



**Argentinian  
Explorer**

## ARGENTINA TOURS

### **ROUTE 40 PATAGONIA IN 14 DAYS**

*This unusual journey along Route 40 stretch the Patagonia, is innovative, because it goes to places such classics as Los Antiguos, Cueva de Las Manos, Chaltén and Calafate, but also to places where mass tourism does not come, that was the objective of Argentinian Explorer when he devised this route. We are going to step Roballos and Monte Zeballos, to the Lakes Posadas/Pueyrredón and visited one of the most unspoilt of Patagonia: the Perito Moreno National Park, where we stayed in a room on the banks of the Lake Belgrano.*

## 14 DAYS - 13 NIGHTS

- Double Base accommodation with breakfast according to the selected hotel category
- Private transfers detailed itinerary
- Private excursions detailed in the itinerary (except optional)
- Air tickets of cabotage
- Bilingual English Spanish Guide
- 24 hour emergency service
- Constant coordination

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### Day 1 - EL Calafate

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Reception and transfer of the Airport of The Calafate to the Hotel.

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### Day 2 - Visit to the Perito Moreno Glacier

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Early in the morning we make our way to the most famous glacier in the world. It was declared as a Heritage Humanity in 1981 by UNESCO and it is considered unique for many characteristics such as its continuous advance, its comfortable access to its best viewpoints and the possibility to walk over it. The name was given in honour of the great explorer of the Patagonian area, Perito Francisco Moreno.

We walk along the edge of the southern side of the Argentino Lake, before crossing the rivers Centinela and Mitre, at the same time we discover post card views of the pre Andean Mountain Chain. We arrive to Brazo Rico and enter Los Glaciares National Park. While we tour along the Rich Lake we see the huge blocks of ice drifting along and walk until we have a full panoramic view of this giant glacier. If the weather conditions are favourable, we can have the privilege of attending this unique spectacle in the argentinean Patagonia... the ice landslides from the southern falls in which huge ice floes cover the homonym channel as they are accumulated there or in the Brazo Rico.

Here it is possible to get to know the glacier from different panoramic and viewpoints by walking the footbridges whilst we are informed about its history, characteristics and settings. In the afternoon we return to the Hotel.

**Note:** The Perito Moreno is a glacier in continuous advance; this is different to the great majority of such giant glaciers that are in a severe regression. In its advance it surrounds the cold waters of the Brazo Rico, that are originated from the Argentino Lake which causes some pressure over the ice that make the level of water increase in that part of the lake and has the effect of generating a tunnel of almost 45 metres through which flows from the Brazo Rico and in to the Argentino Lake. The continuous erosion by these waters causes parts of the dome to collapse producing fantastic spectacles.

#### **Navigation across the Rich lake – Nautical Safari**

We leave from the 'Bajo de las Sombras' Port to begin this navigation that complements the visit by the footbridges to the Perito Moreno Glacier and has a time lapse of one hour. There we can see well the southern edge of the glacier. The same as for the Brazo Rico and the Brazo Sur of the Argentino Lake, they are transformed by the glacier into dykes. We navigate the Rich Lake marveling at the imposing face of the glacier that reaches up to 60 metres high. Here we get closer to the confluence between the colossal ice structure and the Magellan Peninsular before continuing, for approximately 3 kms, the length of the southern wall.

**This is the major attraction spot and the most awaited moment by all the visitors:** the landslides of enormous blocks of ice during the summer season that are related to other typical formations such as crevices, 'seracs' and their bluish tints. We have the opportunity to take photos and capture this emotional experience.

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### Day 3 - Cristina Estancia full itinerary

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We dedicate the day to the Cristina Estancia. We leave in the morning in a boat from the Punta Bandera Port in the direction of the Estancia and on the route we pass great icebergs and the incredible landscape of the western face of the Upsala Glacier before we enter into the Cristina Canal and disembark at the Estancia. We visit the Costumbrista Museum which was the old sheep shearing works and after we make our Patagonian journey by a 4x4 up mountainous tracks until we reach the Continental Ice Camp Site where we begin a short hike over the surface that has been eroded by the glaciers. Later we go until the appearance of the Cañadón de los Fósiles (the waterbed of the fossils) where there is a reservoir of marine fossil remains.

**Note:** This program is over irregular ground and involves a reasonable amount of effort and is not suitable for children less than 12 years old.

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### Day 4 - La Leona Petrified Forest - El Chaltén

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Dejamos El Calafate para dirigirnos hasta El Chaltén.

We leave in the morning in order to spend the whole day in the steppes of Patagonian discovering new places and enjoying the free air and adventure. We take the Route 5 to the east and then join the mythical Route 40 along which we have magnificent views of the Argentino Lake, the Santa Cruz River, La Leona and its attractive valley, and having as a back drop the Mountain Range of the Andes and the Fitz Roy Mountain. We stop for a few minutes in the La Leona Hotel, considered an historic site, and then go west, guided by the edge of the Viedma Lake until we get to the slopes of the Los Hornos Mountain.

Close to midday we arrive to the foot of the Los Hornos Mountain where the Route finishes. Here we find a great depression in the land and that is where we can see the petrified tree trunks and begin our trek to explore them. We take some time to have lunch and during this time we can see many petrified tree trunks, some of them up to 1.20 in diameter, that reveal how different the climatic conditions were for millions of years that supported a flora so abundant and great. Here it is possible to also discover some fossil remains of the dinosaurs.

**Note:** this program is available from October only when the meteorological conditions permit. The walk is of moderate difficulty and for this a good physical condition is required. Children less than 6 years old cannot undertake this activity.

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### Day 5 - Trekking to Laguna de los Tres or Trekking to the Capri lagoon

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#### Trekking to Laguna de los Tres

Free day to rest or do some hiking. Depending on the physical conditions we recommend making the trek to the base of the Cerro Fitz Roy, the three Lagoon (moderate, 8 hours) or the hike to Laguna Capri (easy, 4 hours)

#### Trekking to the Fitz Roy Mountain: Laguna de los Tres

Breakfast at the boarding contracted. We have a day off in El Chaltén. We suggest to undertake the most important trekking in Los Glaciares National Park. The trail to do this is perfectly signaled. We get to the first viewpoint, with the view of the Piedras Blancas Glacier, after about two hours of hiking by the Río Blanco Valley and walking through the ancient forests of nothofagus. We go a little further and arrive to the Poincenot Camping Site which finishes on the Río Blanco. From here we climb up a steep slope which rises 400 metres until the Mountain Fitz Roy Base: Laguna de los Los Tres.

The trail finishes on the edge of a glaciatic moraine. From here we have an amazing view of the lagoon and its glacier together with the classic profile of the Fitz Roy Mountain, that appears from the top of its envelope of ice at a height of more than 2,000 metres. If we feel like going a little further we can turn off to go to the Laguna Sucia viewpoint from where we can see the Viedma Lake and the hanging glaciers. We return to the town going to Laguna Capri. If we are not late we should be arriving at about 18 hrs. In case you require a mountain guide please advise in advance.

### **Trekking to the Capri lagoon**

The trekking to Laguna Capri offers a unique relaxing view for the eyes and it is ideal for those who do not have the time to take a whole day walking, like going to the Laguna de Los Tres or Laguna Torre. Our main objective is to arrive to the first viewpoint of the Fitz Roy Mountain. We begin from the town of El Chaltén, it is an easy trekking although the slope is pronounced for a stretch of about 2 hours, rising some 350 metres. The first part is the same as Los Tres track until we arrive at a natural rocky viewpoint where we can turn off to the south until the camping site. At the viewpoint we will have a privileged view of the Torre Mountain and its surrounding ice needles such as Poincenot, Saint Exupéry, Mermoz and Guillaumet. We stop just a few minutes before entering the Capri Camping Site in order to see the Laguna Capri. We return by the same trail to our lodgings in the town.

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## **Day 6 - Navigation on the Viedma Lake and a minitrekking to the Viedma Glacier Caves**

We leave from the Túnel Bay Port in the northerly direction to El Chaltén, in Los Glaciares National Park, in order to navigate on the Viedma Lake disembarking at the Viedma Glacier and walking to its interiors. The Viedma Lake is some 78 kms in length and is the largest one caused by glacier abrasion and the second largest in the Park (the Upsala Glacier is the largest). It is fed by its glacier of the same name that is in the west.

The Viedma Glacier has a breadth of some 5.000 metres, a height of 50 metres and an area of circa 1.000 kms<sup>2</sup> and originates from the Continental Patagonian Ice Fields between the Huemul and Campana Mountains taking their ice and tipping it into the lake. Once we board the vessel we go to the south accompanied by the views of the Fitz Roy and Huemul Massifs and the impressive icebergs. In the middle of the morning we arrive at the Viedma Glacier and we descend in a rocky area to go and see the ice caverns and other glacier formations that are particular to this zone. Here we are given some information about the glaciers and then we continue our trekking to the erosion zone in front of the glacier.

With the help of crampons we ascend in order to start a walk over the icy structures for about 3 hours where we could see crevices and drainage areas. Once we finish the trekking to the interior of the caves we return to the boat to take a trip along the front of the glacier. We have lunch on board (the box lunch is not included) and in the afternoon we return to Túnel Bay.

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## **Day 7 - De Chaltén al Parque Nacional Perito Moreno**

Desayuno en el hotel. Traslado a la terminal de buses de El Chaltén para tomar el bus que nos llevará al Parque Nacional Perito Moreno. Nos estarán esperando en la ruta 40 para arribar desde el cruce hasta la estancia patagónica que se encuentra en el parque nacional más virgen de toda la Patagonia. A la tarde descansamos en la estancia.

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### Day 8 - Perito Moreno National Park

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Breakfast in the estancia. The Perito Moreno National Park is one of the most beautiful and wild ones in all Patagonia, it keeps many secrets, carefully hidden, thanks to the fact that massive tourism does not reach those lands. Thanks to Argentinian Explorer and its exclusive program along Ruta 40, we are able to discover this natural paradise. The estancia is in middle of the Patagonian steppe, very near the colossus Cerro San Lorenzo. We can taste typical food prepared with vegetables from their own vegetable garden and greenhouse and first class meat from the estancia. We can choose between a visit to the park or horse riding or walking along the neighbouring areas. The Perito Moreno National Park is only 15km away from the estancia. The National Park Post has many different start-points to the Burmeister, the Belgrano and the Volcán Lakes.

We can trek to the Sendero del Viento (Wind Path) or the Mansilla Lake. Along the Sendero del Viento we arrive to a moraine, where we have unique sights to one of the sides of the Perito Moreno National Park and the Valley of the Belgrano River on the other side, we cross the river over a bridge to return to the manor of the estancia. The trekking to the Mansilla Lake is special to those who enjoy bird watching. Another alternative is to ride on horseback along the Águila plateau, with the help of a local, enjoying fantastic sights of the park, of the Cerro San Lorenzo and of the lakes. There are farmyards made by the Tehuelches natives which are investigated by anthropologists who call them parapets.

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### Day 9 - Hacia los Lagos Posadas & Pueyrredón

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Desayuno en la estancia. Nos trasladamos hasta el cruce de la ruta nacional 40 y la ruta provincial 39, en Bajo Caracoles. En este paraje nos estarán esperando para trasladarnos hasta la estancia patagónica sobre el Lago Pueyrredón. Aprovechamos la tarde para descansar en la estancia.

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### Day 10 - Posadas & Pueyrredón Lakes, Cerro San Lorenzo and Río Oro Canyon

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Breakfast in the hostelry. We start along the zone of the Posadas and Pueyrredón Lakes, enjoying a special sight of the Cerro San Lorenzo of 3,706 meters high, together with the Cordillera de los Andes. When passing the isthmus or small tongue of land of 100 meters long and 5 meters wide, that separates both lakes, we can appreciate the different colours between both lakes, the Posadas in green and the Pueyrredón in blue. It is located on a very wide glacier valley which limits the plateau of the Buenos Aires Lake from the Cerro San Lorenzo range. We walk this valley surrounded by the most beautiful lakes in the Patagonia, with pretty formations and an autochthonous fauna that inhabits the damp.

We trek along the canyon of the Río Oro that is born in the Cerro San Lorenzo and flows its cold waters into the Pueyrredón Lake. We start walking at the Posadas Lake, to a western direction, towards the Pueyrredón Lake. The way crosses mounts and canyons, being able to watch guanacos, ñandúes (Patagonian ostrich) and choiques. We cross over the bridge on Río Unión, between Posadas and Pueyrredón Lakes, we observe the ecosystem of the lakes of the peninsula where ducks, flamingos, avutardas, long black neck swans and bandurrias nest. We continue to Valle del Oro, 15km away, we cross over its bridge and ascend along the path up to the river gorge, with its 150 meters in free fall. We enter the legendary ñires and lengas (beech) forests, following the path of the slopes that embrace the forest.

When it is sunny, we can enjoy the Cerro San Lorenzo presence. Before dark we leave the town Irigoyen to overnight in a Patagonian estancia on the shore of the Belgrano Lake.

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## Day 11 - Cueva de las Manos by Bajo Caracoles

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Desayuno en la estancia. Nos trasladamos hasta el cruce de la ruta nacional 40 y la ruta provincial 39, en Bajo Caracoles. En este paraje nos estarán esperando para trasladarnos hasta la cueva de las Manos en el Río Pinturas.

Breakfast in the hotel. We will go to the Cuevas de las Manos. It is one of the most important archeological places in Patagonia, as the Estancia La María in Santa Cruz. Its cave paintings are very meaningful and are 7,500 years before Christianity old. The cave has many eaves where the paintings, reflecting the nomadic people's habits who were principally hunters, are. The best known is the negative image of the silhouette of the hands, superimposed. Old airbrushed methods have been used. Other figures are representing animals, such as the choique and the guanaco.

There are typical scenes of the hunting of these animals. The human figure appears but in less proportion, with more lineal and geometric outlines, as the example of the spiral drawings. They drew with fruit, plants and animal blood. Different times of evolution are evident in the lines and geometrical drawings. We early set off from Perito Moreno to go 120km along the Patagonia Agreste (Wild Patagonia), most of these km are on Ruta 40. We start the visit to the Cave walking some 600 meters till we are near the Cave Paintings with more than 8,000 years old. After that a trekking along the canyon of the Pinturas River. We return along Bajo Caracoles to take Ruta 40 again towards El Chaltén.

### **Our itinerary will be different depending on the place where we enter**

We can arrive crossing the canyon of the Pinturas River with a mini-trekking or by entering the cave by Bajo Caracoles. It depends if we want to walk or simply arrive directly to the place..towards the Posadas and Pueyrredón Lakes.

Otherwise if we enter by estancia Los Toldos, the way is shorter, we do 60km without waking up so early. Once inside the estancia, we go 7km up to the manor, then we continue along the path some 16km more until we reach the canyon of the Pinturas River. At this moment is when the real adventure begins, when we have to descend to the Pinturas River, trekking almos 2,500 meters. Then we must descend to the other end of the canyon to reach the cave paintings. After lunch and a short rest, we take the same way to reach the vehicle and to continue along Ruta 40, travelling up to the Posadas Lake. Then we continue towards the Cordillera de los Andes (Andean mountain range), to the west to arrive at Posadas Lake.

**Note:** If you want our opinion, don't hesitate to cross the canyon, it is a real adventure. To walk, special trekking shoes are highly recommended. The route is difficult because the canyon is steep and the ground is unstable when descending, specially in the first stretch.

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## Day 12 - Route 40: Cueva de las Manos - Alero de Charcamata

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Breakfast in the hotel. We start our journey in Los Antiguos travelling to the south of Chubut some 60km along the Ruta 40 up to the entrance of the Estancia Cueva de las Manos (Ex Los Toldos) and from there, other 30km where we have to cross the Pinturas River and descend to the bottom of the Cañadón de Hiucacha. The Alero de Charcamata is formed of a rocky structure over 65 meters long by almost 18 meters high. In the inside there are paintings of hands, related to the hunting of animals and symbols with geometric drawings.

There are different colours from black to light red. The discovery of Charcamata was at the beginning of the 70s. We start trekking and after an hour we get to the entrance of the Alero de Charcamata, by a rocky path with vegetation. This place stands out for the cave paintings displayed of more than 9,000 years old, with an excellent state of conservation. We take the enough time to rest of the trekking and then we have lunch. In the afternoon we return to the hotel.

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### **Day 13- Roballos Pass, Monte Zeballos, Los Antiguos and Buenos Aires Lake**

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Breakfast at hostelry. We set off in the morning along a mountain path taking Route 41 towards the Roballos Pass and the Monte Zeballos, going some 180km along a mountain path, between the Cordillera de los Andes and the Buenos Aires Lake plateau. We will be able to see the second biggest lake in South America (after the Titicaca Lake): the Buenos Aires Lake, it flows into the Pacific Ocean through the Baker River. This lake is ideal for trout and salmon fishing. After midday we move on towards Los Antiguos. It is located in a wonderful valley, with a special microclimate, at the shore of Los Antiguos River and near the Buenos Aires Lake. Every year, during January, the Beer National Feast is celebrated. We can observe agricultural ventures dedicated to cultivation and production of fine fruit, such as raspberries, strawberries, morello cherries, etc. We arrive at the lookout points at the Los Antiguos and Jeinimeni Rivers – International boundary Argentine-Chilean- and the Buenos Aires Lake.

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### **Day 14- Salida a Comodoro Rivadavia**

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Desayuno en el hotel. Traslado a la terminal de buses de la localidad de Perito Moreno o Los Antiguos en la Provincia de Santa Cruz para tomarnos el bus hacia la ciudad de Comodoro Rivadavia. Recepción en la terminal de buses de Comodoro Rivadavia y traslado al Aeropuerto. Fin de nuestros servicios.

#### **ARGENTINIAN EXPLORER EVT**

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