

# ARGENTINA - TIERRA DEL FUEGO - MITRE PENINSULA

## ITINERARY

### Day 1

The meeting point for the ride is Ushuaia.

On the first day your flight should arrive in Ushuaia early afternoon or before. In the late afternoon or early evening, when all guests have arrived, there will be a ride briefing with your guide.

On departure day your flight can leave Ushuaia at any time. Check-out is at 11:00, but you can store your luggage and explore a little of Ushuaia if you are booked on a later flight.

If you plan to spend some time in Ushuaia before the ride begins, you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. Then on Day 1 of the ride, you should make your own way to the hostel by 15:00 at the latest (check-in is from 14:00).

Overnight La Posta Hostel. The first night of the ride is spent at La Posta Hostel, (Perón Sur 864, Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego. Tel: +54 2901 444650).

In the late afternoon/early evening there will be a trip briefing where equipment will be checked and questions answered.

At the ride briefing you will be given a set of saddle bags for use during the day, plus a waterproof stuff sack for your sleeping bag and mat, clothes and toiletries, which will go onto the pack horses.

Dinner is to your own account tonight and the hostel will be happy to recommend local restaurants. The city centre is about a twenty to thirty minute walk, or five minutes in a taxi, and you can choose from traditional grill houses or perhaps fish and seafood.

Accommodation at La Posta is in shared apartments, each sleeping four to six guests. Each apartment has a kitchen and bathroom.

The hostel is about a thirty-minute walk from the town centre, but taxis are plentiful and not too expensive.



One of the rooms at La Posta

## Day 2

Breakfast is to your own account this morning - there are grocery stores and bakeries nearby.

Transfer by road to Estancia Maria Luisa (c. 230km), the starting point of the ride. The journey takes about four hours and passes through some of the most iconic landscapes of Tierra del Fuego such as the Garibaldi Pass through the Fuegian Andes, with panoramic views of Lake Fagnano. You will stop for a comfort break at Tolhuin, a town in the centre of the peninsula.

Meet the horses and your guide in a sheltered grove in the grounds of Estancia Maria Luisa. Lunch of homemade empanadas is served, and the guides will load the pack horses before introducing you to your horses.



Organising the horse packs at Estancia Maria Luisa

The following is the proposed itinerary. The route is subject to the tides of the Atlantic Ocean. Rivers need to be crossed at low tide, and beaches traversed whilst the tide is out or receding, so you may find the day starting early in the morning or sometimes not until later in the afternoon.



Setting off from the Estancia

Local conditions, weather and other unforeseen circumstances can sometimes cause the itinerary to change. Any changes to the itinerary will be made only with your best interests in mind.



It is a relatively easy ride today as you get to know your horse and a new style of riding. You ride through grassy pastures to the Irigoyen River, which you cross at low tide. The ride continues along windswept beaches until you arrive at Puesta La Chaira, part of the old Estancia Policarpo, where you will meet some of the local gauchos.

Overnight Puesta la Chaira.

For the next 9 nights you will be staying in basic sleeping bag accommodation in simple refuges. Each shelter has a communal area, warmed by a central stove, where meals are cooked and eaten. Sleeping arrangements are communal bunk rooms. The refuges provide a place to cook and warm up in front of the fire if the weather has been unkind.

Facilities are limited - there is a bucket shower on three nights (at Bahia Thetis Refuge), an inside loo on 5 nights and outside loo facilities on 4 nights.

This trip is semi-participatory in style, so your guide will appreciate assistance with tasks like setting up camp, looking after the horses and preparing meals.

La Chaira is the last refuge on the route where gauchos live.

There is a bunk room for guests, a bucket flush loo and a woodburning stove for cold nights.



La Chaira Cabin



Bunk room at La Chaira

### Day 3

Set off after breakfast on the long ride to Rio Bueno, following the beaches at low tide. Today, the wilder side of Tierra del Fuego begins to take over.



En route you will pass abandoned refuges, many of which were built with wood from the shipwrecks you may pass. Look out for the 'Barca', an old wooden shipwreck which has been buried by the sand for centuries.

As you ride keep an eye open for local wildlife such as foxes, guanacos, condors and varied bird life. If you are lucky you might even see solitary penguins and other marine life along the coastline.



Finally, cross the River Leticia and arrive at your overnight stop.

Overnight Cerro Alto. The refuge at Cerro Alto was constructed in early 2025.



Cerro Alto

There is a main timber building which houses the kitchen, plus a separate dorm and a loo a short walk away.



Outside loo

Sleep in your sleeping bags on basic beds in a dorm room.



Dorm room

## Day 4

Today the trail takes you across the Bueno and Policarpo rivers, as well as some challenging peatland terrain. The horses are very good at finding the best route, but you also need to watch your guide carefully. There is a good chance of seeing wild horses, sea lion colonies and solitary penguins today.

On the beach once more, visit the most famous shipwreck along the route, the British clipper the Duchess of Albany.



The wreck of the Duchess of Albany

Leaving the shipwreck you ride on to Caleta Falsa Bay, today's destination.

The centre of the bay used to be the heart of Estancia Policarpo, which was founded at the beginning of the 20th century by the pioneer Francisco Bilbao, but has been abandoned since the 1960s. Estancia Policarpo has been declared a National Historic Monument and, if you look around, you can still see traces of habitation, which nature is slowly taking back.

The day comes to a close as you reach the remains of Estancia Policarpo.



Arrival at Policarpo

Overnight Estancia Policarpo. Formerly the centre of Estancia Policarpo, the refuge now provides shelter for gauchos and adventurers on the peninsula.

There is a bunk room to sleep in and an outside loo.



Inside the cabin at Policarpo

## Day 5

Leave Caleta Falsa Bay along the beach to Laguna Centenario, where there are varied species of birds. You might see species like cormorant, southern crested caracara, black browed albatross and Andean condor, and perhaps sea lions.



Sea lion colony at Laguna Centenario

Ride inland through the Fueguino peatland. If the weather is good you might spot the mythical and inaccessible State Island, with its San Juande Salvamento Lighthouse, made famous in Jules Verne's book - The Lighthouse at the End of the World.



The Salvamento Lighthouse

The land becomes boggy here and you will need to dismount and lead your horse on foot on occasions. Although this a shorter day in terms of hours in the saddle, it is a challenging day's ride.

Arrive at Bahia Thetis, where a factory (now abandoned) used to process sea lion carcasses for their skin and blubber. Also in this location stood a military detachment and rescue shelter for survivors of the shipwrecks, which was operational between 1889 and 1896.



Dinner in the cabin at Bahia Thetis

Overnight Bahia Thetis. Accessible only by ship or horse, there are few visitors to Bahia Thetis Refuge.

Everyone sleeps dormitory-style in the bunk room. There is a bucket shower and a bucket flush loo.



Refugio Bahia Thetis

## Day 6

At Bahia Thetis time is taken to explore the area on foot and allow the horses to rest and recuperate before the journey home.

Today you may choose to make a 23km full-day hike to the Cape San Diego Lighthouse on the farthest point of Tierra del Fuego. This is a tough walk over uneven terrain and will take around seven hours (round trip). At the start of the trail you first need to cross the channel to the inner bay by small boat.



Setting off on the trek to Cape San Diego

From the trig point close to Cape San Diego you can appreciate an exceptional 360° view of the South Atlantic Ocean, Strait of Maire, Staten Island and the entrance of the Beagle Channel. Explore the lighthouse and have lunch, before returning to Thetis Bay on foot.



Cape San Diego Lighthouse

Lunch will be carried as usual by your guides, but you will need a small day sack for your personal water bottle, flask and waterproofs. Good walking boots are essential.

Overnight Bahia Thetis.

## Day 7

Another non-riding day. Relax in camp, wash some clothes ready for the journey back, or perhaps explore Thetis Bay on a short walk from the gaucho hut, keeping an eye out for local wildlife and traces of the indigenous people who inhabited this land many years ago.



Braving the waters of Thetis Bay.

Your guides will be pleased to discuss the history of the area and show you around.

Overnight Bahia Thetis.

## Day 8

Set off on horseback once again, retracing your tracks from Thetis Bay to Estancia Policarpo.

Your sure-footed Criollo horses will again demonstrate strength and skill when negotiating the tricky peat terrain.



Views from the cliff tops give an amazing spectacle of light and colour; a beautiful landscape of sub-Antarctic forest, Andes mountains and the South Atlantic Ocean.



Overnight Estancia Policarpo.

## Day 9

This morning, leave Caleta Falsa Bay, cross the peatland again and arrive at the coast next to the wide Policarpo River.



After crossing the river there should be the chance for some canters on the long beaches of Donata and Policarpo Bay, as long as the conditions are right. You may encounter herds of wild horses here in their natural habitat; an unforgettable experience.

Stop for a rest by the shipwreck of the Duchess of Albany, before continuing the ride along the beach. Pass grassy cliffs dotted with wild cattle as you hopefully pick up the pace again.

Overnight Cerro Alto.

## **Day 10**

In the morning, there may be time to walk around the Rio Bueno refuge and listen to stories about the legendary 'puesteros' who used to live here in years gone by, working with their cattle.

Later set off on horseback, cross the Leticia River and climb to the top of the grassy cliff on the other side. From here take time to appreciate panoramic views of the entire region, and look back along the route you have travelled so far.

On the way to La Chiara there may be the chance for some beach canters and also some relaxing breaks.



This evening you enjoy a final dinner with your guides on your last night on the trail.

Overnight Puesta la Chaira.

## Day 11

Today you depart La Chaira and say goodbye to the gauchos of the Mitre Peninsula.



Leave behind the most remote and wildest region of Tierra del Fuego and begin your journey back to civilisation across the Rio Irigoyen. The pace of the ride varies as you slow to reflect your days on the trail, then perhaps enjoy a canter through the sheep pastures.

Return to the shady grove at the estancia, where you will leave the horses and say goodbye to your guides.



The transport is waiting for you and, after a light snack, travel back to Ushuaia by road. Depending on the time of the tides today, you may not reach Ushuaia until late in the evening. As the guides first have to tend to the horses before they leave, it is likely that they will arrive back in Ushuaia three or four hours later than the group so, if you have an early flight tomorrow, this may be the last time you will see them.

Dinner is to your own account tonight.

Overnight La Posta Hostel.

## **Day 12**

You will be transferred to Ushuaia airport. Meals are to your own account today. Check-out is at 11:00, but if you are on a later flight you can store your luggage and explore a little of Ushuaia until it is time to leave for the airport.