JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



DISCOVERY GROUP TOURS

NANDU: PEAKS AND PLAINS OF PATAGONIA

20 days from **£5,526pp**

CHILE / SANTIAGO AND THE VINEYARDS / CHILEAN LAKE DISTRICT (NORTH) / CHILEAN LAKE DISTRICT (SOUTH) / PATAGONIA / TORRES DEL PAINE NATIONAL PARK / ARGENTINA / EL CALAFATE AND LOS GLACIARES NATIONAL PARK / EL CHALTEN AND THE FITZ ROY MASSIF / TIERRA DEL FUEGO / BUENOS AIRES



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

A comprehensive and varied group tour including the Patagonian Andes of Chile and Argentina, with walking and wildlife spotting. Includes the volcano-dotted lake district, Torres del Paine, Perito Moreno glacier, Tierra del Fuego and Buenos Aires.

	UK clients depart on overnight flight arriving in Santiago, Chile the following day.
DAY 1	**Arrive Santiago. Walking tour of the city.**
DAY 2	**Optional visits to local vineyards or the port of Valparaíso.**
DAY 3	**Fly to Temuco, by road to Pucón, to explore the lake district.**
DAY 4	**Optional visit to Huerquehue National Park or the opportunity to climb Villarrica volcano.**
DAY 5	**Drive to Puerto Varas; visit the Petrohue Falls.**
DAY 6	**Visit Chiloé Island.**
DAY 7	**Fly to Punta Arenas.**
DAY 8	**By road to Puerto Natales gateway to Torres del Paine, 3 night stay.**
DAYS 9-10	**Walking in the park to see rivers and glaciers.**
DAY 11	**Travel to El Calafate, Argentina, on the shores of Lago Argentino.**
DAY 12	**Excursion to the Perito Moreno Glacier.**
DAYS 13-14	**Drive to El Chaltén. Walking in Los Glaciares National Park.**
DAY 15	**Fly to Ushuaia, lively port on the southernmost tip of the continent.**
DAY 16	**Walk in Tierra del Fuego National Park.**
DAY 17	**Fly to Buenos Aires.**
DAYS 18-19	**City tour. Optional tango show or boat trip to Colonia, Uruguay.**
DAY 20	**Depart for international flight or extension.**
	UK clients arrive home the following day.

ITINERARY

The Nandú Journey explores the beautiful, remote and sometimes savage scenery of Patagonia in southern Chile and Argentina, and the diverse human and wildlife landscapes of these two very varied countries.

From the gentle countryside, dense forests and snow-capped volcanoes of the Chilean lake district, the journey heads south to the bleak windswept scenery of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, crossing grassy plains, passing soaring granite peaks and creaking glaciers. By way of dramatic contrast you'll savour life in the two capital cities; the elegant and European Buenos Aires, and cosmopolitan Santiago.

UK clients depart on overnight flight arriving in Santiago, Chile the following day.



DAY 1

Arrive Santiago. Walking tour of the city.

Those passengers arriving on an international flight will be met at the airport by the tour leader or a local representative. Santiago is laid out in a broad valley below the snow-capped Andes, a cosmopolitan city of many museums, markets and parks.

In the afternoon your guided city tour takes you to all the major sites of this fascinating city concentrating on Santiago's bustling historic centre, which in recent years has taken on a new lease of life. Awakening from years of neglect, the traditional residential neighbourhood of Lastarria is a delight to explore, replete with shops, arty cafés and characterful hotels. Nearby, leafy Parque Forestal was inaugurated in the early twentieth century to celebrate the first 100 years of the republic. It is just a few blocks from the beating heart of old Santiago, the Plaza de Armas, the capital's main square which is graced by elegant Chilean wine palms with their characteristic bottle-shaped trunks. Grouped around the plaza are Santiago's Cathedral, the main post office, the National Historic Museum and the Municipalidad de Santiago (city hall). From here, if time, visit San Cristóbal Hill by riding the cable car to the top. On clear days there are spectacular panoramic views across the city towards the Andes.

DAY 2

Optional visits to local vineyards or the port of Valparaíso.



Today there is an optional visit to Chile's second city, Valparaíso (2 hrs by bus). This lively seaport is built on a series of hills which form a backdrop to the wide bay, with views over the seaside resort of Viña del Mar. You can wander through the steep, winding streets and among the brightly-coloured colonial homes built for 19th century British and German merchants, or take a ride in one of the creaky wooden funiculars which link the cliff-top communities.

Time permitting, you may wish to visit one of the vineyards close to Santiago, to sample some highly respected Chilean wine.

DAY 3

Fly to Temuco, by road to Pucón, to explore the lake district.



Fly south to Temuco (1 hr); continue by bus to Pucón (90 mins), leisure capital of the lake district. Located on the shores of Lake Villarrica, Pucón is a popular summer resort overlooked by the dramatic peak of the active Villarrica Volcano (2,840m).

During your free time here, you might hire a bike and follow undulating trails into the forested countryside, stopping off at waterfalls, volcanic lakes and natural thermal springs. For something a little more adventurous there is the option of river rafting: gliding across the extraordinarily clear, glacial waters between densely-forested banks, and with a towering volcano as your backdrop, is a wonderful way to see the countryside. The river has grade 3/4 rapids, but no previous experience is necessary.

DAY 4

Optional visit to Huerquehue National Park or the opportunity to climb Villarrica volcano.



Today offers an excursion to Huerquehue National Park: follow trails through the mature araucuaria (native monkey puzzle) forests, passing glossy lakes. It's an idyllic, almost fairyland landscape, with buckled roots, vines and creepers. This full day's walk (5-6 hrs) is quite challenging with some steep sections.

There is also the option to climb to the icy peak of Villarrica volcano. This is a demanding trek which requires a good level of fitness. A local agency provides all the necessary equipment. The steep 1,400m ascent takes 5-6hrs through snow and icy conditions. Views down over the surrounding volcanoes, shimmering lakes and bright green deciduous forests are mind-expanding and at the top you are greeted by the sight of the deep, smoking crater.

Or you might explore the area on horseback. This is a 4hr optional trip into the Mapuche countryside originally settled by the Mapuche indians in the shadow of Villarrica and Lanín volcanoes and along the shores of the bright green Curilafquen Lagoon. You can even take a dip in the chilly waters if you dare!

DAY 5

Drive to Puerto Varas; visit the Petrohue Falls.



A morning bus takes you to Puerto Varas (4hrs), situated on the shores of Lake Llanquihue (one of the largest natural lakes in South America), in the heart of the lake district. Towering snow-capped volcanoes punctuate a patchwork landscape of cultivated hills and pastures. The town sits in the shadows of the perfect conical peak of the Osorno and Calbuco volcanoes. In the afternoon there is a visit to the crystalline cascade of the Petrohue Falls.

The town itself was originally colonised by German immigrants, so it has a distinctive, Bavarian feel. There are some excellent seafood restaurants and cafés to while away a day at leisure.

DAY 6

Visit Chiloé Island.



Today there is a full-day excursion to Chiloé. This extraordinary island developed largely independently from the mainland and has a distinct history, architecture and mythology. Alighting on its shores is like stepping back into a time of mists and legends. Half the population works in agriculture, the techniques of which have remained unchanged for centuries; distinctive ox-driven carts are to be seen trundling down the island's unpaved roads past unique wood-shingled churches and there are several folksy fishing ports where you can savour fresh oysters.

November-March you can take a boat trip to spot Magellanic and Humboldt penguins. The excursion ends with a visit to a chilote family, where the traditional curanto is prepared for you; it's a hearty dish of seafood, meat, potatoes and vegetables, all piled high in a hole in the ground, buried and cooked among glowing embers.

DAY 7

Fly to Punta Arenas.



After a short drive to Puerto Montt, a 2hr flight takes you south to Punta Arenas. On a clear day you have views of the southern icecap, its fjords, volcanoes and glaciers. Approaching the city you see the rust brown Patagonian steppes, pitted with small lagoons, stretching out towards the Straits of Magellan. On the other side of the water rise the mountains of the windswept island of Tierra del Fuego.

You'll overnight in Punta Arenas which was once an important, British-influenced trading centre before the opening of the Panama Canal turned it into a backwater; the region's fortunes were only briefly revived during a short-lived gold rush. To add to its woes, the sheep-rearing business has never recovered from the catastrophic collapse of the price of meat and wool. It's now a gateway to Chilean Patagonia and the nearby National parks.

DAY 8

By road to Puerto Natales gateway to Torres del Paine, 3 night stay.

We continue by bus to Puerto Natales (3hrs), a small town on the shores of Last Hope Sound, frequented by pelicans, black-necked swans and cormorants, the perfect base for exploring the nearby Torres del Paine National Park.



DAYS 9-10

Walking in the park to see rivers and glaciers.

For 2 full days the group will explore the Torres del Paine National Park by private vehicle and on foot, leaving early in the morning and returning to the comfort of Puerto Natales by evening.

Whilst exploring the park they'll be stops to visit some of the best viewpoints such as Lago Nordenskjold and Salto Grande. The scenery is overwhelming; the granite massif of the Cuernos, milky lakes dotted with icebergs and, soaring above, condors riding against perpetual fierce winds.

Spend the rest of your days exploring the national park on foot. Follow a number of different walking trails winding alongside the glacial lakes and rivers with close-up views of tortured rock towers and needles rising 3,000m into a tempestuous sky.

The difficulty and length of the available walks in the park vary hugely, and some may not be suitable for all passengers. The most famous hike is to the 'base of the towers', but this is also the most strenuous lasting at least 8hrs. There should however be something for everyone, so consult your tour leader about which hike would be best suited to you or for alternatives such as horse riding. Water and windproof clothing, as well as suitable footwear, are essential as weather can be very unpredictable.



DAY 11

Travel to El Calafate, Argentina, on the shores of Lago Argentino.

Head out across the Patagonian steppe by comfortable coach (3.5hrs + stops and border crossing), passing guanacos, ñandús (similar to an ostrich) and flamingos, and with a view of translucent Lago Argentino, the largest lake in the country. It is on these shores that El Calafate, your next port of call, is situated. This is a small town, but it is growing fast, brimming with hotels, cafés, tour agencies, delicatessens, sweet shops and roaming travellers. There's not a huge amount to do in town, but it's a nice place to unwind and a convenient base for excursions into the area.

DAY 12

Excursion to the Perito Moreno Glacier.



The town is a stopping off point for visitors to the Perito Moreno Glacier, still one of the most dynamic in the world. Driving out towards the glacier on your included excursion (2 hrs) the road follows the lake before turning up a wooded valley, dense with beech and birch trees, and continues alongside shimmering lagoons bordered with bright crimson and heather lichens.

Just looking at the cliff-edge of the glacier, which towers 60m above the water surface and is an extraordinary 5km wide, is awe-inspiring in itself. But after a time you hear the unforgettable sound of the glacier calving a vast wedge of ice the size of a tower block and sending it smashing it down into the lake, where it divides and floats away as an iceberg.

There is an optional mini-trek on the glacier. Walking out on the ice is an extraordinary experience; atop this immense ice sheet you feel exposed to the elements, and you can explore the craggy, desolate landscape, peering into crevasses and deep water pools, squinting against the incredible blue of the ice. It is a 1-2hr walk on the ice led by a local guide, and crampons are provided *(this is one optional excursion we book in advance to maximise the chances of availability. There are age limits in place so please talk to your consultant for more details).*

DAYS 13-14

Drive to El Chaltén. Walking in Los Glaciares National Park.



Travel by road through uninhabited wilderness to El Chaltén (3.5hrs). This small town enjoys a wonderful location, surrounded by the spectacular jagged mountains of the Fitzroy range in the Los Glaciares National Park, and is our base for 2 days.

Founded in 1985 in order to settle the area and pre-empt Chilean territorial claims El Chaltén has grown very rapidly as a centre for climbing and trekking in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter. Explore this region of extraordinary natural beauty on foot, along one of the national park's many trails. You hike through dense forest and across glacial brooks with the vertical peaks of the Fitzroy Massif, too steep to shelter snow, providing a mesmeric backdrop. We include guided walks, however these are optional, but some do involve some quite steep ascents and others are can be more demanding due to their length or uneven terrain. Again the tour leader and local guides are on hand to best advise the group on suitable options and people can take on as little or as much as they desire. Be sure to take warm clothes as the weather in the south is notoriously unpredictable.

DAY 15

Fly to Ushuaia, lively port on the southernmost tip of the continent.



An early road journey takes you back to El Calafate for the flight to Ushuaia (1hr20mins) (some domestic flights have a free baggage limit of 15kg, the excess charge is minimal though).

The dense forests, high mountains and glaciers of Tierra del Fuego are a surprise to those arriving from the bleak Patagonian steppes further north. The beautiful landscape of the national park surrounds the world's southernmost city, Ushuaia. The city has grown rapidly in recent years, partly as a result of government incentives to settlers, and its establishment as a Free Port, and partly a tourist centre – most Antarctic cruises leave from the port here. The setting is spectacular; jagged mountains hem in the town down to the shore of the Beagle Channel.

In the afternoon, there are optional trips available including a boat ride along the famous Beagle Channel.

DAY 16

Walk in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Full-day excursion to the nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park, with its bright green deciduous beech forests cascading down to bright lakes and fjords populated by water birds and beavers. Walk along winding, narrow hillside paths to be met with views over the Beagle Channel, and learn about the flora and fauna of the area with your guides, who love the park and have devised their own nature trails. The 4-5hr walk is at a gentle pace, there are plenty of stops and a packed lunch is provided.



DAY 17

Fly to Buenos Aires.

Fly to the Argentine capital, Buenos Aires (3.5hrs), an elegant and cosmopolitan city famed for its fascinating districts and being the birthplace of the Tango and Diego Maradona. Evenings can be spent sampling the juicy world renowned steak, tasting the famous local wines or enjoying an evening tango show.
Two full days allow for plenty of time to explore its lanes and boulevards as well as make the most of some free time to shop, have a drink and a pastry in a tea-room or peruse the items on display in one of the many markets.



DAYS 18-19

City tour. Optional tango show or boat trip to Colonia, Uruguay.



A guided tour of the city takes you to the most famous spots the city has to offer. Starting in the centre of the city, the historic heartland, where government buildings and churches mingle with chic shopping districts, which have a nostalgic, Parisian feel. The quintessential district La Boca with its cobbled streets and brightly painted houses is a must, as is the bohemian district of San Telmo, full of quaint old houses interspersed with antique shops, tango bars and expensive restaurants. Slightly further out of town is the Recoleta district, even more evocative of belle époque French and Italianate architecture. The area is home to the cemetery where Evita is laid to rest, and huge tombs line the alleys.

On your free day you can explore more of what this fascinating city has to offer. Alternatively take a break from the city's frenzy and travel by boat across the River Plate border to Colonia in Uruguay (don't forget your passport) where you can wander cobbled streets and admire the squat colonial houses from the top of the lighthouse, and have a glass of wine or lunch in the yacht club.

If you want to visit one of the city's iconic Tango shows speak to your tour leader who can arrange one for you for the evening.

DAY 20

Depart for international flight or extension.

UK clients arrive home the following day.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Santiago: walking tour of the city
- Lake district: Petrohué Falls
- Lake district: Chiloe Island
- Torres del Paine: 2 full days in the park to explore by vehilcle and foot
- Los Glaciares National Park: guided walks
- Los Glaciares National Park: Perito Moreno Glacier
- Ushuaia: Tierra del Fuego National Park expedition
- Buenos Aires: guided city tour

ESSENTIALS

To find out more about how our group tours including group sizes, solo travellers and why to choose us. Please click **here**.

On this tour, you'll be accompanied from start to finish by one of **our exceptional Journey Latin America tour leaders**. From the moment you land in Latin America until the day the tour ends they will deal with all the practicalities, expertly adapting to the circumstances and individual needs of the group. Rather than different guides in different cities, your leader will get to know the group and keep you informed and entertained as you go.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

20 days, 19 nights: Santiago 2; Pucón 2; Puerto Varas 2; Punta Arenas 1; Puerto Natales 3; El Calafate 2; El Chaltén 2; Ushuaia 2; Buenos Aires 3.

ACCOMMODATION

For our Discovery Journeys we aim to use good quality, value-for-money accommodation, in a mix of larger more modern and smaller family run hotels. All the properties we use are well maintained and rooms will have a private bathroom with hot water.

The focus of these trips is on getting outside, seeing the sights, and experiencing local restaurants and cafes, therefore a few hotels may not have evening dining facilities. If you prefer more luxurious accommodation, please see our classic tours range.

We use the following properties on this tour:

- Santiago: Almasur Providencia
- Pucón: Casa Solaria
- Puerto Varas: Hotel Puelche
- Punta Arenas: Almasur
- Puerto Natales: Martin Gusinde
- El Calafate: Cauquenes de Nimez
- El Chalten: Lunajuim
- Ushuaia: Hostal del Bosque
- Buenos Aires: Kenton Palace

On very rare occasions these hotels can change, however please speak to one of our consultants who can provide full details for each departure if you have any doubts. Address and contact details will be sent out with your final documents.

TRANSPORT

4 flights (longest 3.5hrs). We use a mixture of private and public vehicles for the road transport. Where the journeys are done by public transport (4 in total) we use comfortable tourist coaches.

MEALS

Breakfast daily, lunch days 6 and 16 and dinner day 6.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

On this tour the price includes excursions in all the places you visit as per the itinerary. There will however likely be some free time when you may choose to take part in an optional excursion. These are booked locally through your tour leader once you are in Latin America, however we are more than happy to advise you of what is on offer in advance of your holiday so you can best plan the excursions that suit you.

TRAVELLING ALONE

There is no extra cost for single travellers who are willing to share a room. You will be accommodated with another same-sex member of the group who is also travelling solo. For single travellers who wish to have their own room there are a limited number of single rooms available, which carry a surcharge.

TRIP SUITABILITY

Although not a walking holiday the nature, location and environment mean that the main activities of the tour do take place on foot. Hikes can vary in length (between 2 and 10 hrs) and difficulty (some with steep ascents or more uneven terrain). Note that most walks are linear and along good paths, (although some can be slippery in wet weather), so you can follow them as far as you feel comfortable. All trekking excursions are optional and your tour leader is always on hand and with the help of the local guides will always try and make sure that all levels of ability can be catered for and alternatives offered. In other locations such as Pucón in the Chilean Lake District and El Chalten in Argentina, there is more flexibility as you are within a small town, however, the main purpose of staying in these beautiful locations is the incredibly scenic walks that are accessible within the surrounding countryside.

CLIMATE

This holiday only operates from October through to March. As a broad overview Chile and Argentina have the opposite seasons to the UK, meaning November to February tend to be the warmest summer months. The further south you travel in the country the cooler it gets, although this varies with altitude. A comprehensive overview of the weather in all the regions you are visiting can be found in our Destination pages. Our Travel Experts can answer your questions on climate and further details will be sent with your confirmation documents.

CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT AND LUGGAGE

A daypack is essential for carrying rainwear, snacks, books/tablet and a water bottle. To ensure your comfort while walking in Patagonia, you should bring good waterproof walking boots/shoes (tried and tested so you don't get blisters) as well as a good water/windproof (not just shower-proof) jacket and trousers, a warm hat and a scarf. Some walkers find hiking poles helpful, and binoculars are useful for bird and wildlife spotting. Bring a hat with a visor, sunglasses and sun block. Because the weather can be changeable, we recommend wearing layered clothing for excursions.

MONEY

Please see the Country Info tab on this holiday for our latest currency information and advice about how to take your spending money. Tipping in Latin America is almost always done using cash. It is customary to tip tour leaders, local guides, drivers, boat crews and other service providers such as restaurant staff and porters. Full tipping guidelines are sent with your confirmation documents as is advice on local costs.

HEALTH, ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND INSURANCE

For health information on travelling to Chile and Argentina including recommended vaccinations, please see https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/

All Latin American countries have specific entry regulations related to Covid 19. Please also check our Travel Hub for further information.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports should be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Other nationalities should enquire with us or check with the consulates.

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on the Travel insurance website.

Our full briefing dossier contains more information on vaccinations, visas and insurance and will be provided with your final travel documents or can be requested from your travel consultant at any time.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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