Tour Code
BR5

ADVENTURESABROAD

BRAZIL, ARGENTINA & CHILE

24 days

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Day 1 Arrive in Rio de Janeiro

Today we arrive in Rio de Janeiro.

Rio is indeed the "Cidade Maravilhosa" (Marvelous City). Seven million Cariocas, as the inhabitants are called, are jammed into one of the world's most beautiful city settings, between ocean and escarpment. This makes Rio one of the most densely populated places on earth. This thick brew of Cariocas pursues pleasure like no other people: beaches and the body beautiful, samba and football, cerveja (beer); and cachaca (sugar-cane rum). In Rio everything ends with samba -- football games, weddings, work, political demonstrations and, of course, a day at the beach. There's a lust for life, and a love of romance, music, dance and talk that seem to distinguish the Cariocas from everyone else.

Overnight in Rio de Janeiro.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Rio de Janeiro: City Touring & Christ the Redeemer

Today we have a tour of Rio. The city is divided into a zona norte (north zone) and a zona sul (south zone) by the Serra da Carioca, steep mountains that are part of the Parque Nacional da Tijuca. These mountains descend to the edge of the city centre, where the zonas norte and sul meet.

Corcovado, one of these mountain peaks, offers us the best way to become familiar with the city's geography -- from it you have views of both zones. The statue Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer), with his outstretched arms, gazes down on the Bahia da Guanabara and the landmark Pao de Acucar (Sugar Loaf). His left arm points toward the zona norte, and his right toward the zona sul suburbs of Copacabana, Ipanema, Leblon and beyond. We will go to the foot of the mountain from where we travel by an electric tramway car to the top. We have plenty of time at the summit to take in this world-famous view!

We continue with a drive through the city center. Here we will also enjoy a walking tour and a break for lunch. The Centro in Rio, or the city center, is the oldest neighbourhood and the site where Rio de Janeiro was founded. Today it is not only the historic core but also the commercial, administrative and financial center. We will see one of Rio's finest buildings, the Theatro Municipal, hidden amongst busy roads. The Metropolitan Cathedral of Rio was completed in 1979, and its unique architectural style was based on the Mayan architectural style of pyramid construction.

Later in our day we enjoy a sightseeing ride along Rio's beaches -- Leblon, Ipanema and Copacabana. One of the world's most famous beaches runs 4.5 km (3 miles) in front of one of the world's most densely populated residential areas. There is always something happening on the beach during the day and along the footpaths at night: drinking, singing, eating and all kinds of people checking out the scene; tourists watching Brazilians. From the scalloped beach you can see the granite slabs that surround the entrance to the bay -- a magnificent meeting of land and sea. Different parts of the beach attract different crowds.

Overnight in Rio de Janeiro.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Rio de Janeiro: City Touring, Sugarloaf Mountain & Free Time

Today we continue to explore this world-class city.

We will voyage to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain. From the top of this celebrated peak, the city, Baia de Guanabara, and the winding coastline are stretched out dazzling below. To reach the summit at a lofty 400 m (1,325 feet) it is necessary to take two cable cars. A clear day will supply the most spectacular of views: the uncurling arch of the Praia de Copacabana, its miles of tiles glistening in the sun's last rays. From the top you'll see Corcovado Mountain, with the massive statue of Cristo Redemtor (Christ the Redeemer), his arms extended in mercy and blessing.

We will stroll through parts of Santa Teresa, a small neighborhood located on top of the Santa Teresa hill. Close to the center of Rio, this district is famous for its winding, narrow streets that are a favourite spot for artists and tourists. Nearby is the Carioca Aqueduct. Located in the city center, this aqueduct was built in the middle of the 18th century to bring fresh water from the Carioca River to the population of the city. This is an impressive example of colonial architecture and engineering.

There will be some free time this afternoon for you to explore on your own and perhaps stroll along the beachside avenue nearby our hotel.

Overnight in Rio de Janeiro.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Rio de Janeiro - Iguacu Falls

This morning we fly to Iguacu Falls.

Made up of many cascades producing vast sprays of water, this is unquestionably one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the world!! The surrounding subtropical rainforest has over 2,000 species of vascular plants and is home to the typical wildlife of the region: tapirs, giant anteaters, howler monkeys, ocelots, jaguars and caymans. The Falls are formed by the Rio Iguacu, which has its source near Curitiba. Starting at an altitude of 1300 m (4,264 feet), the river snakes westward, picking up tributaries and increasing in size and power during its 1200 km (745 mile) journey. About 15 km (9 miles) before joining the Rio Parana, the Iguacu broadens out, and then plunges precipitously over an 80 m (263 foot) high cliff. The 275 interlinking cataracts extend nearly 3 km (2 miles) across the river.

On arrival, we'll head to the viewing area from where you will quickly appreciate the enormous size of the falls. From numerous spots all along the path there are excellent views, at first across the lower river at a point where it has narrowed to channel width. At the bottom of the path, where the river widens again, there's a catwalk leading out towards the falls themselves. Depending on the force of the river, the spray can be quite heavy so, if you have a camera, be sure to carry a plastic bag. Special walkways have been built along the path allowing visitors to get close up to this wonder of natural beauty and power.

Overnight at Iguacu Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 IguaÃ§u Falls, Brazil - Iguazu Falls, Argentina

This morning we travel into Argentina where we have a different view of the falls -- spelled "Iguazu" in Spanish.

On the frontier with Brazil there is a gully -- La Garganta del Diablo (The Devil's Throat)* which is 150 metres (492 feet) wide and 700 metres (2,296 feet) long. We wander the paths and bridges along the upper and lower parts of the falls and the paths which go along the river from the observation point of the Bosetti falls to the quay. The plunging falls throw a fine drizzle up to 30 metres (98 feet) into the air, weaving countless rainbows in the sun. Be sure to bring rain-proof clothing.

Overnight at Iguazu Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Iguazu Falls - Fly to Buenos Aires

You have a half-day free to revisit the paths along the upper and lower parts of the falls (optional cost) and the path that goes along the river from the observation point of the Bosetti Falls to the quay. The plunging falls throw a fine drizzle up to 30 m (98 feet) into the air, weaving countless rainbows in the sun. Be sure to take rain-proof clothing. The United Nations has declared Iguazu Falls a protected area of worldwide importance.

You can also take an optional boat ride to the base of the falls (extra cost), or the local bus to Iguazu Town where you can explore and observe

where Argentine, Brazil, and Paraguay come together. You will need to be back in the hotel this afternoon to be ready for your transfer to the airport; please verify the check-out time from your hotel reception desk.

Later this afternoon we fly to Buenos Aires and transfer to our hotel.

Overnight in Buenos Aires.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Buenos Aires: City Tour

Today we see the sights of this cosmopolitan city. In the early part of the 20th century, Argentina was one of the richest countries in the world. The grand public buildings of Buenos Aires reflect this opulent era. The city is known as the "Paris of South America" because of its wide boulevards and European-style architecture. Buenos Aires was founded for the second time in 1580 by Juan de Garay, just north of Mendoza's encampment. In accordance with Spanish law, he laid out the large Plaza del Fuerte (Fortress Plaza). It acquired its present name of Plaza de Mayo after the month of revolution in 1810. Our tour focuses on the major public buildings.

Catedral Metropolitana, built on the sight of the original colonial church was not completed until 1827. Not only is it considered a major religious landmark, but also a historic site of great importance. Here lies the tomb of Jose de San Martin, the man who (along with Simon Bolivar) liberated South America from Spanish rule in the early 1800's. The Plaza de Mayo is also home to Museo del Cabildo, the Presidential Palace (Casa Rosada), and the National Congress (Palacio del Congreso).

We also visit the Recoleta Cemetery where Buenos Aires' richest citizens are buried in magnificent marble tombs elaborately decorated with statues. The most internationally-famous person buried here is "Evita" Peron. While in BA, we will also visit La Boca neighbourhood, so named for its position at "the mouth" of the Riachuelo, and its role as the port of call for thousands of immigrants from Italy, Spain, and other European countries. Those settlers struggled, starved, hoped, and celebrated in this rough-and-tumble barrio. Today, one of the most photogenic and colourful parts of Buenos Aires, La Boca is the domain of the working class, bohemian artists, rabid soccer fans, and tango artists.

Ask your Tour Leader about the possibility of seeing an optional Tango Show this evening.

Overnight in Buenos Aires.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Buenos Aires: Continued

Today we have a half-day WALKING tour.

Our first stop is the Centro Naval, one of the city's most exquisite buildings and a masterpiece of cast stone architecture. It's not generally open to the public, but sometimes they let you into the circular lobby.

The Kavanagh Building, at the time of its construction in 1936, was the tallest building in South America, standing at about 120 m (400 ft) with over 30 stories. Designed as a residential structure, it took more than 16 years to sell the apartments in this Art Deco building.

Palacio Paz is perhaps the most beautiful of the Beaux Arts mansions in Buenos Aires; the Circulo Militar looks plucked from the Loire Valley. It was the home of the Paz family and took almost 12 years to build; the patriarch who commissioned it died waiting.

The General Jose de San Martin Monument celebrates General Jose de San Martin, who battled against Spain in the wars of independence and is known as the founder of the Argentine nation. The Palacio San Martin is another of the grand mansions that line Plaza San Martin, this was the home of the powerful Anchorenas family whose prestige dated to colonial times in Argentina. The Islas Malvinas-Falkland Islands Memorial honors the more than 700 Argentines who died in the war over the Islas Malvinas/Falkland Islands chain in the brief war with Great Britain in early 1982.

The Torre Monumental (British Clock Tower) is a 1916 gift from the British community in Buenos Aires, along with all other things British, was renamed in response to the Islas Malvinas/Falkland Islands War and is called the Argentine Big Ben by some. Decorated with British royal imperial symbols, the base was partly destroyed by an angry mob during an Islas Malvinas-Falkland Islands memorial service. Inside the

tower you'll find a small Buenos Aires City Tourism Information Office.

Retiro Station was opened in 1915 and was built with British technological assistance. Four British architects designed it, and the steel structure was made in Liverpool, England, and shipped to Argentina to be assembled.

Our tour ends in the Galerias Pacifico in time for your lunch break. This is the most famous shopping mall in Buenos Aires, opened in 1891. The building was designed to recall the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, with its long halls, glass cupola, and several tiers of shops.

Overnight in Buenos Aires.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Buenos Aires - Fly to Bariloche

A direct flight from Buenos Aires brings us to Bariloche, located in the heart of the Lake District. The Nahuel Huapi National Park extends over 750,000 hectares, of which 330,000 is a National Reserve. Situated in the southwest of Neuquen Province and northwest of Rio Negro, it stretches from the Patagonian steppes to the high Andes. On account of abundant rainfall and summer melt from snowfields and glaciers, there is a great number of lakes and also rivers that flow either to the Atlantic or the Pacific oceans. Lake Nahuel Huapi, covering an area of 60,000 hectares, is the largest in the area.

This afternoon we visit the Francisco P. Moreno Patagonian Museum, inaugurated by National Parks in 1940. It is named after the famous explorer of the Andes and the Patagonian rivers, who donated the lands that were later transformed by the government into the first national park in Argentina. It has halls specializing in natural science, ethnography, pre-history and local and regional history. It also has a library and a bookstore.

Bariloche has a very strong Central European influence; most of the first settlers were of Swiss, German, or Northern Italian origin. These people gave the city its European style, with Swiss chalets, ceramics, chocolates, and neat shop windows. However something tells you that you are not in Europe; boats are seldom seen in the huge Nahuel Huapi Lake, the roads are swallowed up in the wilderness as soon as they leave the city and at night, there are no lights on the opposite shore of the lake.

You will have time to explore the lakeside and to visit Bariloche town with it's chocolate shops and excellent visitors' centre.

Overnight in the Bariloche area.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Bariloche Area: Small Circuit

Today we have the classic half-day tour of the Bariloche region. We will get a general overview of the surrounding area along a 60 Km (40 mi) partial loop excursion, all on a paved road. Our outing heads westward from Bariloche on the highway to Llao Llao along the southern shore of Lake Nahuel Huapi. At Km 8, the road passes Playa Bonita, a small harbour and popular beach. Cerro Campanario, the Belltower Hill, is at Km 18 (mile 12), where our bus may stop on the outward leg or when returning. The view from the top of this hill, reached after a seven minute chairlift ride, is the highlight of the trip. The Catedral Ski Village, at the base of the ski slopes, and part of the city of Bariloche, are visible from this spectacular 360 degree look-out.

The tour continues toward St Eduard's chapel and the Llao Llao Hotel. It is after passing the hotel's golf course, at the 100 inch yearly rainfall boundary, that the Valdivian Rain Forest begins. This is a temperate rain forest, with vines canes and lush vegetation. Our tour continues through a thick beech forest surrounding the western Moreno Lake passing by the base of Lopez Mountain, a sheer 3650 m (12,000 ft) face of rock.

We'll have a short stop further along the road for a breathtaking view high above Moreno Lake, the Puerto Panuelo Harbour, Victoria Island and smaller islands on the lake. On the return trip, the road crosses the bridge between the Moreno lakes and then joins the main road back to Bariloche.

Overnight in the Bariloche area.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Bariloche, Argentina - Lake Crossing - Puerto Varas, Chile

The Andean Lakes Crossing is the most scenic way to travel from Argentina to Chile. This spectacular crossing of the Andes takes us through lakes and mountain passes from Bariloche
to Puerto Varas, and occurs in a very well-orchestrated combination of boat and bus. Our luggage is handled for us -- you just sit back and enjoy the scenery.

After breakfast we leave by bus to Puerto Panuelo, where we will board the ship to navigate to the Puerto Blest Port, where we will arrive at 11:30. From there we will travel by bus to the Puerto Alegre Port at 13:30 where we will embark to navigate further. We then board a bus that will take us across the border to Chile at an altitude of only 976 m (3,200 ft); we continue on to Peula from which we embark towards Petrohue, sailing on the Lago Todos los Santos. Weather-permitting, we will have views of the Osorno Volcano, and the mountains, Puntiagudo and Tronador. Imposing views of the volcano Volcan Osorno y Calbuco dominate the landscape. A simple boxed lunch is provided today.

At +/- 19:30 we arrive in Puerto Varas, the City of Flowers (due to our late check-in, dinner on your own this evening).

Overnight in Puerto Varas.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 12 Puerto Varas - Fly to Punta Arenas - Torres del Paine

Today we fly to Punta Arenas and continue by road to Torres del Paine National Park, a full day of travel.

The Torres del Paine (Towers of Paine) are spectacular granite pillars which soar almost
vertically more than 2000 m (6,000 feet) above the Patagonian landscape. The park in which the high peaks sit may be considered the finest national park in all of South America. With turquoise lakes, roaring waterfalls, rivers and creeks, dense forests and sprawling glaciers, this is an unequalled destination.

Overnight at Torres del Paine.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Torres del Paine National Park

Today we spend the entire day at Torres del Paine National Park.

Some say "Paine" come from the name of an early settler. Others say the name comes from an ancient Indigenous word meaning blue -- hearkening to the intense blue of the area's lakes. Whatever the name comes from or means, this is a spectacular park, comparable to Yellowstone or Yosemite in the US. Founded in 1959, Torres del Paine takes in 180,000 ha (450,000 acres). In 1978 UNESCO gave the park World Heritage status, recognizing it as a biosphere especially worthy of international recognition.

The park is part of the Paine Massif, which lies east of the high central Andean spine. These medium high mountains emerge suddenly from the plains of the Patagonian steppes. The mountains are granite, capped by crumbly sedimentary rock that used to lie on the valley floor. Before the park was acquired by the Chilean government, it belonged to ranchers who overgrazed and also burned down forests to increase pasture area.

The park is still recovering from this devastation, but it's a chance to see what nature can do to fix itself if given a chance. The glaciers of the park are in quick retreat -- up to 17 m (56 ft) a year for the last 90 years, creating a fascinating study of plant succession and soil build-up from bare rock to forest. The flora of the park ranges from grassland to southern beech forests. Many parts of the park were too remote for the cattle ranchers and exist today in a pristine state.

The animal stars of the park are the guanacos and the rheas. Rheas are an ostrich-like bird; guanacos are wild South American cameloids, related to the domesticated llama and alpaca. Native peoples hunted both across the plains, using every part for food and sheltering hide and feathers. When the Europeans came, the guanaco were slaughtered to make way for cattle, and almost became extinct.

We will travel through the park in our coach stopping at various points of interest and scenic viewpoints. We will also have an opportunity to walk one of the many easy-going trails that afford expansive views of the mountains, glaciers, and waterfalls for which Patagonia is famous.

Overnight at Torres del Paine.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Torres del Paine, Chile - Calafate, Argentina

Today we travel by road to El Calafate, a resort town on Lake Argentino situated at the entrance to Los Glaciares National Park.

Named after a berry that grows in the area, the town of El Calafate was formerly a trading post for local ranchers, but in recent years tourism has spurred rapid growth. The centre of town and the lively main street Avenida del Libertador are lined with trees and a variety of trendy shops (try the calafate berry ice cream), restaurants, and bars.

This pleasant and colourful town will be our comfortable base for our glacier viewing in the area.

Overnight in Calafate.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 15 Calafate: Lago Argentina Glacier Cruise

Today we explore the glaciers, mountains, forests and lakes of Los Glaciares National Park on board a luxury cruise boat. We spend a full day relaxing on a stylish watercraft, taking in views of the Patagonian ice field. This morning we transfer the pier to join our cruise, which offers the best opportunity to visit the Spegazzini, Upsala, and the Perito Moreno glaciers in an intimate way.

We cruise out of the Upsala Channel toward the iceberg barrier, then to the largest glacier in the park; the Spegazzini Glacier. Continue to Puesto de las Vacas, where we will disembark and take a short guided walk through the icefields. During our journey, admire dramatic views and enjoy spectacular photo ops of the natural surroundings, including forests, glaciers, icefields, bays, and steppes.

We will then navigate toward Punta Avellaneda and Boca del Diablo to reach the Canal Spegazzini to see the glacier that bears the same name. The cruise will arrive at Puesto de Las Vacas (an extremely quiet bay in the Canal Spegazzini), where we can enjoy a guided walk with stunning panoramic views of the Spegazzini Glacier.

We continue toward Herminita Peninsula; the series of ice floes of the most varied colours and shapes, anticipates the proximity of Upsala Glacier. We will stop in front of the barrier of ice floes which at present is blocking the entrance to Canal Upsala. If the weather conditions are good we will observe the glaciers at a distance.

We continue to Canal de los Tempano to finally reach Perito Moreno Glacier. Huge icebergs on the glacier's 60 m (180 foot) high face calve and collapse into the Canal de los Tempanos as it advances about 100 m (300 feet) a year. The roar of the gigantic ice wall as it crashes into the surrounding channel is an unforgettable experience.

NOTE: Though weather may seem fine in Calafate, the weather on the water and near the glaciers can be completely different. You should be prepared with layered clothing and a warm hat.

Late afternoon we return to Calafate.

Overnight in Calafate.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 16 Calafate: Glaciarium & Time at Leisure

This morning we visit the Glaciarium, a modern interpretation glaciological centre and one of the few glacier museums in the world. The understanding of glaciers and environmental awareness are our main subjects. The exhibits include models, dioramas, photographs, screens, interactive representations, and a 3D documentary.

We return to Calafate where you will have the balance of the day to enjoy this charming town.

Overnight in Calafate.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 17 Calafate - Fly to Ushuaia & Tierra del Fuego National Park

Today we fly to Ushuaia on the island of Tierra del Fuego.

Ushuaia is considered the world's southernmost city. In 1520, Magellan passed through the strait that now bears his name, in search of a sea route to the spice islands of Asia. The Yahgan Indians built the fires that inspired Europeans to give this region its name -- "The Land of Fire". At first, very little attention was paid to this rocky and glacial shoreline, and its indigenous Indian population. It was not until the demise of Spain's colonial domination of the region in the late 1800's, that other Europeans began settling here. Ushuaia lies on the north shore of the Beagle Channel, at the very heart of the archipelago, and just east of the Parque Nacional Tierra del Fuego. Since 1950, the town has played host to an important naval base, supporting Argentine claims in Antarctica.

Ushuaia has one of the world's most dramatic settings: surrounding jagged glacial peaks rise from sea level to nearly 1500 m (4,500 ft). In 1870, the South American Missionary Society, a British-based organisation, made Ushuaia its first permanent outpost in the Fuego region.

This afternoon will be spent in the Tierra del Fuego National Park. Just a short drive from town, this pristine nature reserve is home to hundreds of species of birds, in addition to bountiful varieties of plant life. At Lapatoia Bay we reach the southern end of the Pan-American Highway, which starts in Alaska and runs all the way down through Canada, the USA, Central and South America.

Overnight in Ushuaia.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 18 Ushuaia: Beagle Channel Cruise

Today, weather permitting, we include a cruise on the Beagle Channel, named after the ship on which Darwin sailed through here in 1832. The island of Tierra del Fuego is divided between Argentina and Chile and the Beagle Channel forms part of the border between the two countries. In addition to spectacular scenery, we should see many species of marine mammals and birds, including a penguin colony (the actual presence of penuins can rely on seasonality and recent conditions - so no promises!).

You will also have time to discover this interesting town. We suggest a visit to the old prison of Ushuaia located within the confines of the naval base. The penitentiary was constructed by the prisoners themselves between 1902 and 1920. Now this impressive complex houses the Antarctic Museum, the maritime museum, a modern art gallery as well as a restored wing of the prison, complete with cells inhabited by some of the infamous prisoners.

Please note: As Tierra del Fuego is so close to the Antarctic Circle and surrounded by water, the weather here is extremely changeable hour by hour. In order to maximise our sightseeing, we may have to alter the sequence of our activities. Your Tour Leader will do his/her best to ensure that you see all the items listed on these days but, in the event of extreme weather, other activities may have to be substituted.

Overnight in Ushuaia.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 19 Ushuaia - Fly to Mendoza

Late this afternoon we fly to Mendoza (likely via Cordoba or Buenos Aires), the provincial capital, situated in the pre-mountainous Andes, and one of the largest and most beautiful cities of Argentina. Among its highlighted characteristics it features tree-lined streets, gardens, pathways and trolleybuses. Mendoza is the heart of the viticulture activity in the country and the starting point for practicing adventure and mountain sports: skiing, mountain climbing and rafting.

Overnight in Mendoza.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 20 Mendoza: Town Tour

Mendoza is one of the most charming capitals of Argentina. It has a dry and sunny climate and a design that consists of large streets, wide sidewalks shaded by old trees, low construction, and ample green areas. Many of its streets have adjacent irrigation channels which give them a special charm; the ditches and canals remind the visitor that Mendoza has grown thanks to irrigation technology and development.

Today we have a half-day guided tour of the town, on which we'll see Government House, San Martin Park, Independence Square, Plaza Espana, and Plaza del Castillo, where there is a museum that was built on the foundations of the old Town Hall where excavations, old photographs and elements from the past can be observed. They are evidence of the earthquake that damaged the city in 1861, three hundred years after its foundation.

Balance of the day at leisure to enjoy Mendoza.

Overnight in Mendoza.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 21 Mendoza Wine Tour - Fly to Santiago, Chile

The Mendoza area is the fastest growing wine producing region in the world and it is Argentina's most popular spot to travel to for wine tours and tastings. Located in the shadow of Mt Aconcagua, the vineyards in the Mendoza wine region are at one of the highest elevations in the world. Receiving little rainfall per year, the vines are irrigated with runoff from melted glaciers in the Andes. Primarily, it is Malbec that is grown, a grape that thrives in the high altitude, arid region of Mendoza. Other varietals include Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Chardonnay.

Today we will visit two wineries for which the region is famous. As quality, season, and customer feedback can vary, we do not pre-determine which properties we will be visiting far in advance. Your Tour Leader will advise on today's activities in greater detail while on tour.

Today we include lunch at a wine estate (instead of dinner). If available, we may also be able to enjoy an olive oil tasting.

Later this afternoon we transfer to the airport for our flight to Santiago, Chile's capital and largest city, located in a valley surrounded by the snow-capped Andes and the Chilean Coast Range. Because our flight is likely over the dinner hour, and due to our substantial lunch, we do not include a group dinner this evening (most travellers grab something light at the airport as we wait to board).

Overnight in Santiago.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 22 Santiago & Valparaiso

Today we travel to central Chile's Pacific coast and visit the colonial city of Valparaiso, an excellent example of late 19th-century urban and architectural development in Latin America. The route to Valparaiso takes us through the coastal plain and past Casablanca Valley, Chile's fastest growing wine region. Valparaiso ('Paradise Valley') is one of Chile's most important seaports and an increasingly vital cultural center. The city was the first and most important merchant port on the sea routes of the Pacific coast of South America that linked the Atlantic and Pacific oceans via the Strait of Magellan. The importance of the vibrant seaport began to decline after the construction of the Panama Canal in the early 1900s.

Built upon dozens of steep hillsides overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Valparaiso boasts a labyrinth of streets and cobblestone alleyways, embodying a rich architectural and cultural legacy. Valparaiso is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is often considered to be one of Latin America's most intriguing urban areas. The majority of the houses were constructed between 1880 and 1940. The neighborhood's economic and social lifeline was a system of funiculars that climbed the precipitous slopes, carrying people and goods like a series of elevators on wheels. In its heyday, the 'elevators' of Valparaiso had 31 station houses perched at points across the city's steep terrain.

We will start with a visit to La Sebastiana, one of poet Pablo Neruda's homes-turned-museums. From here we will continue to the heart of the historic quarter where we stroll the streets and enjoy a ride on one of the city's many elevators. Ascendor Artilleria, built in 1898, is one of the oldest still in operation and offers beautiful views of the coastline. The Cordillera funicular is situated on Cerro Cordillera, and was opened in the year 1887. This is the steepest and second oldest 'elevator' in Valparaiso.

Nearby along the coast we find the popular beachside resort of Vina del Mar. Vina del Mar has been nicknamed the 'Garden City' and, as Chile's premier beach destination, it stands to reason Viña del Mar would be packed full of scrumptious seafood eateries. Better yet, thanks to a burgeoning fishing industry and its proximity to the ocean, the seafood here is about as fresh as it gets. Today we include lunch here in lieu of dinner.

Return back to Santiago.

Overnight in Santiago.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 23 Santiago: City Tour

Today we have a tour of central Santiago.

Founded in 1541 by Pedro de Valdivia, Santiago was attacked and overrun by Mapuche Indians just six months later. Spanish troops fortified the summit of Cerro Santa Lucia, and made immediate plans to rebuild the settlement. For almost 2 years, Santiago remained all but a settlement under siege. By the end of the 16th century, the settlement was made up of just 200 houses, with a population of no more than 2,000.

We will visit Santiago's Plaza de Armas (ongoing renovations and possible limited viewing / access). As the midpoint of the Spanish settlement of 1541, the square was once a military training ground -- hence its name -- but with time it became the focus of Santiago's social and commercial life with some of the nation's most accomplished architecture.

We visit the Cathedral in the plaza and see the old post office. We also visit the Centro Cultural Palacio de la Moneda, and head to Cerro Santa Lucia for a view of the city. We visit the central market to see the various types of seafood on offer, and make a stop in Bellavista neighborhood. and 1990. From here we take a stroll through the Quinta Normal Park looping back to our hotel.

On your free time, you may consider a visit to the Pre-Columbian Art Museum and/or Museum of Memories and Human Rights, dedicated to the victims of human rights violations during the civic-military regime led by Augusto Pinochet between 1973.

Overnight in Santiago.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 24 Departure

Today is free to explore and enjoy Santiago.

Departure from Santiago (most flights depart Santiago in the evening).

BUEN VIAJE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast