

EXPLORE!

Northwest Argentina and Eclipse

12 days

Argentina - Trip code NWAE



Northwest Argentina and Eclipse

Combining the unique spectacle of the total eclipse with some of the most breath-taking landscapes in South America, this two week adventure takes you from the inspiring, diverse city of Buenos Aires to the brightly coloured mountains, deep gorges and fertile plains of Argentina's northwest region. Woven into this exceptional landscape is a strong cultural and gastronomic presence; we discover the indigenous heritage still found in the Andean region, manifested in the art, weavings and lifestyle of the locals, and taste Argentinian wines in one of Cafayate's many vineyards.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Eclipse** - View a total solar eclipse, guided by an astronomer
- ★ **Humahuaca** - Explore an immense gorge and the Hill of Seven Colours
- ★ **National parks** - Walk amid red rock deserts and lunar landscapes, exploring the land of dinosaurs
- ★ **Local villages** - Explore the traditional and indigenous villages of the Andean region

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:**12 - 18**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Buenos Aires

We join the tour in Buenos Aires and check-in to our hotel. Here we find ourselves in the midst of Argentina's capital, located on the southern shores of the Rio de la Plata. Since its founding in 1536 the city has thrived on trade and its streets are filled with an eclectic mix of European architectural styles, with Spanish, French and Italian classicism rubbing shoulders with remnants of Victorian grandeur. Gaining independence from its Spanish overlords in 1816 the city grew to rival the great cities of Europe, its wide avenues and elegant squares earning it the title of the Paris of the South.



Accommodation: Hotel Waldorf (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walking tour of the city including Plaza de Mayo and La Boca

Today we will take a tour of the city, exploring the major landmarks around the Plaza de Mayo, site of the famous mass demonstrations by supporters of Juan Domingo Peron in 1945, organised by his wife Eva. We'll also visit the elaborate mausoleums of the famous Recoleta Cemetery, the final resting place of some of Argentina's most revered figures, including Eva Peron herself. Our tour will also take us via Palermo Park and the tango-filled streets of La Caminito in the La Boca district of the city. Settled originally by Italian migrants, the area is famed for its colourful houses and lively street performers. After our city tour we have some free time, which you may wish to spend wandering the cobbled streets of the arty district of San Telmo. This evening we will discover the most Latin of dances during one of the city's famous tango shows, with wine tasting and dinner included.



Accommodation: Hotel Waldorf (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 3 - Fly to Salta; discover the city on foot including the San Bernardo Hill cable car

This morning we board our flight to Salta, the colonial city that is the hub of Argentina's northwest. Salta's grand neo-Classical buildings and bustling town squares are perfect for exploring on foot. In the heart of the city we discover the extraordinary pink cathedral and the San Francisco Church. We get a great view of the city and surrounding valleys from San Bernardo Hill, a slog of more than 1000 steps, with the 14 stations of the cross built into the side of the hill. Fear not, as we plan to take the cable car up to the top, where we will find an amphitheatre and coffee shop, and we may see some of the locals looking for a shady spot to prepare mate - a bitter green tea drink that takes centre stage in most Argentinian social gatherings. On descending the hill, we may have the chance to sample a staple of northern Argentinian food; empanadas in Argentina are much like the pasties of Cornwall, but much smaller, lighter, and in a wider variety of flavours - all deliciously addictive!



Accommodation: Amerian Salta (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Discover the Humahuaca Gorge; visit local villages

Today we set out to explore the UNESCO Heritage area of the Humahuaca Gorge, a highlight of any trip to the northwest of Argentina. Purmamarca is one of the towns within the gorge, and setting off today we can appreciate the town's incredible backdrop - a mountainside named the 'Seven-Coloured Hill' for its bright shades of yellow, oranges, reds and green. Indeed, the rest of the day's journey is awash with colour and scenic roadside lookouts; another appropriately named mountain is The 'Painters Palette'. Through our exploration today we visit the regions old traditional villages, such as Tilcara, Maimara and Humahuaca - these villages are perfect people-watching opportunities, and it's interesting to see the heritage from the pre-Columbian period which gives this area of northwest Argentina a very distinct sense of cultural identity. This is not only manifested in the woven items that are particular to the Andes, but also in the local diet, with northern food including llama stews and corn dishes. We return to Salta this evening and can make the most of our journey in the north by eating at one of the local restaurants.



Accommodation: Amerian Salta (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Drive via 'Shell Gorge' to Cafayate; wine-tasting in local vineyards

Today we take route 68, which connects Salta to the small town of Cafayate and its surrounding winelands. The views down this road are spectacular, particularly in the Quebrada de las Conchas, or 'Shell Gorge', with its bright orange jagged rock formations standing out against the greens of the sparse trees and bushes that line its walls. There are some impressive geological formations on

show here, all shaped by the winds that have blown through the gorge. After making several stops on our way, we arrive into Cafayate in the afternoon, ready for a round of wine tasting in one of the area's rustic wineries, their rows of vines backed by the stunning mountains beyond. Torrontes is the wine of choice here - a white wine that is well-known for being produced in this region.



Accommodation: Los Sauces (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Visit to ancient Quilmes ruins; drive to Belen

Today we leave the winelands around Cafayate for the sleepy town of Belen, stopping at the ancient ruins of the pre-hispanic Quilmes civilisation en route. The Quilmes people, dating back to around AD1000, resisted the Incan invasion and lived through over a century of Spanish colonisation before succumbing to disease and war. The large site is made up of the remains of terraces rising up the cacti-covered hillside - we can walk to the top for excellent views of the valley and the site. Although not as impressive as other archaeological sites in the Andes, it helps us to understand the indigenous heritage in this part of Argentina. Woven cloth, for example, is found in many Andean societies, and on arrival into Belen we may have time to spend admiring the hats, sweaters and ponchos woven from llama and vicuna wool by the local traders, many of whom are maintaining pre-Hispanic methods of weaving.



Accommodation: Belen Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Explore the red deserts of Talampaya National Park

Today we will be discovering the magnificent Talampaya National Park. Once the kingdom of dinosaurs, this park, along with its neighbour, Ischigualasto, which we will be visiting tomorrow, contains an important number of fossils, providing a sequential record of life through the Triassic period. The scrub desert boasts fossilised remains of a wide range of indigenous animals and plants from roughly 250 to 200 million years ago. Even for those amongst us who are not scientifically-minded, the park is an impressive show of geological wonders. The main attraction is the canyon, an imposing red rock trench whose sides tower approximately 150 metres above us as we venture through it. During our visit to the park, we walk through the Don Eduardo Gorge, which is an approximately 8km hike on flat terrain. The dry riverbeds, red dunes and sand plains are more akin to a Martian journey than our expectations of Andean scenery. We head on to Villa Union, our base for this evening.



Accommodation: Canon del Talampaya (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Hike in the lunar landscapes of Ischigualasto National Park

Another other-worldly landscape awaits us today as we drive to Ischigualasto National Park. Popularly known as 'Moon Valley', this park, together with its neighbour Talampaya, were granted UNESCO heritage some years ago, and while yesterday's exploration had an overriding theme of 'red', today's scenery warrants the lunar nickname. The geological oddities that have been somehow formed by water, wind and sun over the last million years have turned the park into another planet. 'Bowling Lane' is one of the most well-known sites, with scores of perfectly polished round balls sitting on a flat surface, with apparently no explanation to their formation. We will have chance to do the one hour walk up to Cerro Morado (400m ascent) for panoramic views before heading to our accommodation near San Juan in preparation for the eclipse tomorrow.



Accommodation: Olivos del Sol (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - View the total eclipse with a local astronomer

A total eclipse of the sun will take place today, July 2nd 2019. We will be heading to a 'casa de campo' (country house) on the outskirts of San Juan. Here we will also be joined by other Explore groups who have been travelling around the country prior to the event, and over lunch we'll be able to share stories about our travels so far. The house has a large garden from which we will watch the eclipse - bear in mind that it is winter and will therefore be chilly in the afternoon, so warm clothes are recommended. Eclipse glasses will be provided to allow you to view this natural wonder safely, and we will be accompanied by an expert local astronomer to provide more information and answer any questions you may have. At this time of year in San Juan, cloud cover is estimated to be at 20%, which is generally classed as on the cusp of 'sunny' and 'partly cloudy', although we are unable to make any guarantees regarding the weather conditions and the likelihood of seeing the eclipse. The Moon orbits the Earth almost 13 times a year, and an eclipse happens if it lines up exactly with the Earth and the Sun. Solar eclipses occur at New Moon, when the Moon is between Earth and the Sun. Lunar eclipses occur at Full Moon, when Earth is between the Sun and the Moon. A total eclipse of the sun occurs when the moon appears the same size as the sun, thus completely obscuring the light. Eclipses do not take place every month because the orbits of the Moon and Earth are tilted at an angle. Most of the time, the line-up is not precise enough for an eclipse. When an eclipse is total, the solar corona can be seen as a white halo around the black disk of the Moon. Near the beginning and end of total and annular eclipses, the thin, visible slice of the Sun appears broken up into blobs of light. These blobs are called 'Baily's beads' after the British astronomer Francis Baily. They happen because the edge of the Moon is not smooth but jagged with mountain peaks. When just one bead is visible, the effect is often likened to a diamond ring. The eclipse will take place at approximately 4.25pm, after which point we will return to our accommodation and spend the rest of the evening relaxing.



Accommodation: Olivos del Sol (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 10 - Optional wine tasting; fly to Buenos Aires

Despite being somewhat overshadowed by the fame of Mendoza, San Juan is the second largest wine-producing region in the country, and this morning we have the opportunity to visit one of the many vineyards on the 'Ruta del Vino' to try some of the first-class local specialties. We take a flight later this afternoon back to the hustle and bustle of Buenos Aires, which will be a huge contrast from the quiet and open landscapes of the Andean region. This evening is free to enjoy something of Buenos Aires' dazzling nightlife.



Accommodation: Hotel Waldorf (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Free day in Buenos Aires

Today we enjoy a full free day in Buenos Aires to explore more of one of South America's most captivating cities. There is much to enjoy just from wandering around the districts like La Boca and San Telmo, and you could also taste some of Argentina's most mouth-watering traditional food at one of the city's many parrillas (grills). Choripan comes highly recommended - a large chorizo in a homemade crusty bread roll, covered with spicy chimichurri sauce. Delicious! Alternatively, you can escape the city with a trip to a working estancia (ranch) or take a boat trip on the Tigre delta, a fascinating insight into the manmade communities and stilted homes set around this swampy river.



Accommodation: Hotel Waldorf (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Tour ends Buenos Aires

Our tour ends this morning in Buenos Aires.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Why book this trip

Join a local astronomer to view the total solar eclipse from San Juan, and enjoy three different opportunities to taste Argentinian wine beneath the wonderful setting of the Andes mountains. This trip is ideal for active people who want to combine some city sightseeing and cultural discovery with walks amid some of the world's most inspirational scenery.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 11
Lunch: 1
Dinner: 1



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Astronomer
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

11 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Argentina Holidays & Tours

Climate

Argentina has a climate that ranges from subtropical in the north to cold in the temperate south. The Andes has erratic rainfall and flash floods from December to May. From June to September spring like sunny days temper the cold nights.

Time difference to GMT

-3

Plugs

3 Pin Flat

Religion

Predominantly Roman Catholic.

Language

Spanish is the main language throughout this region, along with a number of indigenous dialects, of

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Buenos Aires - Tango show US\$70 and US\$120 with dinner, Tigre Delta cruise US\$951 Pampas Ranch Excursion - US\$ 166 per person (not including transfers) 0

Clothing

June is the winter season in Argentina, so you should expect cold, crisp and mainly dry days, and pack accordingly. The sun can still be strong so sunblock is recommended, particularly in the national parks, as well as a rain jacket and sturdy shoes to walk in. On the eclipse day you will be outside with the astronomer for part of the day, so pack a thick jumper in case you become cold.

Footwear

Comfortable and sturdy walking boots with good ankle support and tread are useful for the walks. Trainers/sandals for relaxing in.

Luggage

15Kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Total allowance for your international flight: 44lb/20kg. Luggage limit for domestic flights is 15kg. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Eclipse glasses will be provided for you in Argentina.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 50 for tipping

Country Information

Argentina Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£10

Dinner price

£17

Beer price

£2

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Peso

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Buenos Aires. In Patagonia some cards with Chip and Pin do not work in the ATM machines. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in some places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

In San Juan you will have 3 nights in a hotel made up of differing cabins and rooms. Here you may be in a studio apartment, a double room or a small cabin. This is the best available place to stay to see the eclipse near San Juan.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Please note we require a photocopy of your passport 3 month pre departure. It is essential that you provide Explore with a photo copy of your passport at the time of booking, as this will be required in order to confirm accommodation. Argentina: Visas are not required for UK, US, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand citizens. However Canadian and Australian citizens will need make a payment called the 'reciprocity fee' in advance of travel to enter Argentina. This currently costs 100USD for Australian citizens, 70USD for Canadian citizens. This payment needs to be made online at <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/accesibleingles> The receipt generated at the time of online payment must be printed and given to local immigration authorities together with your passport. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure. USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely be refused boarding. You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover. If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel. Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore

team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit) For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html> Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding. When completing an application for transit you should enter the words 'In Transit' with your final destination location in the address line. You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover. Please note that if you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel. For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications -

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Argentina Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended.. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
