

Itinerary, from Chile to Argentina

Day one: The trip will start at your hotel, where you will meet your tour leader and driver, load the minibus, and drive for three hours, crossing the Valdivian forest along the Reloncavi estuary. Arriving at Lake Tagua, there is time for a picnic lunch before crossing the lake. A ferry crossing will take us to the other side where we will drive for another half hour. At this point we will meet the horses and “huasos” (local horsemen) and ride to the Puelo River. Cross to the other side of the river in small motor boats (the horses will swim alongside) to reach our first lodgings. Once installed, guests can enjoy a delicious tea.

Day two: After breakfast and organizing the pack horses, we will start our day riding out along the Puelo River. Through unspoilt, primary ancient forests on winding trails, a ‘wild’ trail to experience how the first pioneers traveled in the area. Picnic lunch on our way and in the afternoon, arriving at a pioneer’s house where we spend the night. Another very friendly local host will tell us about the beginning of their life in this remote area.

Day three: Today a longer day riding, sometimes along difficult terrain, but the horses are sure footed and ideally suited to the area. This was the only way into this isolated and unique corner of Patagonia—on horseback or hiking. We see hardly any farms and very few people as we traverse this dramatic landscape. In the afternoon we arrive on the shores of the Puelo River—the water is a beautiful blue colour. A motor boat will come and take us upriver to a cozy cottage where we will lodge that day. The views from the balcony out over the river are spectacular.

Day four: Today we will take a short boat trip in order to start our full-day horse riding expedition. Some fresh horses will be with us in this part of our trip. Enjoy this fantastic landscape and cross the river just as the locals do: on a public boat while the horses swim alongside. Ride into the Ventisqueros valley where we will stop on the way for lunch. In the afternoon, we arrive at a little wooden house where we spend two nights with a wonderful host family. The farmhouse is one of the very few houses in this isolated valley with the Ventisqueros glacier high above us.

Day five: After breakfast we embark on a gentle ride, crossing the river once more to join another valley, then approach the glacier. This little valley becomes wilder and more remote, with incredible flora and no houses at all. We will arrive close to the ‘Alerces’ forest and enjoy riding alongside the river. Kingfishers are often sighted darting along the water. Picnic lunch and ride back to our farmhouse accommodation. Later there is a chance to go for a walk around the area or simply relax with a glass of wine. Another unforgettable day.

Day six: Breakfast and then set off on a full day’s ride towards “la pasarela del Rio Puelo”—an important suspension bridge crucial for the communication between the local inhabitants and the outside world—that we are going to cross. This area is particularly spectacular due to its high waterfalls and rapids on the fast running river. After a picnic lunch near the bridge—and a chance to swim—we ride on, crossing more ancient forest with huge trees, before reaching the shores of Lago Las Rocas,

where we leave the horses and meet the motorboat for a 10 minute boat trip to a private island for a two-night stay. A unique experience on this enchanting island.

Day seven: Breakfast and depart by boat to rejoin the horses. This morning we'll enjoy two hours' ride visiting the Blue Lake "Lago Azul" with its crystal clear waters and great fishing opportunities. The majestic peaks and stunning landscapes will not escape your attention! Picnic and relax on the shore of the lake. After lunch our ride follows deep and narrow paths into the forest along the mountains and will take us to join the south part of this lake. We ride through the fascinating typical "cold jungle," Valdivian-type rainforest with its ancient Alerce trees as well as other local giants such as the "Coihue" and "Arrayanes" (the cold tree). After leaving the horses, we will return by boat to our own island to enjoy the rest of the afternoon there strolling, relaxing on the decks, or swimming.

Day eight: In the morning after breakfast we will take the boat back to where the "huasos" and the horses will be waiting. Today we will ride until lunchtime. With passports at hand, we will reach the Chilean Mountain Police Station, "Reten de Carabineros," on horseback. This leads to the border crossing, close to the edge of the Puelo River, from where there are great views of the interior lake. We go through Chilean customs and immigration by horse and, once the paperwork is completed, ride between the borders—"no man's land"! We will arrive at the Argentinean post and leave the horses and take our last boat trip into the Argentine territory. We cross Lago Puelo by boat into the national park after going through the Argentine border formalities, and arriving at the pier, a vehicle will be waiting to take us to El Bolson. Lunch at a great local restaurant and time to buy some souvenirs or explore the town. We then travel to San Carlos de Bariloche and say goodbye.