



SOUTH AMERICAN HIGHLIGHTS TOUR 2012 PROPOSED ITINERARY PREPARED SPECIALLY FOR

SUN DAY 1: AUSTRALIA – BUENOS AIRES (L*)

Interstate passenger's connect through Sydney and fly to South America, changing aircraft in Santiago. Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina is a fascinating cosmopolitan city. Considered the Paris of South America, Buenos Aires is a true International city characterized by its wide boulevards and definite European accents. Its grand buildings, varied culture and nightlife, is why it is compared to Paris. The Portenos, as the residents of Buenos Aires are called, seem more European too – but this is hardly surprising considering that most are European descendants, mainly Italian, immigrants who settled here in the 19th century. Along with them came a culture and a cuisine that still flavours the city and can be enjoyed in countless art galleries, theatres and museums, as well as fine restaurants. But the city has also spawned its own art forms, notably the Tango, for which Buenos Aires is famous. Its distinct neighbourhoods like La Boca and Recoleta are not to be missed so one may really appreciate the character of this great city. You can enjoy Florida Street; the nine-block pedestrian mall is a shoppers' paradise, with fine leather handbags, belts and wallets, antelope and leather jackets, shoes and fashion goods. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

MON DAY 2: BUENOS AIRES (B,D)

Your morning half day city tour begins on '9 de Julio Avenue', the widest in the city, passing the Obelisk, the monument that symbolizes the city, and the famous Colon Theatre (Opera House), a masterpiece of architecture with superb acoustics. The tour continues to San Telmo neighbourhood, the original centre of the city, and to Plaza De Mayo (May Square), its historical and political centre. The Plaza is surrounded by Government House or 'Casa Rosada' (pink house), the Cabildo, an historical building which was the centre of colonial political life, the Metropolitan Cathedral and the Town Hall, site of the city government. Continue on to La Boca district, a picturesque neighbourhood where the Italian immigrants settled, famous for colourful 'Caminito' street. The tour continues along Avenida de Mayo, typically Spanish, to 'Plaza de los dos Congresos' just in front of the Congress Building. Head north, through the aristocratic Recoleta district, known for its Cemetery to Palermo, a wide and beautiful park located in the heart of one of the most elegant areas in the city. The rest of the day is at leisure, or you could explore the many museums and art galleries that exist in this amazing city of contrasts. This evening we are met by our host and taken to one of Argentina's famous steak houses, to experience some of the best beef in the world prior to our Tango/Folkloric show.

TUE DAY 3: BUENOS AIRES (B)

This morning you are collected at approx 09:30 for your tour that includes the northern residential zone, Tigre and a cruise on some of the many canals that form the delta of the capital's Parana River. Start by travelling to the neighbourhood of Olivos, where the Presidential Residence is located and pass the towns of Martinez, La Lucila, Acassuso and San Isidro until reaching the Tigre, where we will take a boat/catamaran to navigate different rivers and streams that delineate the Delta of the Paraná River. Within the delta there are a number of channels, weekend houses, and clubs, some with beautiful buildings such as the Venetian style Italian club, later returning to Buenos Aires and your hotel. This afternoon explore on your own!

WED DAY 4: BUENOS AIRES (B)

You could even take the fast ferry to the amazingly quaint town of Colonia in Uruguay. Walk down Ave Cordoba approx 600mts from your hotel to the port and ferry terminal and you can purchase your ticket to Colonia or you can opt for the day excursion that gives you a tour and lunch on arrival in Colonia www.buquebus.com. This is a charming small town with an interesting historic section jutting into the River Plate, founded by Portuguese settlers from Brazil in 1680. It contains rebuilt city walls and quite a number of colonial buildings and narrow streets in the older part of town, such as the Parochial Church, the Municipal Museum in the old house of Almirante Brown, the Mansion of the Viceroy, the house of General Mitre, and the Farola (lighthouse). Later return to BA on the 1830 or 2100 ferry.

THU DAY 5: BUENOS AIRES – IGUAZU FALLS (B)

This morning you are transferred to the airport for your flight to Iguassu Falls - the world's most spectacular waterfalls on the border of Argentina and Brazil. The Iguacu River hurtles 60 metres over a cataract several kilometres wide into a churning cauldron below, sending clouds of spray high into the air. The Iguassu falls were first discovered in 1541 by Spanish explorers. The Argentine & Brazilian National Parks were created in 1934 & 1939 in order to protect the Iguacu River estuary, giving protection to 240 thousand hectares of subtropical forests. **Note:** National Park Taxes Approx US\$78.00 to be paid locally. Today be sure to pack a lot of film and/or make sure you have a lot of memory in your camera as you will no doubt need it! On arrival you are met and taken on a tour of the Argentinean side of the falls. Now you can stroll the many walkways that abound providing spectacular views and a great feel for the falls (getting wet). The surrounding vegetation, gives a great appreciation of the local flora and fauna (over 2,000 species of butterfly inhabit the Iguacu park area). You will have time to take the new Eco electric train around the top of the falls to see the Devil's Throat where you can walk out to the lookout for a completely different aspect of the falls.

FRI DAY 6: IGUAZU FALLS - RIO DE JANEIRO (B)

Today your tour will be to the Brazilian side of the falls. From the moment you enter the National Park, you know you are in for a treat! On arrival at the falls in front of the Das Cataratas hotel you start an exhilarating escorted walking tour starting with an amazing overall view of the falls! **Neither words nor photographs do the falls justice - they must be seen and heard in person.** As you commence your walk down the small catwalk the roar of the falls is deafening! There are numerous stops at observation decks which offer breathtaking panoramic views. The tour concludes at an amazing platform literally within hands reach of the falls, where you can watch the birds playing in the spray while marvelling at the magnitude of the falls! If you wish to get wet you can walk out on the mezzanine level footbridge for a great view into the Devils Throat. An elevator ride can also take you up to a viewing tower for an impressive overall view of the falls. There is plenty of time to take advantage of the helicopter ride for a truly spectacular birds eye view. Later, transfer to the airport for your flight to Rio.

Rio de Janeiro is a fascinating city set along a narrow alluvial strip between the mountains and the sea. With one of the healthiest climates in the tropics, Rio de Janeiro will allow you to discover the many attractions this city has to offer none the least being its Carnival atmosphere. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel

We suggest that you take in one of the famous samba show houses in Rio. This is the display of Carnival throughout the year, with beautiful costumes, the rhythm of a typical "samba school", wonderful "mulatas" and the diverse richness of the Brazilian Folklore. You must experience a gastronomic treat and eat out in one of Rio's famous Churrascarias", These "Churrascarias" are Barbecue Restaurants with a unique system of serving several types of meats brought to the table on skewers and cut before you, the Barbecue Dinner is part of Brazilian Folklore, and should definitely be experienced during your stay in this marvellous city.

SAT DAY 7: RIO DE JANEIRO (B)

This morning your tour takes you to Sugar Loaf Mountain. Ride the cable car, first to the "Morro da Urca" mountain, 270m above sea level and then to the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain, 395m above sea level. Here you get a different panoramic view of Rio. Returning to your hotel you will visit the Cathedral, Samba Stadium "Sambodromo" down town area, and if time permits, the Maracana football stadium.

If you're really adventurous you can visit the historic downtown (Centro) of Rio. Once there you are in the pulsating heart of the City, the Commercial and Financial centre of Rio. There is an abundance of great old colonial buildings such as the Theatro Municipal, Palacio Pedro Ernesto (City Hall), Biblioteca Nacional (Library), Museum of Fine Arts and the Federal Supreme Court to name a few. An interesting place that is a must to visit for a light refreshment, just to see the old opulence of the city, is the Confeitaria Colombo - Tea Rooms. Other sites of interest include both the historic Church of the Candelaria and the modern-style cathedral, the Municipal Theatre and several museums. Centro remains the heart of the city's business community. Or stroll the shopping precincts of this famous city. Maybe bargain for shoes or take advantage of an optional tour program.

SUN DAY 8: RIO DE JANEIRO (B)

This morning's tour of a Favela reveals to visitors the way of life of around 15% of Rio's population, and changes the general impression that the Favela's in Rio de Janeiro are all inhabited by criminals. It is a tour to understand this city, its contrasts and paradoxes. The tour takes the visitors to the Favela of "Vila Canoas", with around 2,500 inhabitants, and to "Rocinha", the largest Favela in Brazil, with 180,000 dwellers. a walking trip is made through the community getting a good idea of its social initiatives that are also part of the Favela's in Rio de Janeiro.

This afternoon your tour takes you by cog railway to the top of Corcovado Mountain (710 metres), to see the 40 metre high statue of Christ the Redeemer and to look out over the city and beaches. Your coach will meet you and return along the famous beaches - San Conrado, Leblon and Ipanema to your hotel at Copacabana.

MON DAY 9: RIO DE JANEIRO - PARATY (B)

This morning (Approx 08:30) you will be picked up at your hotel and transferred by regular "Costa Verde" transfer for a drive (Approx 4½ hours) along a scenic coastline to Paraty, considered one of the most beautiful historical sites in Brazil. In 1966 a federal decree classified the town as a National Historical Monument. From its port gold and precious stones that were mined in the interior were transhipped to Europe during colonial times. Here you will see typical Portuguese architecture and cobblestone streets in a setting, you could describe only as, "a living memory of colonial Brazil". On arrival you will be deposited at your hotel. This afternoon you have an incredible walking tour of this amazing city, which has gone from a trading post to national monument. Inhabited since 1650, Paraty has remained fundamentally unaltered since its heyday as a staging post for the eighteenth-century trade in Brazilian gold. Today, according to UNESCO, Paraty represents one of the world's most important examples of colonial architecture and the entire city has been elevated to the status of a national monument. The town centre is one of Brazil's first planned urban projects. The narrow cobbled streets are off limits to motorized vehicles. As we explore the historical Centre of Paraty, you will travel back in time. The construction of its old housing and churches reflect a certain style of that time and the mysterious masonry symbols, which decorate its walls, lead our imagination back to the old times of Brazil. The prohibition of motorized vehicles in the Centre certainly adds to this feeling of "time travel".

TUE DAY 10: PARATY (B)

Suggestions: Take a tour to the hinterland mountains of Paraty, and explore the National Park of Serra da Bocaina. Visit the old Sugar Mills and Cachaca Distilleries to view and maybe sample the local artisan products or trek the old Gold trail from the interior. Discover the immensely beautiful beaches of Trindade, (about 20Kms further down the coast) some of the most spectacular in the region; such as the long stretch of white sand of the Praia do Caixadaço, surrounded by palms and almond trees where, according to legend, pirates hid their stolen bounty, and Praia Brava, the most well-known, accessible by motor-boat or 30 minutes walking. For those interested in Brazilian foods and presentation you can even have a few hours learning the local Gastronomic skills.

We suggest you check with the reception/tour desk for tours of the bay on a typical schooner, stopping over at different islands and beaches. There are also bicycles for rent for an interesting way to view the area. Or just relax in one of the many coffee shops/bars (some almost out of Somerset Maugham's descriptions of early decadent life styles) or boutiques that abound in this unique setting.

WED DAY 11: PARATY - LIMA (B,D*)

This morning you are transferred along a scenic coastline, then heading inland to pick up the Via Dutra (main highway between Rio & Sao Paulo) The scenery is a mixture of rain forests, small villages and red earth, as you follow this though to Sao Paulo you will be amazed at the commerce and industry that prevalent along this main trunk route the closer you get to metropolis of Sao Paulo and the airport for your flight to Lima.

Peru is said to be a country of contrasts and Lima illustrates many of these. Called the "City of the Kings" by the Spanish conquistadors in 1535, it was the main city of the Spanish Empire in South America. Today's Lima combines extensive areas of elegant, colonial architecture with vibrant modernism and traces of pre-Inca and Inca civilisations. In Lima there are beautiful convents and churches, such as The Convent of Santo Domingo, the Church of San Francisco and the Cathedral, all of them reminders of the rich religious and colonial past. It has quaint historical districts such as Barranco and Rimac and dynamic, modern residential and business areas like Miraflores and San Isidro. Lima has fine hotels, well-supplied shops and excellent restaurants, many of them specialising in local seafood. While you are here, why not also sample local Afro-Peruvian or Andean music and dances at some of Lima's lively night spots? On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

THU DAY 12: LIMA (B,L)

Today your tour of the city starts with lunch at a typical restaurant “El Rustica”, prior to continuing through the exclusive residential areas of San Isidro and Miraflores. You will visit the Plaza de Armas, where the Presidential Palace is guarded by soldiers in colourful 18th Century uniforms, the Cathedral and the venerable San Francisco Monastery housing the best exhibition of Colonial Art in Latin America. The tour includes the Choir Hall, the Monks’ Library and the Sacristy, featuring a collection of Zurbarán and Rivera oil paintings. After visiting the Main Patio of the Cloister to see its fine XVI century Seville tiles and Moorish Arches, the tour will proceed to the Underground Crypts known as the Catacombs. Followed by a visit to the Larco Museum, located in a vice royal mansion of the 18th Century. The Museum has an extraordinary collection of gold, silver and copper artefacts from ancient Peru, along with a magnificent collection of ceramics belonging to the Pre-Colombian cultures. These give a great overview of the development of the Peruvian Cultures through their pottery. The museum boasts a fascinating erotica section along with a large display of textiles.

FRI DAY 13: LIMA – ICA (B)

Today you are transferred to the Bus station for your 7am coach service some 300 kilometres south of Lima through a torrid land of contrasts with long extensions of arid desert crossed by irrigated river valleys, to Ica. Ica is the most important city on the southern coast of Peru (actually it’s 50km from the ocean), and the centre of Peru’s wine and Pisco industry! The main attraction in the area is the excellent Regional Museum, which has a fine collection of artefacts showing how the different cultures that have inhabited the region developed. The textiles from the Paracas culture are well preserved, and the Nazca ceramics are superb. We also suggest that you visit the Museum of Anthropology. A must is to take a trip to the Oasis of Huacachina, its green coloured waters surrounded by old Villas. You could even try your hand at Sand dune surfing. Visit the Luren Park, explore the church, and try the local delicacy called “Manjarblanco” (a local sweet sold behind the Luren Church). Ica is also known for its wines and Pisco which you can sample while enjoying a great meal at El Otro Peñoncito.

SAT DAY 14: ICA (B)

Today is a free day to relax and enjoy you may wish to take the optional over flight of the famous Nazca Lines, which are one of the world’s great mysteries. At the local airport to join a small aircraft for an unforgettable over flight of the mysterious markings. (Hint: Don’t eat just prior to flight) Here you can appreciate the enormous figures of animals, birds and people etched in the desert sands, visible only from the air.

SUN DAY 15: ICA - LIMA (B)

This morning you will join a cruiser for a tour to the Ballestas and Guano Islands, where you will have time to view the many specimens of seabirds, sea lions, penguins and pelican. During the journey you will see the giant candelabrum carved on the hill before visiting the national park. This afternoon join your return coach service to Lima and transfer to your hotel.

MON DAY 16: LIMA - HEATH RIVER WILDLIFE CENTRE (B,D)

Early morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Puerto Maldonado, a small, rustic outpost jungle town located at the meeting of the Madre de Dios and Tambopata Rivers. It is here that you commence your Amazon experience! We are met by our guide at Puerto Maldonado airport and transferred to the port on the Tambopata River. Here we board a motorized canoe for a four-and-a-half hour journey to the Heath River Wildlife Centre. After descending the Tambopata River for 5 minutes to the confluence with the larger Madre de Dios River, our boat heads east, downstream on the mighty Madre de Dios River, passing small gold prospecting barges before reaching the Peru-Bolivia border. This stretch of the Madre de Dios River is particularly attractive, as more than 75% of the riverbank is still covered by towering, virgin rainforest, and periods of 15-20 minutes go by without a single sign of forest cutting. (For comparison, a similar length of river travel up the Tambopata River features only 10-15% of primary forest along the riverbank---the rest is in agriculture and freshly burned forest clearings). Here we transfer to a smaller motorized canoe and head up the narrow, intimate Heath River, which forms the wilderness border between Peru and Bolivia, to arrive at our 100% Indian-owned lodge, the only all-Indian-owned lodge in the Tambopata region. We will provide a complete box lunch during the river trip. In the late afternoon, our Ese Eja Indian hosts will take us to explore the forest surrounding the lodge in search for the various species of monkeys and hundreds of species of birds that make the rainforest home. After dinner we explore the forest by flashlight, including a visit to a small mammal clay lick if it is active.

TUE DAY 17: HEATH RIVER WILDLIFE CENTRE (B,L,D)

We rise early in the morning to board a motorized canoe for the 10-minute journey up the Heath River to the macaw and parrot clay lick. Brightly coloured parrots and macaws fly in by the hundreds to feed on the clay that detoxifies certain seeds and nuts they eat. Marvel at the cacophony of sound and colour as Red-and-green macaws vie for the best clay-eating position. A specially designed floating blind allows for proximity and complete concealment -- so you can even have breakfast and coffee while the birds are performing their morning ritual. When we return to the lodge, the guide leads us on an ethno-botanical walk through the forest, pointing out flora used in the daily lives of rainforest people. The guide explains how certain plants are used for medicinal or healing purposes, which ones can be made into the best bows and arrows, and how to select trees and leaves for home construction. After lunch and a short rest, we hike through the rainforest to the Pampas del Heath, the largest remaining undisturbed savannah in the Amazon. The contrast is striking as we emerge from the mature rainforest onto the grassland plain of the Pampas.

WED DAY 18: HEATH RIVER WILDLIFE CENTRE (B,L,D)

Our second full day at the lodge allows us to choose from a wide range of activities available in this exceptionally diverse tropical environment. Many people choose to make a second visit to the macaw clay lick. Later we can take a canoe tour around Cocha Moa, an oxbow lake that lies a short way downstream from the lodge. The reeds, fallen trees and forested shoreline of this lake teem with birds and other wildlife. Red Howler Monkeys may peer at us through the branches of the giant trees above us, while herons lie in wait among the fallen trees, cormorant-like Anhingas watch from the forest branches, and an Osprey may circle overhead. Flocks of brilliant Red-capped Cardinals gather on dead branches, and a colourful, primitive bird, the Hoatzin as it hops its ungainly way along the swampy water’s edge. In the afternoon we may travel an hour or so downriver to visit the Ese’Eja native community of Sonene, where we can meet these descendants of nomadic forest tribes, and catch a glimpse of those traditional life styles that they manage to maintain in the modern world. A chance to purchase handcrafts, made from a wide range of seeds collected from the forest. After dinner board our canoe once more, for an evening of spotting for caiman, the Amazonian cousin of the alligator. This region is home to the endangered black caiman, and we nearly always pick out a few with our powerful spotlight as we patrol the river.

THU DAY 19: HEATH RIVER - SANDOVAL LAKE (B,L,D)

We leave at dawn for the return trip downstream. This is peak hour for wildlife so we keep a sharp eye on the riverbanks, often spotting families of Capybara, and perhaps being rewarded with a rare jaguar sighting, or a tapir swimming across the current. We reach the Madre de Dios River, re-enter Peru, and set off upstream for the boat landing near Sandoval Lake Lodge.

We walk the 3km/2 mile trail to the narrow boat channel through flooded palm forest that leads to the open waters of this peaceful lake, stopping as we go to spot birds and butterflies. As our crew paddle us across to the lodge (motors are prohibited here), we may see the lake's surface broken by a massive Paiche – an Amazon fish that can reach 100kg/220lbs. Or perhaps we will hear the strange and haunting calls, and see the heads bobbing above the lake's surface, that will signal our first acquaintance with *Pteronura brasiliensis*, the Amazonian Giant Otter. After lunch at the lodge and a brief rest to avoid the early afternoon heat, we once again set off by boat or catamaran to explore the entire west end of the lake. Here, in the flooded palm forest we drift to the sounds of hundreds of Red-Bellied and Blue-and-yellow Macaws as they return to the palm forest for the night. Our viewpoint from the canoe often allows closer and more extended encounters with birds and mammals than on a typical forest trail hike, and we may witness intimate feeding and mating behaviour. On Lake Sandoval monkeys, in particular, have almost lost their fear of humans.

We return to the lodge around nightfall for dinner. After dinner we take to the boats once more, in search of black caimans, which today are extremely rare in the Amazon, but still common in this protected lake. They grow up to 4m in length, and compete with the Giant Otters for their share of the fishing. On clear nights we take our boat further out into the lake to get an unimpeded view of the vast southern sky, with its unfamiliar constellations and superb vistas of the Milky Way.

FRI DAY 20: PUERTO MALDONADO - CUZCO (B)

Early wake-up, breakfast and transport from the Sandoval Lodge to Puerto Maldonado, watching an unforgettable dawn on the river. Transfer to the airport for your flight to Cuzco the "Archaeological Capital of Americas" is an ancient city built over the site of the former Inca capital. Many streets are lined with perfect Inca stonework now serving as foundations for more modern buildings. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Time at leisure to acclimatise to the altitude (3399mts).

SAT DAY 21: CUZCO (B)

This morning a city tour of Cuzco, including the Main Square, Cathedral with its religious Art museum, 12-Angle Stone, Koricancha Temple of the Sun and the impressive ruins of the Sacsayhuaman fortress, overlooking the city of Cuzco a pre Inca masterpiece; Kenko, a rock sanctuary with its monolithic alter; the red fortress of Puca-Pucara and probably the best for great photos the beautiful Tambomachay, a fountain fed spring. **Note:** This includes the "City Ticket", mandatory for entrance to the museums and ruins around the city & Sacred Valley. (price may vary so may be a small local extra payment should the local municipality raise the price)

SUN DAY 22: CUZCO - SACRED VALLEY (B,L)

Today you have a full day tour to the colourful town of Písac founded during Colonial times, is set at the foot of a hill crowned by the remains of an Inca city. Here every day in the main square market, locals barter their products and artisans from all over the area sell their woven alpaca, wool blankets, and ponchos, engraved gourds, antique reproductions, jewellery, etc. On Sundays it is also the meeting place for Mayors from all the villages in the region, dressed in their traditional costumes to attend morning mass. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant prior to continuing by road along the sacred valley of the Incas to Ollantaytambo to view the fortress, before being dropped at your hotel. The Sacred Valley of the Incas was undoubtedly a key area of settlement to the Incas. Its agreeable climate and fertile plains make a rare and fruitful combination for the high Andes. Today the Sacred Valley remains a lush agricultural region supplying the city of Cuzco with much of its produce such as maize, fruit and vegetables.

MON DAY 23 SACRED VALLEY (B)

A day to relax in this amazing valley, walk to Ollantaytambo and explore the village, its people and its fortress. Today we suggest a walk or visit to the Uruabamba and take the walk Salinas a small village above a mass of terraced salt pans which are still in operation, a truly amazing sight. The walk is very interesting crossing rivers and passing tumbledown villages set below overhanging cliffs. Or if you are interested you can organise an optional trek down the Lares pass that offers you the amazing panoramic splendours of valleys, mountains and canyons with an opportunity to see unspoiled native villages and costumes.

TUE DAY 24: SACRED VALLEY - MACHU PICCHU (B)

This morning you will walk to the Ollantaytambo station to join the train. An approximately 1½ hour trip through scenic countryside is but a foretaste of wonders to come, following the swift-flowing Urubamba River, travelling parallel to the Inca Trail, seeing the ruins of their fortresses and bridges before arriving at Aguas Calientes, the small village at the base of Machu Picchu. Porters from your hotel will meet you at the train station and take your bags to the hotel. Walk to the bus station and board a park bus and ascend the mountain on a switchback road up to Machu Picchu, a UNESCO World Heritage site that is one of the Seven Wonders of the World - the ancient Incan City of the Condor! You're finally here, at one of the most energetically powerful and mysterious sacred places on earth! The climax is the sight of this ancient city, intact except for the straw roofs. Known as the 'Lost City', as it was never discovered by the Spanish conquerors and remained hidden until 1911. It is a maze of empty plazas, chambers and palaces connected by stairways carved out of solid rock. The setting on a mountaintop is unforgettable. Here you will continue with the 3 hour guided tour. After the day trippers leave around 3.00pm you will have the ruins to explore at your leisure. We suggest you walk back (allow about 3½ Hours) up the Inca Trail to Wiñay-Wayna the Inca gate, for a most spectacular view over the whole of Machu Picchu. Or you might even try walking to the Inca Bridge.

WED DAY 25: MACHU PICCHU - CUZCO (B,L)

More time to enjoy the serene atmosphere. **OPTION TO:** Make your own way up to the ruins to take another walk around the ruins and marvel at the ingenuity of the Incas. Its best to climb Huayna Picchu Mountain early in the day, here can marvel and the ingenuity of the Inca, while exploring the tunnels, ruins and sacred gardens. (**Important:** Remember your ticket for the second days entrance is Approx US\$45.00 + return bus ticket approx US\$14.00) Early-afternoon return to the station for lunch at a local Café, prior to your train trip back to Cuzco, arriving late afternoon. (Again depending on the local conditions you might detrain in Ollantaytambo or Poroy and continue to Cuzco by bus). On arrival you will be transferred to your hotel.

THU DAY 26: CUZCO (B)

A full day at leisure in Cuzco to explore on your own or take one of the many optional tours available such as a horse ride to Saqsaywaman, go river rafting in the Urubamba River, take a mystic tour of the Holy Places in the Andes, or attend a Shaman Witch session in Wasao Village. Explore some of the many markets and cooperatives that abound, relax and enjoy a coffee and cake overlooking the Plaza de Armas while watching the day to day activities of the locals going about the business in this fascinating village.

FRI DAY 27: CUZCO - PUNO (B,L)

A full day by coach (389Kms) from Cuzco to Puno (10 hours), visiting en route the Church of Andahuaylillas, also called the "Sistine Chapel of America", the Pikillacta ruins and of the temple of Raqchi. The remains of the central high wall of the Viracocha Temple, probably the largest roofed building built by the Incas, are impressive. On either side of the high wall, great sloping roofs were supported by rows of unusual round pillars, also of masonry topped by adobe. Nearby are the remains of large living quarters and many round store-houses. The whole complex is surrounded by a large stone wall several miles long. Climbing steadily up the valley to the highest point at La Raya at 4321mts above sea level. A short stop to inspect the hot mineral springs at Aguas Calientes then the contrasting difference of the windswept side of the Altiplano as we proceed to Juliaca and on to Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake. At each stop there will be the possibility to buy local handicrafts, Llama and Alpaca wool rugs and ponchos, and see how the local Indian people live. Your guide will give a commentary about the various ruins and other points of interest en-route, but all the entrance fees are to be paid locally (approx \$12.50) On arrival in Puno you will be transferred to your hotel.

SAT DAY 28: PUNO - COPACABANA (B)

Very early this morning (approx 6AM) you will board a small cruiser and cruise out on to Lake Titicaca the world's highest navigable lake and visit the Uros Indians, a primitive tribe that lives on the floating reed islands, some 5 kilometres off the shores in the middle of the lake, much of their way of life remains unchanged for centuries, they are said to be the direct descendants of the Incas! Hint this will happen before breakfast, you will return to you hotel approx 08:30 here you can have breakfast checkout and be ready to depart approx 09:15 you are collected and will travel to Copacabana via Juli. Copacabana, an attractive little red roofed town on the shores of Lake Titicaca and is virtually a living museum! This afternoon you will visit the local church which contains the famous 16th Century miracle-working Dark Virgin of the Lake, also known as the Virgin of Candelaria, who is the patron saint of Bolivia. Then, should you wish, there are optional tours to visit the "Horca del Inca" and "Baño del Inca". But in general the rest of the day is free to explore on your own. Stroll on the beach, explore the markets or as a special treat climb the steps up to Cerro Calvario and the Mountain Shrines. Plan to do this so you get there for the sunset, the spectacle is unreal, a 360° view covering Peru and Bolivia with the village and Lake Titicaca. Note: Take some snacks [cheese, biscuits and salami with you along with a bottle of wine] and have a picnic, an amazing location and magnificent end to a day. Remember to take a jacket as the temperature drops drastically once the sun goes down. In the evening try one of the many boutique coffee-shop/bars that play great music whilst you warm up with a nice glass of sangria, glühwein or local speciality.

SUN DAY 29: COPACABANA – SUN ISLAND (B,L,D)

Note:- Pack today so that you store your main luggage at the Rosario del Lago, taking with you just what you require for the overnight, as you will return to the hotel to continue to La Paz.

Early this morning, board a cruiser and sail to Sun Island (Approx 1 hour) the legendary birthplace of the Incas, the Sacred spot of the Incas, where the Incas were baptized. Land near the Pilkokaina ruins, Then continue by boat to Challapampa to see its museum and 40 minutes walk to Chincana Inca Temple or Labyrinth and the Sacred Rock. **Box-lunch included** at site and then 3 hours-walk from the southern the island to your accommodation at the Ecolodge "La Estancia", near Yumani community, where you'll overnight. (this one is a little more adventurous Ok)

This evening enjoy a spectacular sunset over the lake! the experience is most impressive, with a 360° view that encompasses Peru to the West and the snow-capped Royal Range of Bolivia to the East. Later after the sun has really set make sure you experience one of the best vista of stars and the Milky Way you will probably ever see!

Note: Should Overnight on Sun Island be not available due to limited rooms then there will be 2 nights at Rosario del Lago and a full day excursion/trek to Sun Island.

MON DAY 30: SUN ISLAND - LA PAZ (B)

Remember to wake up early to see the most beautiful sunrise on this side of the Andes! After breakfast walk down the Sacred Staircase past the Fountain of Youth and Yumani, a place with magnificent landscapes and people who have kept their culture alive, visit the local museum to see rich treasures from Tiahuanaco to the Inca cultures, visit the local museum to see rich treasures from Tiahuanaco to the Inca cultures. Take the boat to Copacabana (2 hours), here you can visit the famous Dark Virgin, its great church and a stroll of the town. This afternoon approx 13:30 continue on your regular Turibus transport to La Paz where you are transferred to your hotel on arrival.

TUE DAY 31: LA PAZ (B)

Your morning tour will show you the colonial sector, witchcraft market, residential zones and the weird landscape of Moon Valley. The afternoon is free for strolling along the Prado, a chance to catch that last minute bargain at one of the many markets or play a game of golf (9 holes) at the worlds highest commercial golf course, or an optional tour to Inca ruins at Tiahuanaco. Or, perhaps take a trip to Mount Chacaltaya, the world's highest ski field situated at 5,200 metres above sea level. From here you get spectacular views over the vast Bolivian Altiplano, which encompasses La Paz and Lake Titicaca, but my guess is that you will be cruising the markets for that nice piece of silver and Lapis, magnificent wood carving or an Alpaca treat!

WED DAY 32: LA PAZ - AUSTRALIA (B,D*)

Catch that last minute bargain at one of the many markets prior to your transfer to the airport. Remember to allow US\$25.00 departure tax.

THU DAY 33: Lost in flight.**FRI DAY 34: AUSTRALIA ARRIVE (B*)**

Onward in Sydney there are onward connections available to domestic points:

Itinerary, meals and hotels are subject to change without notice.
(B,L,D) Indicates meals included - (B*,L*,D*) Indicates meals in flight.
MEAL INDICATORS ACT AS A GUIDE ONLY

**Southern Lakes extension
(Pre program making total 39 days)**

TUE DAY 01: AUSTRALIA - SANTIAGO (B)

Interstate passenger's connect through Sydney and fly to South America, changing aircraft in Santiago. Chile's capital is one of the most beautifully set out cities in South America. The Mapocho River crosses the city from East to West, there are many public gardens laid out with admirable taste and the majestic chain of the Andes, with its snow capped heights, is in full view, for much of the year. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

WED DAY 02: SANTIAGO - PUERTO MONTT (B)

Time this morning to make a walking tour: If staying in the downtown area (If out in the suburbs take the Metro [very clean and easy to use] to Moneda station) its an easy walk up Teatinos to Plaza de la Constitucion to see the Moneda Palace (Presidential Palace), Plaza de Armas. Here you can appreciate some fine old colonial architecture inc the Cathedral & Museum of National history, you might like to sample some local delights on the south side of the plaza. Then the Casa Colorado, built in 1769 and home to the Museum of History of Santiago, the Teatro Municipal to the Santa Lucia hill, a 70 metre rocky outcrop that gives some striking views over the city. Crossing the River Mapocho to the Parque Metropolitano to take a Funicular ride will take you up the 300 Metres to the summit and some amazing views across the city. Later transfer to the airport for your flight. Puerto Montt, a very picturesque seaport city is the main distribution base for tourism to the Lake District. It is also an important fishing port and market centre making it very inviting to enjoy the excellent seafood delights of the region. Take a tour of this delightful city and visit its surroundings, such as the picturesque Angelmo fishermen's wharf and its seafood market. Chinquihue village with its oysters hatcheries and palafites is also worth seeing besides the downtown area and residential district of Puerto Montt. On arrival you are met and transferred to your hotel.

THU DAY 03: PUERTO MONTT (B)

Your tour begins with a ferry crossing to Chiloe Island. This was the last bastion of Spanish influence in Chile. Here the two cultures have mixed in its own distinctive way, giving us a chance to experience some of this special music, mythology and customs. We visit Ancud its cathedral and the San Antonio Fort and regional museum

FRI DAY 04: PUERTO MONTT - BARILOCHE (B)

This morning depart Puerto Montt by bus travelling along the shores of Lake Llanquihue via Puerto Varas to Petrohue. En-route you will see the Osorno Volcano, which has a perfect cone similar to Mount Fujiama. Here you leave the bus and join a cruiser where you sail the length of Lake Todos los Santos to Peulla, time to soak up the surrounding panorama prior to you rejoin your bus and continue on an isolated road amid towering peaks to Puerto Frias and the border where you cross into Argentina. It is here you board a Catamaran for the cruise across Lake Nahuel Huapi to Puerto Panuelo, where you again board a bus for the drive to Bariloche. On arrival in Bariloche you will be transferred to your hotel. Bariloche, a charming Swiss-looking city located on the southern shore of the Lake Nahuel Huapi, with its wooden chalets perched upon a glacial moraine at the foot of Cerro Otto. Enjoy the surrounding views and perhaps visit one of the chocolate factories so famous in this town.

SAT DAY 05: BARILOCHE (B)

Suggestions: You could take a tour up Cerro Otto or the ski field of Cerro Cathedral. Or just explore the natural wonders of this lakeside village so reminiscent of Switzerland. You could even hire a car and drive the magnificent Route of the 7 lakes to the magical town of San Martin del los Andes, returning by the Calefufu Pass to Bariloche. Or take a cruise along Nahuel Huapi Lake to Quetrihue Peninsula to admire the Arrayanes forest formations that is unique in the world with centenary specimens. (Marvellous myrtle woods, whose trees average 15 mts in height) A small house built in the middle of the forest and the deer living in the area, (Called Pudú-Pudú) small in size, were the inspiring muse of the famous Walt Disney for his cartoon "Bambi". proceeding along the lake to Victoria Island to take lunch in a magnificent setting.

SUN DAY 06: BARILOCHE - BUENOS AIRES (B)

More time to enjoy this tranquil village prior to your transfer to the airport for your flight to Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina is a fascinating cosmopolitan city. Hear you will join the main tour program

Other options available:-

MV Australis cruise, this can be combined with Torres del Pain National Park and/or El Caliphate Available September though April

Have a look:- <http://www.australis.com/site/en-us/routes-itineraries/punta-arenas-ushuaia-route/>

Chilean Fjords by ferry":- http://www.navimag.com/sitio/en/patagonia_fjords/programs.aspx

Las Torres:- <http://www.lastorres.com/>

Patagonia Camp:- http://www.patagoniacamp.com/index_eng.html

Ecuador and Galapagos cruise - Ex Lima

Have a look:- <http://www.kleintours.com/en/galapagos-cruises.html> or

<http://www.galasam.com.ec/liberty.htm> to name a few!

or Island hopping see:- <http://www.redmangrove.com/tours/programa4.html>

We await your instructions as many more options available on request.

Hasta Pronto; Graham Strachan
"Proudly Australian but Latin at heart!"



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