

July 18, 2024

Dear *Travel Friends*,

Join us at the end of 2024 and ring in the new year with an adventure to **South America!**

Our 12-night tour of Argentina takes us to some of the planet's most spectacular natural scenery, from Iguazú Falls on Argentina's border with Brazil to the glacial icefields in the Southern Andes Mountains. We'll meet on December 28 in the nation's capital, Buenos Aires, an exciting, energy-filled city on the Atlantic seaboard. Buenos Aires, "The Paris of South America," is home to tango, and mouth-watering steaks said to be the best in the world.

After a couple days to see the local sites, and acclimate to the warm weather (summer begins here on December 21), we'll fly north to Iguazú Falls, one of the world's great waterfalls, set in the subtropical forest and home to monkeys, tucans, jaguars, coatis and caimans. We'll have three days to explore this area, including a day trip into Brazil. Then we'll head to the far south, to the opposite end of the country and a much different climate, to see the Patagonian Icefield in the high Southern Andes and explore the region around Lago Argentino, created by the glaciers that break in enormous walls of ice into the water below. We'll see a bit of life here in this vast, windswept region at the "end of the world" before heading back to the capital. We'll finish with a fun excursion across the river to Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay, a picturesque Portuguese outpost from the colonial era that later attracted Italian immigrants who became the country's first homesteaders.

The cost of the 12-night program is \$4400 per person in a double-occupancy room, with a \$1500 supplement for a single room. The price includes twelve nights lodging in tourist and superior-tourist class hotels, all local transportation as described in the itinerary (including airport pick-up and drop-off at the start and end of the program in Buenos Aires, domestic flights from Buenos Aires to Iguazú, El Calafate and back to Buenos Aires, the round-trip ship to Uruguay and back, shuttles and rental vehicles as described), entrances to Iguazú, Iguazu (Brazil) and Glaciers national parks, breakfasts in the hotels, land and water excursions into both national parks, a guided visit of the Colón Theater and entrances into the MALBA museum in Buenos Aires and the small museums in Uruguay. A deposit of \$500 per person is due on September 1. The balance is due on October 1, including the supplement for a single occupancy room.

Buenos Aires and nearby Uruguay have been my home for much of the last four decades. The people are warm and welcoming, and the sightseeing ranks among the best in the world. Karl and I will be glad to share our home and our experiences in South America with you.

Mark McMeley  
Karl Atkinson

[www.TravelFriends.info](http://www.TravelFriends.info)

email- [TravelFriends@icloud.com](mailto:TravelFriends@icloud.com)





## **Argentina from Iguazú to Patagonia, 2024/25**

December 28, 2024 to January 9, 2025



### **Friday, December 27**

Program participants depart today from the United States.

### **Saturday, December 28**

Flights arrive at the Buenos Aires (Ezeiza) airport. The program conductors will meet participants as they arrive at the airport and escort everyone to the hotel in downtown Buenos Aires. Transportation to the hotel is included in the program cost. Argentina is three hours ahead of U.S. Central Time.

We'll spend the rest of the day relaxing and walking around the central part of the city, stopping at the nearby Colón Theater for a brief guided tour. The 120-year old Colón, one of the world's great opera houses, is also a gem of Argentine architecture. Dinner this evening will be in Puerto Madero (the port) in one of the famous parrillas (steak houses), that offer cuts of Argentine beef as well as a full menu of other meats, pasta and salads.

Hotel: [Esplendor by Wyndham Tango](#) *(Note: This is not the Esplendor by Wyndham that is located on San Martín Street.)*

Avenida Rivadavia 947  
1002 Buenos Aires  
Argentina



### **Sunday, December 29**

Breakfast is provided in the hotel this morning and each morning of our stay in Argentina. We'll strike out for the Plaza de Mayo nearby and see the Casa Rosada (the "Pink House"), the executive office building of the Argentine presidency and where Juan and Eva Perón greeted throngs of their supporters in the 1950s. On the same square we'll see the cathedral and the Cabildo, the colonial-era town hall. We'll continue down Defensa Street through the San Telmo Market, held each Sunday morning, and full of stands of crafts and small leather goods, and will watch the tango dancers who perform for passers-by. We'll circle back to the hotel for a break and then head to the Recoleta neighborhood for lunch and a brief tour of the famous cemetery, with its mausoleums built in the early 1900s for the city's elite. We'll see one or two of the grand "palaces" of Buenos Aires from the early 1900s, the Palacio Paz or the Palacio Errázuriz-Alvear and the MALBA modern art museum before heading back to the hotel.

Hotel: Esplendor by Wyndham Tango  
Buenos Aires





### **Monday, December 30**

We'll head for the Aeroparque, the downtown airport, for a two-hour flight this morning to Iguazú, in Misiones province, the far northeast corner of Argentina. Iguazú is the name of the river that separates Argentina from Brazil. The word in the local Guaraní Indian language means "big water"—a good name for the thundering waterfalls that are our main destination. The Misiones province gets its name from the many Jesuit missions that were established among the Guaraní in the 1700s and the history of which was dramatized in the 1986 movie "The Mission," also filmed in this area. We'll settle in the hotel and then explore around the city of Puerto Iguazú, our base for the next few days.

Hotel: [Panoramic Grand Hotel](#)  
Avenida Córdoba y Félix de Azara  
3370 Puerto Iguazú, Misiones  
Argentina





### **Tuesday, December 31**

This morning we'll get shuttle transportation to the Iguazú National Park, about 24 miles to the east, and start exploring Iguazú Falls and the surrounding forest. Iguazú is an extension of about 250 to 300 separate falls along a cliff about three miles long, making it the world's largest waterfall system. We'll not only see one of the world's great natural wonders, but also walk in the semitropical jungle and see plenty of coati mundi, a few monkeys, tucans and many other birds and, with some luck, a jaguar. We'll do the Upper and Lower trails today (all paved trails and walkways, with stairs on the Lower Trail), and then take a boat ride on one of the large speed boats that start from downriver and approach the San Martín Falls. We'll take the shuttle back to the hotel in the late afternoon, in time to get ready to ring in the new year in the hotel restaurant or at another party destination of our choice.

Hotel: Panoramic Grand Hotel  
Puerto Iguazú



### **Wednesday, January 1**

We'll return to Iguazú National Park on the first day of the new year to see the biggest, deepest part of the falls, known as the Devil's Throat. We take the narrow-gauge passenger train (as we did the day before) to a boardwalk that crosses the channels and islands around the easternmost part of the falls and that end with two large viewing areas overlooking the river as it plunges down nearly 300 feet. We'll have plenty of time to take pictures and to watch the swallows that dart in and out to their nests, amid the spray and roar of the water. We'll make our way back to the welcome center and enjoy lunch and some walks through the woods before heading back to the hotel in the late afternoon. We'll take a trip into town to see the Three Borders monument, the park that oversees the confluence of the Iguazú and Paraná rivers and the point where the national borders of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay come together.

Hotel: Panoramic Grand Hotel  
Puerto Iguazú



### **Thursday, January 2**

Take your passports this morning as we board a shuttle for the trip across the river and enjoy the day in Brazil's Iguaçu National Park. Eighty percent of Iguazú Falls are located in Argentina but the Brazilian side offers a nearly complete panoramic view of all of them. We'll do the easy walkways that border the river and that wind in and out of the forest and the cliffs that oversee the water. We'll head back into Argentina in the late afternoon or early evening.

Hotel: Panoramic Grand Hotel  
Puerto Iguazú



### January 3

This morning we'll take a shuttle back to the Iguazú airport and head to Santa Cruz province at the opposite end of Argentina. Santa Cruz encompasses the southern third of Patagonia, the wild, vast expanse of dry scrubland between the Atlantic Coast and the Andes Mountains. We'll settle into our hotel in the central part of El Calafate, on the shores of turquoise-hued Lago Argentino, the largest of the glacial lakes formed by melt from the Southern Patagonian Icefield. We'll take a stroll around town and have dinner before heading back to the hotel.

Hotel: [Linda Vista Apart Hotel](#)  
Avenida Padre Agostini 71  
9405 El Calafate, Santa Cruz  
Argentina



### **Saturday, January 4**

A shuttle will pick us up this morning to take us into Glaciers National Park, another of Argentina's UN World Heritage sites and one of the best places on earth to see glaciers up close and to watch the calving that sends large walls of ice tumbling into the water below. Watch for flamingos on the lake and guanacos, undomesticated relatives of llamas, on the grasslands. Our trip today will include a one-hour boat ride on the lake's Upper Branch. The Upper Branch goes through a three or four-year cycle of being blocked from the main part of the lake by the advancing Perito Moreno Glacier, then breaking through the ice dam and slowly repeating the cycle as the glacier again blocks the flow of water. We'll continue by bus to the viewing area of the Perito Moreno Glacier, taking in the view of this 20-mile long river of ice that slowly flows from the border with Chile and becomes a 240-foot high, three mile long ice wall that empties into Lago Argentino. The walkways built by the Argentine Park Service are easy to manage and provide stupendous views of the glacier. The shuttle will drop us off at the hotel late in the afternoon.

Hotel: Linda Vista Apart Hotel  
El Calafate







### **Sunday, January 5**

We'll enjoy another way to visit Glaciers National Park on a day-long cruise which goes in and out of channels and from which we'll see the Upsala and Spegazzini glaciers in the lake's Lower Branch. We'll enjoy a hot lunch onboard while cruising past icebergs that are formed from the lower edges of the advancing glaciers. The shuttle will take us back to the hotel at the end of the day.

Hotel: Linda Vista Apart Hotel  
El Calafate





**Monday, January 6**

We have a number of options for our last full day in Patagonia. One option is to visit a nearby sheep ranch and enjoy a lunch at the ranch and watch the ranch operations. This would be an excellent way to learn how Basque, Irish and English immigrants scraped together an existence in harsh terrain a century ago. Another is to take the day-long shuttle ride to El Chaltén mountain, a staggeringly tall peak on the north side of Lago Argentino, for more dramatic views of the Andes from the Argentine side. A third, similar and longer option is to take a bus equipped for backroad travel to the Torres del Paine National Park in Chile, for more stunning views of the Andes (take your passport for this option!). These options are not included in the program and would run anywhere from 80 to 200 dollars a person, with transportation and lunch included. We can decide individually or together as a group what we'd like to do, and Mark and Karl will make the reservations beforehand. Or, if you wish, you may want to enjoy a quiet day in Calafate, and look for leather and wool goods and souvenirs, and enjoy a relaxing lunch. In the evening we'll celebrate our Patagonia travels with a dinner in one of the many parrillas in the downtown area. You might try some of the local lamb.

Hotel: Linda Vista Apart Hotel  
El Calafate



## **Tuesday, January 7**

We'll check out of our hotel after breakfast and head back to the Calafate airport for the three-hour return flight to Buenos Aires. A shuttle or cabs will take us to the Buenos Aires hotel we enjoyed at the start of our stay in Argentina. Dinner at one of the local restaurants.

Hotel: Esplendor by Wyndham Tango  
Buenos Aires



## **Wednesday, January 8**

Take your passports this morning as we make a day-trip to nearby Uruguay, across the River Plate, riding on one of the fast ferries that make the 35-mile crossing in an hour. On arrival we'll pick up rental vehicles at the port, in Colonia del Sacramento, and tour the old city that was built by the Portuguese in 1680 and was contested between the Portuguese and Spanish to control river traffic to the rich silver mines in Bolivia. After lunch in Colonia, we'll drive to the east and see the Waldensian Museum and the Piedmontese communities of Colonia Valdense and La Paz, the first independent farming communities created out of Uruguay's large cattle ranches and the most important colony in the Americas for Waldensian immigrants from Italy's Cottian Alps. We'll drive back to the port in the late afternoon and return by ferry to Buenos Aires in the early evening.

Hotel: Esplendor by Wyndham Tango  
Buenos Aires



### **Thursday, January 9**

After breakfast we'll check out of the hotel and move over to Mark and Karl's apartment at Lavalle 1647 (about eight blocks from the hotel) as our base for the rest of the day. Most flights for the United States depart from Ezeiza Airport in between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Mark and Karl will accompany individuals or groups back to Ezeiza for check-in for the return flight home.





### Fees and payments

Fee for the twelve-night Argentina from Iguazú to Patagonia 2024/25 program is \$4500.00 per person in a double-occupancy room. The fee includes:

--Twelve nights tourist-class, double-occupancy lodging in Buenos Aires, Puerto Iguazú and El Calafate, Argentina.

--Economy class air transportation from Buenos Aires to Puerto Iguazú, El Calafate and return to Buenos Aires.

--All local land and water transportation, including incoming and outgoing transportation between airports and hotels, land and water excursions into Iguazú, Iguazu (Brazil) and Glaciers national parks, round-trip Buenos Aires to Colonia (Uruguay) ferry, local taxis, metro and public transportation, except where specified as not included.

--Entrances for parks and museums as described in the itinerary.

--Gratuities to drivers and hotel staff.

Fee does not include international airfare, lunches or dinners, entrances not specified in the program, or travel insurance. Note: Major U.S. airlines offer non-stop flights from their U.S. hubs to Buenos Aires's Ezeiza Airport (EZE).

Supplement for a single room is \$1500.00.

This fee is based on a minimum of ten paying passengers.

Payments are due on the following schedule:

September 1, 2024	\$ 500 due
October 1, 2024	\$4000 due (plus \$1500 single-room supplement if applicable)

Payments should be made to River Plate Seminars by check at this address: Mark McMeley, 1001 Brynlor Lane; Orlando FL 32818, or through the Zelle app on a smartphone to phone number 321-977-1389, or by wire transfer at the following account:

Chase Bank  
Orlando, Florida  
account: 105 987 770  
routing number: 021000021  
attn: Mark McMeley

