



# Chile and Argentina - Across the Andes

## Detailed Itinerary

### Arrival (Days 1-2)

You leave the UK in the evening of Day 1 for the overnight flight to Argentina, and the town of San Carlos de Bariloche, in the foothills of the Andes mountains. Here you'll be met by our guides and transferred to our comfortable cabana (cottage) where we unpack the bikes then let you take a stroll around the local area, or just relax after the long journey. This evening we'll give you a short briefing on what's ahead before walking into town for a good meal.

### Lakes, Peaks and Passes (Days 3-4)

From Bariloche we head straight into the mountains on the fabulous "Three lakes route" across the Andes. After a short vehicle transfer along the edge of Lake Nahuel Huapi we travel by boat, passing Lake Frias before disembarking with helmets and sunglasses on, ready for action.

The ride takes us over Paso Perez Rosales, and despite being quite a low pass, it gives amazing views of Mount Tronador, the mountains ahead, and the lakes behind. As every cyclist knows, after the climb comes the descent, and this is one to really enjoy, as we bowl down to Lake De Todos los Santos. A short catamaran crossing followed by more biking brings us to the village of Ensenada in Chile, on the shores of Lake Llanquihue, where our first exhilarating day of biking and boating ends.

We stay in cabanas at Ensenada for two nights, so in the morning we head out without the need to pack up our gear, for our first ride amongst the mighty volcanoes. Our route takes us out to Osorno Volcano, its perfect snow-capped cone growing ever larger before us as we climb and descend on a rough track through its lower slopes. After lunch by a river famous locally for its tough white-water rafting, we ride through pristine forests on the return route to our cabana at Lake Llanquihue.

**Price:**  
£1560

**Bike rental:**  
£150

**Approx Flight price:**  
£860 (inc internal flights and taxes)

**Duration (inc flights):**  
18 days  
Thursday to Sunday

**The biking:**  
13 days, place-to-place  
Fully guided  
Fitness grade 2/3  
Skill grade A  
Group size 6-12

**What's included:**  
15 nights good accommodation (hotels, guesthouses and cabins)  
All breakfasts  
10 lunches  
5 evening meals  
Tour support vehicle  
Ferry fees  
Park entry fees  
Airport transfers

**Trip Dates:**  
25 October to 11 November 2007

5 to 22 March 2008

30 October to 16 November 2008



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## **Journey to the Coast (days 5-7)**

Turning south from Ensenada the scenery changes dramatically, as we enter a landscape dominated by glacial features. Our rolling ride leads us through deeply carved glacial valleys on our way to the Seno de Reloncavi (part of the Gulf of Ancud). Many people in this area still live a traditional life, and there are picturesque Mapuche Indian villages located here, isolated from the changing World by their wild and remote locations.

Our destination for today is the small town of Puelo, which sits at the mid-point of a fjord over 100km long. After a night here we journey on along the fjord, before catching a boat across to the edge of Los Alerces National Park. This is one of Chile's newest national parks and is home to the South American equivalent of California's famous giant sequoia trees. Our ride continues on a quiet dirt track, following the rugged coastline of Los Alerces and on to the small coastal city of Puerto Montt.

Puerto Montt will be our base for a day, to give us time to explore the area and relax a little, while enjoying good food and the best Chilean wine at the many restaurants and cafes. This friendly city is an ideal place for a rest day, with plenty to see and do, including boat trips into the gulf, walks through the shops and streets, along the bustling waterfront or through the busy markets.

## **Hot Springs and Volcanoes (days 8-11)**

Snow capped volcanoes, dominating the skyline, remote roads through lava fields, wild forests, and stands of Giant Arucaria (monkey puzzle) trees, are just part of what waits for us outside of Puerto Montt. On leaving the city we drive then cycle northwards into the heart of the Chilean Lake District. Our first day takes us past lakes Panguipilli, Calafquen, Pellaifa, then back to the shores of Calafquen, where we overnight at a luxurious hot springs resort. Hidden in the remoteness of this rugged landscape, this place is an oasis of warm, therapeutic waters, great food and lovely accommodation - the perfect retreat after a great day of mountain biking.

The next day is a real classic - riding in the shadow of the impressive Villarica Volcano. Entering Villarica National Park for the first time, you'll see how incredibly fertile the lands are surrounding these volcanoes, thanks to the mineral-rich ash and lava. Cutting through the forests are the tracts of recent lava flows, grey and ominous, with some rocks as smooth as tarmac, others as sharp as a knife.

The ride brings us to the small town of Pucon, which sits right on Lake Villarica and is the launch point for two superb days of adventure, which you can flex to your own desires. Our favourite choice for day one is the trek to the summit of Villarica Volcano (this is optional and there is a small fee payable locally for guides and equipment). This is a fairly challenging hike, but well worth the effort for the incredible views as well as the thrill of being on top of this active, smouldering volcano. If you still have the energy, day two is one for an exploratory ride out to the "Eyes of the Caburga" - the twin lagoons of Lake Caburga, which stretches away to the north, into Huerquehue National Park. Of course, if you'd prefer to just chill out on the shores of Lake Villarica, find a nice little cafe in Pucon, or go for a shorter ride in the magnificent surrounding countryside, you're free to do so.

## **The Tromen Pass to Argentina (day 12)**

One of the most incredible passes in the Southern Andes lies right under the snow covered upper slopes of Lanin Volcano. This is the Tromen Pass - the most remote crossing point in the region. As a result of this remoteness, very little traffic passes along this dirt, gravel and lava covered road, except for intrepid bikers, of course!

Leaving Pucon we use the vehicles to climb most of the way to the top, stopping at the Chilean customs post (sensibly located low down on the volcano) before covering some 20km through no-



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mans-land to the Argentina border post. This is where the riding begins, right in the shadow of Lanin's steep-sided summit. Our trail takes us through forest, along wild roads dotted with small farms and settlements, ever down, first following the Malleo river then turning southwards towards Junin de los Andes. Eventually we reach the strip of tarmac which means that civilisation is close at hand, and we follow it into this small mountain town, to the comfortable hosteria where we will spend the night.

Being in the centre of town we get the chance to mix with the locals in the many bars and small cafes, which open late into the night. Despite some peoples' preconceptions, the Argentines are great hosts, especially in such remote areas, and you'll be made to feel very welcome. We've even had our guides offered drinks by the soldiers at the customs post before now!

### **The Seven Lakes Ride (days 13-15)**

Just south of Junin de los Andes lies its sister town, San Martin de los Andes, and here starts the beautiful "Seven lakes route." After completing the first climb in our vehicle we ride south through the most pristine landscapes, passing lakes, rivers, tumbling waterfalls and a small number of villages and homesteads. This is picture postcard Andean scenery, and it lasts the whole of the next three days.

The first day takes us to Villa la Angostura, on the northern shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi. On the way we pass all seven of the lakes which line this corridor - Lacar, Meliquina, Hermoso, Falkner, Villarino, Espejo and Correntoso - on a challenging but quite stunning journey. In the evening our cook will ensure that we get a good dinner to help us recover from the exertion, as we relax in our comfy cabanas. Hopefully you'll also have imported plenty of good Chilean wine when we crossed the border too!

Our second day in this region is an easier ride, exploring the secluded forests of Los Arrayanes National Park, and mirror-like beauty of Lake Correntoso. To get here we ride out onto the Peninsula de Quetrihue, and from here we can add a short trek to the waterfalls at Rio Bonito. It's a great day out with quite a bit of flexibility, but we all come together back at our Villa la Angostura cabanas.

The third day here takes us on the final, twisting descent past lakeTrafal, through the small village of Villa Trafal, and on to the tarmac road which leads back to Bariloche. This superb ride is downhill most of the way, as we follow the mountain streams and flowing lake into Rio Limay at Confluencia. Here we load up the bikes for the last time, for the drive back to Bariloche, and the cabanas we left two weeks earlier. Tonight it's time for a big night out, so get ready for great food, wine, beer and a chance to enjoy the nightlife of this lively mountain town.

### **Bariloche and Surrounds (day 16)**

With so much to see and do in this area, we've left the last day free for you to do as you please. Our guides will, of course, give you any advice you need, or accompany anyone who wants to ride out along the lakeshore. For many though, today is a chance to stretch the legs on a lakeside walk, soak up the atmosphere of the small cafes and bars for the last time, and then get ready for a final night out with your many new friends.

### **Heading Home (days 17-18)**

After your last night out it's time to pack the bags and bikes up for the final time, as we take you to the airport this morning for the journey home.



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## **Further Information**

### **Cycling Support**

All equipment is carried by a support vehicle which will be with or near the group the whole time, except for two rides where the vehicle cannot travel by the same route. The vehicle carries plenty of drinks and snacks, should you want to hop in for a break. Our leaders carry a good toolkit and will help to fix any bike problems.

### **Cycle Hire**

If you wish to rent a bike we have a number of different models to choose from, but for this tour we recommend front suspension or full suspension bikes only, due to the rough terrain. The hire fee is £150 for a good front suspension bike (RRP 700-900 pounds), and is from the UK only (we will deliver and collect the bike from your daytime work address, boxed and ready to fly) with a refundable deposit of £400. Please call us to discuss what bike is most suitable for you.

### **Flights**

We can book your flight through an ATOL bonded agent and you will have a separate contract for your flight with them. They will provide all flight confirmations and tickets. All departures are in the evening from the UK and the morning from Argentina.

### **Passports, Visas and Vaccinations**

For entry into Chile and Argentina UK citizens need a full passport, valid for at least 6 months after the date of entry. There are no specific visa requirements, and no specific medical requirements for entry into either Chile or Argentina. You should still consult your doctor or a travel clinic for the latest travel health.

### **Clothing and Equipment**

On booking, a detailed list of useful and essential items will be sent to you. The only specialist items are cycle clothing and a helmet, which must be worn for all rides.

### **Accommodation and Food**

We spent a great deal of time researching the best accommodation in this region, so instead of camping out as we did on our first planning trip (back in 1995) you can relax in comfort each evening. For this tour we stay in small cottages, locally known as *cabanas*, or small, family run hotels known as *hosterías*. These are chosen for their great locations and are all friendly places to stay - perfect after a day of adventure. Only in Buenos Aires do we change from this, and instead put you up in a good quality city centre hotel. We include as many meals as possible, while still letting you set your own budget and make your own choices for meals out where there are some restaurants to choose from.



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