



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SELF-DRIVE ARGENTINA: PATAGONIA, LAKE DISTRICT AND PERITO MORENO

16 days from £4,950pp

**ARGENTINA / BUENOS AIRES / ARGENTINE LAKE DISTRICT / EL CHALTEN AND THE FITZ
ROY MASSIF / EL CALAFATE AND LOS GLACIARES NATIONAL PARK / PATAGONIA**

WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

A passion for the region runs through all we do

All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America

Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Fully bonded and licensed

ATOL-protected

On your side when it matters

Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks

We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions

Let us show you the Latin America we know and love



OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This self-drive Patagonia tour takes you to the Argentine Lake District and the wilderness landscape of snow-tipped mountains and glaciers in the far south. Explore at your own pace in a hire-car with all your accommodation pre-booked.

DAY 1	Arrive in Buenos Aires. Transfer to hotel close to colonial centre and commercial district of the capital.
DAY 2	Walking tour along the Avenida de Mayo.
DAY 3	Fly to Bariloche in the lake district. Collect your hire car.
DAY 4	Explore the Bariloche area.
DAY 5	Self-drive to San Martín de los Andes.
DAY 6	Explore the San Martín lakes area.
DAY 7	Self-drive to Villa la Angostura.
DAY 8	Explore the area independently.
DAY 9	Drop off car in Bariloche; fly to Calafate, collect car, self-drive to estancia.
DAY 10	Self-drive to El Chaltén in southern Patagonia.
DAY 11	Explore the area around the Fitz Roy massif.
DAY 12	Self-drive to estancia close to El Calafate.
DAY 13	Opportunity to visit Perito Moreno glacier independently.
DAY 14	Drop off car at El Calafate airport; fly to Buenos Aires.
DAY 15	At leisure in the capital.
DAY 16	Transfer to Buenos Aires airport.

ITINERARY

This self-drive holiday showcases two regions of Patagonia where independent driving opens up amazing landscapes for you to explore at your leisure and preferred speed. You have freedom as soon as you get behind the wheel but also the security of knowing your accommodation is booked for you at the end of a day on the road.

Discover Argentina's glorious Lake District, with landscapes of virgin forests and rugged mountains reflected in a necklace of glassy lakes. The highlight is the drive north along the poster-perfect Seven Lakes Route to tranquil San Martin de los Andes. Later, fly south to visit two of Patagonia's finest national parks: Los Glaciares and Fitz Roy. Besides scenic drives all round, each offers uniquely different experiences once you've parked the car.

DAY 1

Arrive in Buenos Aires. Transfer to hotel close to colonial centre and commercial district of the capital.

You will be met at the airport and escorted to your hotel on the edge of the arty district of San Telmo by one of our local representatives.

Buenos Aires is an elegant, cultured and cosmopolitan city famed for its interesting museums and the fascinating port district of La Boca, with its cobbled streets and brightly painted houses. It was here that the tango was born, and Diego Maradona honed his footballing skills. The centre of town is home to the colonial heartland, government buildings and churches, as well as chic shopping districts, which have a nostalgic Parisian feel. The bohemian quarter of San Telmo is full of quaint old houses interspersed with antiques shops, tango bars and classy restaurants. Slightly further out of the centre is the Recoleta district, even more evocative of French or Italian influences, where Evita Perón was laid to rest. During the winter months, wealthy female residents parade the streets in their fur coats and improbable, towering hairstyles, and take afternoon tea in the city's ornate salons.

DAY 2

Walking tour along the Avenida de Mayo.

Take a guided walking tour along Avenida del Mayo, one of Buenos Aires' principal stately arteries, linking the capital's colonial and political heart at Plaza de Mayo with the Plaza de Congreso, crossing the even more grandiose Avenida 9 de Julio. Built in the 1880s and often compared with similar boulevards in European capitals, it has a definite Old World ambience, with art deco, art nouveau and neo-classical façades, shaded by leafy trees, lining the route.

The guided walk includes a stop at the world famous Café Tortoni, crammed with memorabilia, the barber's shop attached, and one of the first metro stations outside the USA and Europe, preserved in its original state as a museum. Visit the very ornate Barolo Palace, designed in accordance with the cosmology of Dante's Divine Comedy with floors representing heaven, purgatory and hell.

DAY 3

Fly to Bariloche in the lake district. Collect your hire car.

Transfer to the airport and fly to Bariloche in the lake district. San Carlos de Bariloche is the main town in Argentina's lake district, on the southern shore of Lake Nahuel Huapi. The town, a centre for skiing in winter (July and August), and walking in summer, is set against a stunning backdrop of glacial green-blue lakes framed by the mountains of the Andes.

Depending on when you arrive in Bariloche, you will either be taken to pick up your rental car on the way to the hotel, or you will pick it up the following day. Your trip is based on a medium category 2WD vehicle. You will receive a Fly and Drive kit with maps and useful information about the area and highlights to visit.

Your hotel is on the outskirts of town on the shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi.

DAY 4

Explore the Bariloche area.

Day at leisure to explore the chocolate-box pretty region. We recommend a visit to either the Cerro Campanario view point or Cerro Catedral ski resort for panoramas over the lakes and mountains.

Bariloche is also a good base for scenic lakeshore drives.

Just 40 mins' drive away is the Llao Llao peninsula with walking trails and picturesque drives around Lago Moreno. Alternatively, a boat departs daily from Puerto Panuelo for Puerto Blest, one of the area's best day-trips.

DAY 5

Self-drive to San Martín de los Andes.

Today's drive is perhaps the finest in the lake district, showcasing 7 beautiful lakes and 2 national parks along its journey between Bariloche and San Martin de los Andes.

Leaving Bariloche, the paved highway hugs the shore of Lake Nahuel Huapi as far as Villa La Angostura where it crosses the Correntoso river before striking a more winding route through forests and glades in the heart of the lake district. The road emerges at a scenic pass with fabulous views of Lago Lacar during the descent to San Martin. Start out early: it's around 200km (4 hrs) of driving and roughly two-thirds is by paved road, but allow plenty of time if you intend to detour via Villa Traful or make the most of the numerous photo opportunities en route.

DAY 6

Explore the San Martín lakes area.

Spend the day relaxing in this laid-back, low-rise lakeshore resort in Lanin National Park.

Boat trips depart from the jetty for Lago Nonthué, visiting Chachin Falls and the village of Hua Hum. You may opt to drive instead to Hua Hum along a picturesque 50km gravel road along the north shore of Lago Lacar. With an early start (and a 4WD is best for this drive), it's possible to do the rewarding trip to remote Lago Huechulafquen in the northern section of the Park. Half the 100km drive is on a rough gravel road and it takes 2-3 hrs. On a clear day you'll be treated to views of Lanin volcano, just shy of 3,800m.

DAY 7**Self-drive to Villa la Angostura.**

Drive to Villa La Angostura. This is a 110km drive back along the gorgeous Seven Lakes route (2hrs).

Villa La Angostura is a picturesque mountain village set on the northern shores of Lago Nahuel Huapi. It has evolved since its early development in the 1920s into a small, upmarket resort with plenty of good restaurants and shops. The border with Chile is just 20 mins' drive away.

Your accommodation is set in the foothills of the Andes, at the mouth of the Correntoso river where it enters Lake Nahuel Huapi.

DAY 8**Explore the area independently.**

Villa La Angostura is a fitting place in which to relax after the last few days' driving. If you wish to explore, Los Arrayanes National Park, just outside Villa La Angostura, is famous for its centuries-old forests of arrayán (Chilean myrtle) trees, in an idyllic setting on the Quettrihué peninsula. You can hike there (12km/3hrs each way) or visit by boat from Villa La Angostura's port of Bahía Mansa from where it is a 45min sailing.

DAY 9

Drop off car in Bariloche; fly to Calafate, collect car, self-drive to estancia.

Drive to Bariloche airport (90km, 1.5hrs). The airport is conveniently located on the near side of Bariloche as you approach from Villa La Angostura, so there is no need to go into the city.

Fly to El Calafate in the Los Glaciares National Park in southern Patagonia. The town is on the southern shore of Lago Argentino. Tourism in the last 20 years has transformed it into a bustling entrepôt for access to the nearby scenery of glaciers, lakes and impossibly steep peaks. You will be met and assisted with the collection of your hire car. You will receive a Fly and Drive kit with maps and useful information about the area and highlights to visit. Your trip is based on a medium category 2WD vehicle.

The self-drive adventure in the south explores two of Patagonia's finest national parks: Los Glaciares and Fitz Roy. Besides scenic drives all round, each offers uniquely different experiences once you've parked the car. If the sun shines, Fitz Roy's walking trails which offer glimpses of glistening glaciers and turquoise lagoons are an unforgettable highlight. Meanwhile, the walkways which face the Perito Moreno glacier offer ample opportunity to linger and observe a spectacle which, in itself, rewards the long journey to Patagonia. There's about 700km of driving. Much of this is on paved stretches of the Ruta 40 highway but there are also some journeys on ripio (gravel) road.

Today, it's 100km (2 hrs) to the south-eastern shore of Lago Viedma and your first overnight stop.

DAY 10

Self-drive to El Chaltén in southern Patagonia.

Drive to El Chalten (115km – 2 hrs), leaving Ruta 40 for the recently paved Ruta 23 which skirts the entire length of Lago Viedma. On a clear day on approaching El Chaltén, the granite peaks of Fitzroy Massif come into view – a majestic sight.

DAY 11

Explore the area around the Fitz Roy massif.

A full day at leisure to explore Fitz Roy National Park. We recommend the magnificent 8hr hike along the Rio Blanco valley and through ancient lenga (sub-antarctic beech) forest, passing the Piedras Blancas glacier and the massif along the way. It includes a steep 1hr climb to the beautiful turquoise Laguna de los Tres, situated beneath Mount Fitzroy, returning to El Chaltén via a more gentle path through the heart of the national park.

You'll need help with transport to the trail head and the help of a guide is advisable for this trail (we can organise this in advance if you wish).

Shorter, easier options are also possible, such as Laguna Torre (6hr round-trip), and if you are less inclined to hike, the 38km drive to Lago del Desierto is a viable side-trip with the option of a boat ride on the lake or short, scenic walks.

DAY 12

Self-drive to estancia close to El Calafate.

Today's route takes you back to El Calafate (215km – 3hrs), along the shores of Lago Viedma. With any luck, you'll be treated to stunning glimpses of Cerro Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre in your rear view mirror as you drive across the steppe, leaving the Fitz Roy massif behind.

Continue through El Calafate and into Los Glaciares National Park. In contrast to the soaring granite peaks of Fitz Roy or the bleak steppes around El Calafate, Los Glaciares is a sanctuary of glittering lakes fed by vast glaciers against a backdrop of velvet-green forests and bleak, frozen mountain ridges. It's a further drive of 56km from El Calafate to your accommodation, this journey should take another hour by gravel road.

DAY 13**Opportunity to visit Perito Moreno glacier independently.**

We highly recommend a visit to the Perito Moreno glacier, 40km from the Estancia. It's an hour's drive on a mixture of gravel roads and paved highway to the walkways and viewing platform overlooking the glacier. The thundering shards of falling ice are a breathtaking spectacle as you pass at a safe distance along the walkway in front of the Canal de los Tempanos, which separates Brazo Rico from the main part of the lake.

The Glacier has a surface area roughly the size of Hampshire's New Forest in the UK and is 5km wide, standing 60m above the surface of the lake. Its ice masses are fed by the southern continental ice field from the west, and from other smaller surrounding glaciers. To stand and stare is the only way to appreciate its magnitude. You may opt to board a sightseeing boat for an hour-long cruise on the lake beneath the glacier.

DAY 14**Drop off car at El Calafate airport; fly to Buenos Aires.**

It's around 3 hours by air from El Calafate to Argentina's capital.

DAY 15**At leisure in the capital.**

At leisure in the capital. Stroll round Puerto Madero, the refurbished port district where former dock installations and other nautical features have been preserved alongside a string of excellent restaurants and loft conversions. Beyond the city limits, you might consider a trip across the River Plate to Colonia in Uruguay.

Travel along a forest-fringed estuary, dotted with upmarket residences, to this peaceful little port, where you can wander among cobbled streets lined by colonial houses, or have a meal or drink in the yacht club.

DAY 16**Transfer to Buenos Aires airport.**

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Services of our team of experts in our London office

Services of Journey Latin America local representatives and guides

All land and air transport within Latin America

Accommodation as specified

Meals as specified

Excursions as specified, including entrance fees

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

Guided walking tour along the Avenida de Mayo

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Tips and gratuities

Meals other than specified

International flights to Latin America

Airport taxes, when not included in the ticket

Optional excursions

ESSENTIALS

TRANSPORT

3 domestic flights (longest 4hrs); self-drive in the lake district and southern Patagonia.

ACCOMMODATION

This holiday offers economical mid-range accommodation in Buenos Aires. In the lake district we have selected a mixture of modern and boutique properties in scenic settings. In southern Patagonia we've selected accommodation at an unusual variety of rustic estancia-style properties. Whilst not luxurious, what they lack in contemporary comfort is repaid with regional flavour.

MEALS

Breakfast daily.

GUIDES

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by the latter on their return.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

16 days, 15 nights: Buenos Aires 2; Bariloche 2; San Martín de los Andes 2; Villa La Angostura 2; Estancia La Estela 1; El Chaltén area 2; El Calafate area 2; Buenos Aires 2.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Argentina is the Argentine peso.

HOW TO TAKE IT

For our latest [currency advice for Argentina](#) please see our FAQs section.

DAILY SPEND

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US\$50-70 per person per day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants in cities and you will pay considerably more. In addition, you should budget a total of US\$200 to cover the cost of fuel.

TIPPING

Tips are expected and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

INSURANCE AND DOCUMENTS

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

Car insurance:

Argentina (your trip is based on a medium category 2WD vehicle): Limited collision damage waiver and vehicle theft protection (CDW/TP) cover is included, with an excess payable. Additional CDW/TP cover with zero excess can usually be purchased at additional cost. Please check the level of your coverage with us when making your booking. We strongly recommend you consider buying your own car hire excess waiver insurance policy before you travel: these are widely available from insurance companies in the UK. All incidents involving collision, robbery and theft must be reported to the police and a report obtained. Let us know if the transmission (automatic or manual) is important to you, or if you prefer a different type of vehicle: although we cannot guarantee availability we will do our best to help.

An international driving permit (IDP) is officially required for Argentina. Since 2015 new regulations have applied concerning the paper counterpart of UK driving licences. Please

check <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/driving-licence-changes> for further details.

You will need to return the car to the specified office at the end of the rental period. If you are leaving on a morning flight we advise you to do this the day before you depart.

AIRPORT TAXES

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.

TRIP SUITABILITY

This predominantly self-driving holiday is for independent-minded clients seeking the freedom to explore without the support of local guides and drivers but with the security of pre-booked accommodation. You should be confident to navigate along roads outside the UK, driving on the right. Some Spanish as well as mechanical knowledge, for example the ability to change a tyre, is highly recommended. We advise you to let us know if you have a strong preference for automatic or manual transmission as vehicles supplied can vary. GPS equipment is not normally available but you will receive basic written directions and we will send you our Rules of the Road document with helpful tips specific to driving in Argentina.

Driving is along a mixture of paved and ripio (gravel) roads, more if you plan to go exploring on your days at leisure. A 2-wheel drive vehicle is sufficient to complete the route but a 4WD will be more comfortable (and is recommended) if you intend to venture off the beaten track or deeper into the national parks. Please speak to us if you wish to upgrade to a 4x4. Finally, petrol is usually easy to come by in the main towns but be sure to keep an eye on your fuel tank as you won't find any service stations in the countryside.

CLIMATE

Owing to the extremities of the weather in Patagonia in winter, this holiday is only available between October and the end of March, the southern summer.

In Buenos Aires, October to November and March to April see temperatures between 15 and 25°C and a good deal of sunshine. January to February is hot, with temperatures over 30°C.

In the summer in the lake district (Dec-Mar) and Buenos Aires in the shoulder seasons the weather should be similar to a good British summer. The shoulder seasons in the lakes are more unpredictable, with possible cool periods and rain in April and October.

Southern Patagonia's summer (Dec-Feb) has long, usually mild days, although you can be subjected to 4 seasons in one day and occasional snow flurries are not uncommon. Mar/April or Sep/Oct can be sunny and clear, but it can be windy.

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

In the southern hemisphere summer it will be hot in Buenos Aires so take loose-fitting light clothing for maximum comfort. An umbrella offers good protection from tropical showers. You will need sunglasses and head protection.

The further south you travel into Patagonia, the more unpredictable the weather, so you will need layered clothing including wind and waterproof outer shells.

If you plan to go to good restaurants or out on evening entertainment trips, you might bring something a bit smarter as well (although formal attire will not be required).

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts.

VACCINATIONS

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following: polio; tetanus, hepatitis A. For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

VISAS

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

GIVE US A CALL

We'd love to chat

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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