

Ultimate Uruguay, Uruguay

Itinerary

Day 1 – Montevideo

Today is set aside to relax and explore the coastal city of Montevideo. Have lunch at the lively Port Market, before setting off on a short walking tour of the 'old city' of Montevideo.

Dinner is to your own account tonight. Your guide will suggest somewhere to dine and arrange transfers for you.

Overnight at Don Boutique Hotel in Montevideo.



The following is the proposed itinerary. Local conditions, weather and the ability of the group can sometimes cause the itinerary to change, but always with your best interests in mind.

Day 2: The Atchugarry Foundation

After breakfast, you drive to the horses and ride to the Atchugarry Foundation founded by Pablo Atchugarry, a renowned Uruguayan artist. You ride along private trails, bordering local estancias and studs until you get to the Sculpture Park and Exhibition Centre.



Enjoy a picnic lunch in the grounds and then continue riding onto the vineyards of Aguaverde.

Dinner and overnight at Chacra La Magdalena.

Day 3: to Jose Ignacio

After breakfast, ride along the beach towards the isolated beach of La Boyita. Experience the freedom of cantering along the coast before arriving at the town of Jose Ignacio. Enjoy lunch in the town and then continue riding along the beach to La Viuda de Jose Ignacio.

Dinner is to your own account this evening, usually at one of the top seafood restaurants in the area.

Overnight at La Viuda de Jose Ignacio.



Day 4: Garzon Lagoon

After an early breakfast, you are driven to the area of Laguna Garzon where you ride along the Garzon Lagoon and into the protected area of 'El Caracol'. Stop here for a typical asado lunch in the middle of the forest.

In the afternoon continue riding towards 'La Lengueta', where the Garzon Lagoon reaches the ocean. For the adventurous ones, there is usually the possibility to swim with the horses at the lagoon before returning to Posada La Viuda de Jose Ignacio.

Dinner is to your own account tonight in Jose Ignacio. Your guide will suggest somewhere to dine and arrange transfers for you.

Overnight at Posada La Viuda de Jose Ignacio.

Day 5: Barra de Chuy Beach

After breakfast you transfer to Chuy, a very curious town straddling the border where you can step into Brazil and hear the locals speaking a strange language made of a mix of Spanish and Portuguese. Continue on to meet your new horses for a three to four-hour ride towards the coast.

After a picnic lunch, there is time for a siesta discovering that gauchos' saddles also make a good pillow! In the afternoon, the pace picks up along the wonderful, isolated beach of Barra Chuy. Visitors seldom reach this beach so you can enjoy a long canter with no signs of habitation as you ride across the pure white sands alongside the Atlantic Ocean.

Dinner and overnight at a small beachside hotel in Coronilla.



Day 6: Santa Teresa National Park

Today you ride south, alternating beaches, sand dunes, pine forests and coastal hills where you may see dolphins feeding in the waters below. Continue your ride to the sizeable Santa Teresa National Park. The centrepiece of the park is a fort, built in 1762 by the Portuguese to defend the edge of their territories. The fort was completed by the Spaniards who took it by assault a year later. There followed a succession of the fort being conquered and then lost, before the newly forming Uruguay finally captured and held the fort in 1825. The fort is surrounded by 3,000 hectares of forest containing over 2 million trees.



After a picnic lunch, and hopefully a chance to look around the fort, you ride along the forest trails and down to the beach and along the coast towards the lovely town of Punta del Diablo.



The trail takes you past a shipwreck buried in the sand – one of many along this treacherous stretch of coastline. Later in the week you will visit Cabo Polonio, an area named after a Spanish galleon that went down nearby. Luckily the Beagle, with Charles Darwin on board, had more luck. Darwin was able to spend a good period of time in Uruguay collecting species and most likely starting to formulate his theories of evolution.

Dinner and overnight at Posada Terrazas de la Viuda.



Day 7: Cabo Polonio – shifting sands & sea lions

A short drive to meet the horses. From here ride into the desert-like land and journey on horseback through a natural animal reserve and an area designated as a Biosphere Natural Reserve by UNESCO.



Ride towards Cabo Polonio, a charming fishing village which can only be reached by horse or four-wheel drive. The fascinating place is part of a huge area of shifting sand dunes. As you ride through, it is possible to imagine that you are right in the middle of the Sahara.

After lunch at a seaside restaurant you go on foot to visit the lighthouse, seals and sea lions that populate the small islands and make up one of the largest seal populations in the world. Occasionally you may glimpse a migrating whale.



Later ride towards the small town of Valizas.

Dinner and overnight at Posada Valizas.

Day 8: Wetlands, Lagoon & Ombu Forest

After breakfast, your ride continues along the beach of Valizas. Riding to the hidden Brioso Lagoon towards the wetlands of Rocha, the trail takes you across an amazing untouched landscape of palm groves. After lunch the trail leads you along the Castillos Lagoon and Ombu Forest before reaching Estancia Guardia del Monte, a charming traditional working estancia.

Dinner and overnight at Guardia del Monte.



Day 9: The wetlands of Castillos Lagoon

Begin the day with a lovely breakfast full of homemade goodies. The ride this morning starts towards the neighbouring estancia Barra Grande, crossing wetlands and a magic forest of Ceibos, Coronillas and native trees. Lunch is a typical Uruguayan asado before riding back to Guardia del Monte.

You may meet the wonderful, friendly gauchos of Guardia del Monte, with their berets, ‘bombachas’ (riding trousers) and knives tucked into their belts.

A game of armadillo jumping often inadvertently gets underway when riding with gauchos, as the little armour-plated animals make a dash for their holes when the horses approach.



In the late afternoon you transfer to the Province of Lavalleja.

Dinner and overnight at Posada Balcon del Abra.



Day 10: Mar de Piedra

The next few days give you the opportunity to relax in this beautiful setting, exploring the area for a few hours each day on horseback.

Meet your new horses after breakfast and ride towards a nearby estancia where you will see local cattle and a stud. The landscape is very beautiful as you take a circular route from the stud back to Posada Balcon del Abra for lunch.



During the afternoon, you may take the trail to the Mar de Piedra (sea of stone) and a long ride along the hills.

Dinner and overnight at Posada Balcon del Abra.



Day 11: Balcon del Abra

The day starts with a ride towards a local neighbouring estancia where you will pass by an abandoned private cemetery and return along a different trail back to Posada Balcon del Abra.

After lunch a ride through the estancia, enjoying the landscape of the hills.

Dinner and overnight at Posada Balcon del Abra.



Day 12: Farewell

After breakfast say farewell to your hosts and horses and head back to Montevideo for your flight home.