

EXPLORE!



Wine and landscapes of Argentina

ARGENTINA - TRIP CODE NWA

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Take an adventure through the heart of Argentina. This northwest region houses some of Argentina's most inspiring scenery, from colourful mountains and barren salt plains, to spectacular gorges and lunar landscapes. Woven into this tapestry is a strong cultural and gastronomic presence - throughout the tour, discover the indigenous heritage still found in the Andean region and contrast this with multi-cultural Buenos Aires.

- **Wine tasting** - Taste the specialities in vineyards around Cafayate, famous for their Malbec and Torrontes wines
- **Magnificent scenery** - Journey from arid cacti-strewn deserts to rich fertile forests and blinding salt plains
- **Humahuaca** - Explore the immense gorge and 'seven coloured mountain', and take a drive up to San Antonio de los Cobres



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 12
Dinner: 1



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
Flight



ACCOMMODATION
12 nights
comfortable hotel



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip in Buenos Aires

The most cosmopolitan of South American cities, Buenos Aires is an eclectic jumble of neighbourhoods, where Spanish, French and Italian classicism rubs shoulders with remnants of Victorian grandeur. In the larger boroughs of Recoleta or Palermo, wide avenues and elegant squares highlight the capital's historical affluence, while the narrow cobbled streets of San Telmo and tumbledown houses in La Boca showcase the diverse cultural mix found in the city. We check into our hotel today in anticipation of the journey ahead.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Principado (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Fly to San Juan; visit Leoncito National Park and observatory

This morning we set off early on our two hour flight to San Juan, one of Argentina's gateway hubs to the Andes.

On arrival to the airport, we drive to Leoncito National Park. The park is a protected area with very strict regulations on air pollution, and due to the quality of the atmosphere it is also an important centre of astronomy. We will visit the Leoncito Observatory which is one of the best spots in the southern hemisphere for astronomic observation. Given San Juan's extremely high percentage of sunny days and its dry weather, the location guarantees open clear skies all year round. We will have an introductory talk with a local astronomer who will explain how to interpret the sky and give us an insight on the research taking place at this remote station. This talk will last approximately one hour, after which we can explore the visitor centre at leisure. Following this we continue onto the small town of Barreal.



ACCOMMODATION:
Accrux Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Drive to Villa Union through the Las Burras gorge

We have a long day of driving today, approximately seven hours, to Villa Union. Much of the drive is on the iconic Route 40 - much like Route 66 in the US, the road is embedded into the country's culture, taking travellers from Salta in the north down to the wilds of Patagonia. Most of the road is paved, with just 120km of dirt roads, passing through small villages, ancient pre-hispanic settlements and the 'Las Burras' Gorge road, winding through the mountains. Villa Union is the jumping off point for exploring the Talampaya and Ischigualasto National Parks, which we'll be visiting over the next two days, and is a sleepy town with the shadows of the Andes in the background.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Pircas Negras (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Discover the lunar landscape of Ischigualasto National Park

A day full of weird and wonderful lunar landscapes awaits us today as we drive to Ischigualasto National Park. Popularly known as 'Moon Valley', this park, together with its neighbour Talampaya, was granted UNESCO heritage some years ago. The hike to Cerro Morado Hill will take us to many balcony-style look out points with excellent vistas across the whole valley. The round trip hike takes approximately three hours, and there is a moderate 400m climb up to the top of the hill, with chances of spotting centuries old plant life, unique to the valley. We will also explore the unique rock features found in the park, by bus, before returning to Villa Union.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Pircas Negras (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Explore the red desert of the Talampaya National Park

Talampaya National Park is the site of our exploration today - once the kingdom of dinosaurs, this park, along with Ischigualasto, contains the most complete fossil record known from the Triassic Period. The scrub desert boasts fossilised remains of a wide range of ancestral animals and plants. 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 carving through the desert floor. From here we can observe the oddly shaped rock towers with evocative names such as the Chimney, the Monk, the Elevator and the Cathedral - more akin to a Martian journey than our expectations of Andean scenery. After our visit, we head to Belen in the heart of the Catamarca province.



ACCOMMODATION:
Belen Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Wine-tasting in Cafayate and visit to indigenous Quilmes ruins

Setting off this morning to Argentina's northern winelands around Cafayate, we stop at the indigenous Quilmes ruins en route. The Quilmes people, dating back to around AD1000, famously resisted the Incan invasion and lived through over a century of Spanish colonisation. 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. Finally, we arrive in Cafayate in the early afternoon for a round of wine tasting in two of the region's rustic wineries, their rows of green vines backed by the spectacular mountains beyond. We might try Argentina's main white wine, Torrontes, famous in this region.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Portal Del Santo (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Drive drive to Cachi through 'Broken Arrow Gorge'

The Argentina of the Andes is steeped in Inca heritage, and the indigenous populations have retained many of their old traditions - in small towns like Cafayate, local methods of weaving have been maintained since pre-Hispanic times, and during our journey through the Andes we may admire their woven clothes, hats, sweaters and ponchos in llama and vicuna wool. Today this journey takes us to Cachi through 'Broken Arrow Gorge', a spectacular formation of sharp, pointed rocks shooting up through the air at all sorts of different angles; the road that we travel on pierces this dramatic and surreal landscape. We'll take the opportunity to stop en route at viewpoints, with some short walks and small village visits. On arrival in Cachi (2530m altitude) we have some free time. We can use the time to relax and wander the cobblestoned streets and tranquil plazas of the town.



ACCOMMODATION:
ACA Cachi (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Drive to Salta through high arid cactus deserts down to fertile forests on the 'Bishop's Hill Road'

This morning we have free time in Cachi to explore some of the surrounding mountain trails. In the afternoon, we head on to Salta, down the 'Bishop's Hill Road', 20kms of hairpin bends that offer views down to the Sierra del Obispo. During the three hour drive the change in scenery is simply amazing, as we travel from the cactus filled deserts of the Cardones National Park, down to lush green mountains, blanketed in vegetation and eroded by rippling brooks and streams. We stop to discover the spectacular mountain views at the various viewpoints on route to Salta - one of the more lively cities in the north of Argentina, it is a blend of colonial architecture, fascinating museums and buzzing nightlife. Tonight we can get a taste of its music scene at a 'pena', a traditional folk music hall where locals come with guitars and take turns in playing and singing. Dinner is included.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Patios de Lerma (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 9 - Walking tour of Salta; optional walk through San Lorenzo Gorge

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 - we're taking the cable car, but for those who fancy the exercise there's a walking route up 1000 steps, with the 14 stations of the cross built into the side of the hill. On descending, we have the option to sample a classic 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! Our Explore Leader will take those interested to the Patio de la Empanada, a giant courtyard packed with tables surrounded by different empanada kiosks. Eating is optional but highly recommended; the best option is to get a variety and share. After a filling lunch, we have free time in Salta to explore the local handicrafts or head to the coffee shops to taste another Argentinian staple - Alfajores. These are cakey biscuits filled with 'dulce de leche', perfect with an afternoon tea. Alternatively, our Explore Leader can take us on a hike through San Lorenzo Gorge, a nature reserve found at the foot of the Andean mountains just 10 kms from the city centre. Within the gorge we hike through Yungas forest, a fertile green landscape of ferns, creeks, moss and colourful fauna. We hope to see wildlife here, perhaps foxes, small deer, hawks or toucans. During this four hour hike, the mid-afternoon light through the trees is beautiful, and we will be rewarded for our uphill efforts by the views over the deep, green valley below.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Patios de Lerma (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Follow the rails of the Train to the Clouds

A day of spectacular scenery awaits us as we head towards the mountain town of San Antonio de los Cobres, following the rails of the famous Train to the Clouds by vehicle as we ascend through the winding Toro Gorge to reach the rugged and sleepy backwater town. The change in scenery is dramatic, as the multi-coloured cacti-strewn mountains are followed by silent high-altitude desert. San Antonio lies at 3775m, a small town surrounded by bleak landscapes. After taking in the views we descend, traversing the lunar landscapes of the Puna Jujena and the Salinas Grandes flatlands, where entire families of salt workers make a hard living of working the soil of the salt flats. Our road literally pierces through the salt flats, and the blinding white cracked surface of the floor seems endless, making the mountain backdrop seem almost dwarfed in comparison. We spent a little time exploring the flats, before entering the Humahuaca gorge area, and arriving at the village of Purmamarca.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel La Casa de Piedra (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Discover 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 yellows, oranges, reds and greens. 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 once again 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 we have seen in other towns, 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:
Hotel Patios de Lerma (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Fly to Buenos Aires; walking tour of La Boca and Plaza de Mayo

We say goodbye to the northwest and catch our flight back to Buenos Aires. This afternoon we take a tour of the southern part 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 also visit the arty district of San Telmo, with its small one-way streets and walls covered with street art and graffiti. The tour ends in the colourful vibrancy of La Caminito in the La Boca district of the city. Settled originally by Italian migrants, the area is famed for its bright houses and lively street performers. We will surely come across the tango being performed on some street corners, a dramatic difference to the Folkloric dancing in the northwest, and highlighting the capital's affiliation with Europe in this most Latin of dances. This evening we have an opportunity to enjoy something of Buenos Aires' dazzling nightlife and soak up the pulsating rhythms of one of South America's most captivating cities.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Principado (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Trip ends in Buenos Aires

Our trip ends this morning in Buenos Aires after breakfast. There is plenty to love about Buenos Aires, so if this is your first visit we recommend adding a couple of extra nights here to enjoy the city and its surroundings.





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Argentina

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

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Buenos Aires - Tango show US\$70 and US\$120 with dinner

Clothing

A warm sweater or fleece, good waterproofs and a windproof jacket are all essential. Laundry services are available throughout.

Footwear

Comfortable and sturdy walking boots with good ankle support and tread are useful for the walks. Trainersandals 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

Water bottle, insect repellent, suncream (at least factor 15), good quality sunglasses and a lipsalve with sun protection and walking poles (if you use them).

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline

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, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 40, approx. 1'790 Argentinian Pesos for group tipping

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

Argentina

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£11	£20	£3-4	£2

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Argentine Peso (ARS)

Recommended Currency For Exchange

You can choose to either change your money in advance or on arrival at the airport. Here you will find both ATMs and Bureau de Change. The exchange rate with the ARS is approximately ARS 57 to the British Pound. You may wish to take extra USD cash as most optional excursions need to be paid in USD cash (not dispensed by ATMs in Argentina or Chile). Please check on line for up to date information

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 card are widely accepted in many shops and restaurants but some may be subject to a service charge

Travellers Cheques

We do not recommend Travellers Cheques

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Flight

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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.

Please note Australian passport holders will need make a payment called the 'reciprocity fee' in advance of travel to enter Argentina. This currently costs US\$ 100. This payment needs to be made online at <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/accesible/templates/reciprocidad/reciprocidad.htm> The receipt generated at the time of online payment must be printed and given to local immigration authorities together with your passport.

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>

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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

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. Yellow fever is only recommended for those travelling to Iguazu falls. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information



Why book this trip

The northwest of Argentina is still relatively unvisited compared to Patagonia, which is a shocking fact given how much there is to enjoy here, and the diversity of the landscapes. The food and drink scene is incredible, and we include wine tasting in the vineyards on this trip as well as plenty of opportunities to taste the typical food like empanadas, local cheese, llama stews and, of course, Argentinian steak.

Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**