the west to the central Andean foothill along a mountain road discovering unique sights.

We visit Cuesta del Viento, ideal place to practise nautical sports such as windsurf, then we go to Rodeo, small mountain town next to the Dique Cuesta del Viento, hydroelectrical dam with a mirror of crystalline water of a turquoise colour. We continue with the itinerary to Pismanta, where the famous thermal water complex is, mixing the arid desert with the green oasis, being one of the nicest places in San Juan. Its thermal water has healing, therapeutics and rejuvenating effects, ideal for rheumatism and skin diseases. We return to San Juan capital by Las Flores and Bella Vista, foothills road climbing up the slope to arrive at the highest zone at El Colorado. Then, in Talacasto we go back to the Ruta 40 to enter San Juan.

Day 9 - Ischigualasto Provincial Park: Fertile Valley and Valley of the Moon

Breakfast at the hotel. We leave towards Valle Fértil, going through the Difunta Correa Sanctuary in the town of Vallecito, San Juan. There is a great popular devotion from Catholic people although she was not recognized by the Catholic Church. Her followers believe in her miracles and consider her a popular Saint, worshipped as a Goddess. We arrive at the Ischigualasto Provincial Park to discover the Valle de la Luna and its five stations.

This park has an extension of 62.000 hectares and is 330km away from San Juan capital city. It boasts a considerable paleontological and geological patrimony, UNESCO declared it as Natural Heritage of Humanity in the year 2000. Ischigualasto belongs to the Triassic period, 300 million years ago, and it is an accurate representation of those times when the first mammals and dinosaurs spread. It was in these lands where one of the oldest dinosaurs, the Eoraptor Lunensis was found. Its principal landforms are: El Gusano, Valle Pintado, Cancha de Bochas, El Submarino, El Hongo and Los Colorados. We go back to Valle Fértil in the afternoon, where we will spend the night.

Day 10 - Talampaya National Park, La Rioja

Breakfast at the hotel. We get up early to leave San Juan province and travel to La Rioja province to Villa Unión to visit the Talampaya National Park. Villa Unión has 6,000 inhabitants and is located on a valley between the foothills of the Andes and the formidable Famatina mountain range, 60km away from the park. Talampaya is a natural reserve with sites of great archaeological-paleontological value due to the number of fossils found, such as the Lagosuchus Talampayensis, dinosaur of the Mesozoic era. To sum up, this park is a product of the intense tectonic movements and wind erosion produced during millions of years. It has 215,000 hectares and it is famous for its incredible red rock cliffs and the wind sculptured eroded figures where condors nest. Its rocks belong to the Triassic period in the Mesozoic Era where the first dinosaurs' pawprints are found. The return journey to San Juan is through the majestic Cuesta de Huaco.

Day 11 - Chilecito, Cuesta del Miranda, Nonogasta

Breakfast at the hotel. We say goodbye to Villa Unión to go to La Rioja through Cuesta de Miranda, caught between the Sierras de Famatina and the Sierras de Sañogasta (small mountain ranges). These hills have one of the few good roads linking the Valle de Chilecito with Cuyo. It is the obliged route to join Villa Unión with Chilecito. The Cuesta de Miranda shows a landscape full of different reddish shades, a path that draws a silhouette between the hills and the canyon of the river with the same name, ending in an edge road with stunning curves and gullies. Before that, we had entered Chilecito, the second important city in La Rioja, located in the Valle Antinaco – Los Colorados and hidden between the Sierras de Velasco and Famatina. It is a zone dedicated to the winery industry and the walnut and fruit trees plantations. We arrive at the capital city in the afternoon.

Day 12 - La Costa Riojana: Sanagasta, Huaco, Chuquis, Anillaco...

Vamos a recorrer la costa riojana, de trata de las principales poblaciones de La Rioja. El mayor encanto lo brinda el cordón montañoso de la sierra del Velazco, que nos acompañara durante todo nuestro recorrido, encontrando lugares llenos de vida, colores, una paz que detiene el tiempo, el microclima que nos pone en contacto con la naturaleza. Las Peñas es el primer pueblo con sus casas de adobe sobre peñones de granito y la iglesia de San Rafael. Luego viene Agua Blanca, famosa por sus dulces caseros Sigue el pueblo

de Pinchas, lleno de frutales, hortalizas y nogales. En sus tiendas artesanales, se pueden conseguir mantas de llama o vicuña.

Chuquis es conocida por que se encuentra el solar de Pedro de Castro Barros, actualmente es un museo regional. Continúa el pueblo de Aminga, con casonas, quintas y bodegas hechas con muros elevados de pircas. En su plaza principal está el Mercado Artesanal y la iglesia de La Merced. Una vez más sobre la ruta, alcanzamos a reflexionar sobre la alegría y la tranquilidad que se perciben en el aire de cada una de estas localidades. Llegamos a Anillaco, el más moderno de los pueblos de la costa riojana con calles de asfalto y grandes propiedades de viñedos ideales para degustar vinos de alta calidad o vinos pateros.

Avanzamos hasta Los Molinos con sus fincas de nogales, olivos, almendros y membrillos. Sigue Anjullón, con la iglesia más bella de la costa riojana, que data de 1896, de estilo italiano. Más tarde está la localidad de San Pedro y finalmente Santa Vera Cruz, que está sobre la montaña. Sobresale en el viaje el Castillo de Dionisio Aizcorbe. Por la tarde traslado a la terminal de buses de La Rioja para viajar a Catamarca (200 km). Recepción en la terminal de buses de San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca y traslado al hotel.

Day 13 - Catamarca & Cuesta del Portezuelo

We know the city of Catamarca during the morning. From the Basilica, the Paseo de la Fe, 25 de Mayo Square, San Francisco Convent up to the Handcraft Market. We set off to the Cuesta del Portezuelo arriving at the Dique Las Piquitas in the afternoon. The Cuesta del Portezuelo is a beautiful, long and winding road which is almost 1,700m over sea level, where we will have spectacular views of the Valle de Catamarca (the Catamarca Valley) crossed by the Paclin river and the Sierra de Ambato. This downhill has been immortalized in the zamba Paisaje de Catamarca, sung by the famous Argentine folklore group: Los Chalchaleros. During the journey we enjoy different towns by the roadside.

Day 14 - San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca - Return to Buenos Aires

Breakfast in the hotel. Transfer to San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca Airport. Reception and transfer from Buenos Aires Airport (Domestic Airport) to Ezeiza International Airport in Buenos Aires. End of our services.

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