



# RIDE WORLD WIDE

## Argentina

### Argentine Adventure with Jakob von Plessen 2012

#### Ride Information Sheet

This ride takes you to the heart of Argentina on a uniquely personal trip that explores the Patagonian Andes as well as experiencing the hospitality of private ranches in Buenos Aires province. It has been put together by Argentinian-raised Jakob von Plessen who has spent several years guiding riding safaris in Kenya with Tristan Voorspuys of Offbeat Safaris which has given him the experience to produce a remarkable adventure with an eye for detail. The 10 night program has several optional activities such as polo, rough shooting and fishing.



From Buenos Aires you fly south to the Argentine Lake District and climb high into the snow capped mountains through land unspoiled by man, where pristine turquoise rivers offer refreshing swims and entertaining trout fishing. From Patagonia you fly north and stay on the von Plessen family's private island on the Tigre river before continuing on to Jakob's home in Buenos Aires province about 400km south of the city. El Golf is one of the properties on the estancia El Boquerón, erstwhile home of the old aristocratic Anchorena family. Estancia El Boquerón has played host to Argentine presidents, Chilean Nobel Literary prize winner Gabriela Mistral and Argentine literary giant Jorge Luis Borges. "El Golf", so named because it was formerly the estate's private club house, has been beautifully redecorated by Jakob's mother, interior designer Christl von Plessen (there is however no golf course, but wonderful open country, great for a good gallop). Surrounded by open rolling farmland and in its 100 acre park with specimen trees planted by an Englishman over a century ago, the estancia offers ample opportunity for excellent riding. As well as long rides out over neighbouring estancias, there is the chance for some fun chukkas, a little 'stick and ball' polo, or to try the cross country and steeplechase courses.

**Dates** Rides are for 10 nights and are arranged from set dates during the season. Please see the dates below and contact us to check availability. Other dates and tailor-made itineraries can be arranged on request for private groups of 4 to 8 riders.

**The Horses** The horses in Patagonia are locally born and bred, mainly energetic Argentine Criollos and some Criollo crosses with quarter horse, Thoroughbred and even Percheron blood. They are bred for working cattle, are strong and sensible, yet are also responsive, athletic and forward going making them a real pleasure to ride. Tack is Argentine style - saddles are similar to a Maclellan style army saddle (a western without the big pommel) topped with a comfortable sheepskin, and saddle-bags are provided. The horses at El Golf are Thoroughbred and Thoroughbred crosses, all fun rides and immaculately cared for, the tack room is an experience in itself. The horses are ridden local style, similar to western riding, and are used to neck reining. They go best when ridden with a light contact and relaxed seat. There is a weight limit for riders of about 100kgs / 15 ½ stone but please contact us to check suitable horses are available if your weight is close to this (some heavier experienced riders may also be taken by prior arrangement).

**Riding** The riding in Patagonia is about 6 to 8 hours a day, with 2 hours or so break for lunch and a siesta. On some days you will be riding from camp to camp, on others it will be day rides out from base. At El Golf it is very flexible, with hours tailored to suit and a wide range of riding and horses available, including stick and ball polo, a cross country course, and more relaxing hacks out across peaceful rolling farmland.



**Pace** The pace varies with the different terrain. In Patagonia, some routes are rugged, narrow or quite steep and in places the vegetation is thick requiring a slow pace - although you are free to move on where the going allows and there are often energetic canters. When riding at El Golf the pace can be varied to suit. There are lots of places where the going is good and open so plenty of opportunities for long, fast canters but the riding can also be leisurely and relaxed for those who prefer.

**Riding Experience** With a good selection of fun, forward going horses and varied going, this is an excellent choice for intermediate riders and above, who are comfortable, relaxed and secure in the saddle at a walk, trot and fast canter, and are looking for good quality riding. The Patagonian leg of the trip includes widely varied and sometimes steep terrain as well as river crossings, so it helps to have some experience of this type of riding. You will enjoy your riding much more if you are riding fit. If you don't currently ride regularly, we recommend you accustom yourself to the hours you will spend in the saddle.

**Terrain** The land you explore from Estancias Tres Lagos and Arroyo Verde takes you deep into the mountains where steep hillsides will challenge those who are not good with heights, however the views are breathtaking and worth the climb. The horses are adept at covering this terrain but you do need to be confident. You may also be asked to get off to lead up or down any steep hills, so should be comfortable walking on uneven ground and on a gradient. At El Golf you have riding ranging from hacks across rolling fields to a blast around a cross country course skirting the landscaped gardens.

**Accommodation** The accommodation in Patagonia varies and includes lodges and a log cabin overlooking the magnificent Lake Traful, and also more basic 2 man dome tents (sleeping bags are provided). On Isla Don Felipe the accommodation is a stylishly renovated house with shared bathrooms. At the estancia near Mar del Plata you stay at El Golf in beautifully decorated guest rooms. There is also a separate detached cottage, with plans afoot for other cosy guest cottages in the grounds.



**Meals** The food is first class, whether you are in the hills of Patagonia or on the verandah of El Golf, or in the 'quincho' by the pool. Lunch and dinner are traditionally large meals in Argentina with dinner generally eaten late - never before 9pm and sometimes not until 11pm. Argentinian beef is renowned for its excellence and is a popular item, often served as part of a traditional 'asado' (much more than simply Spanish for barbecue) along with chorizo or lamb, accompanied by fresh salads, home-made bread and cheeses, washed down with delicious Argentinian wine. Vegetarians will be catered for as far as possible but please give us prior notice of any special dietary requirements. For an adventure of this calibre there is also "courage in a bottle" - the well known Pisco Sour - specially mixed to fortify mind and body!



**Weather** The weather in Patagonia is best from November to March, with January usually the hottest month. Days are generally mild to hot with temperatures averaging 20-27C, and nights generally cool. However, as you are in the mountains when in Patagonia you should be prepared for weather that is best described as capricious - it is unpredictable and changeable, and rain (and snow) is possible at any time with little warning. The weather on Don Felipe Island and at El Golf is far more temperate. The Argentine summer is hot and sunny, with daytime temperatures up to 30 C, generally plenty of incentive to spend the middle of the day relaxing in the shade by the pool.

**What to bring** We will send you a list of things we suggest you bring when you make your booking.

**Example Itinerary** The following is an example of the itinerary planned for the set date rides - although **please note** the day by day arrangements may be varied by your guide at his discretion if the weather or other local conditions require. Please note departure from Buenos Aires is mid morning on the first day so you will probably need to arrive the day before, please let us know if you would like help arranging accommodation on arrival.

This itinerary varies depending on the time of year as indicated on the dates below. Cattle mustering in Patagonia features on some dates, visits to the Argentine Open polo on others, and stag hunting is also available at the end of the season.

**Day 1** - You will be met at your hotel after breakfast and driven to Buenos Aires Jorge Newbery domestic airport for mid-morning transfer by plane to Bariloche or San Martin airport. Transfer to the 12,000 hectare Estancia Tres Lagos where you will be accommodated in comfortable log cabins. Lunch will be laid out and there will be an introductory afternoon ride allowing time for you to get acquainted with your horse and the traditional Argentine tack and style of riding. Enjoy a hot shower or a refreshing swim in the river, while Jinny, the estancia owner and former restaurateur, prepares a delicious meal served in a traditional log cabin which serves as the mess area. Dinner and night at Estancia Tres Lagos (L,D)

**Day 2** - A hearty breakfast before heading off on a daylong ride via the shores of Faulkner Lake, stopping for a delicious Argentine style asado picnic lunch prepared for you by Jinny. You will ride through Argentina's oldest national park, Nahuel Huapi, famous for its particularly diverse flora and fauna due to the wide altitude range within, from 700 to 3000 metres. Plantlife includes the beautiful llao llao fungus, the symbol of the area and the name of the nearby Hotel Llao Llao, a famous resort landscaped by Hermann Botrich who also landscaped Estancia El Boquerón, where Jakob grew up. Return to the estancia by a different route. Approx 6 hours riding. Dinner and night at Estancia Tres Lagos (B,L,D)



**Day 3** - After breakfast and loading the packhorses with all that is needed for the night, you take the lakeside route into the mountains to the top of the Cerro Bayo. The ride explores the Nahuel Huapi National Park, home to plenty but shy wildlife, including otter, huemul (deer), the rare and tiny pudu deer, guanaco, mara (a sturdy relative of the guinea pig and also known as the Patagonian hare), parakeet and condor. A short stop to enjoy the magnificent views and a picnic, before continuing on to the overnight 'fly' camp set up for you at an old hunting refuge high in the Andean cordillera. Time to enjoy a drink as Jinny prepares dinner. Night in camp. (B,L,D)

**Day 4** - Break camp and head towards the Lake Traful valley, riding first along the shores of Lake Traful and then through a native forest of Coihue (*Nothofagus dombeyi*) some of which are more than 40mts high. This is a long day in the saddle but rewarding since the goal is Arroyo Verde, a 12,500 acre sheep and cattle estancia and your base for the next two nights. The property is nestled in the valley below Lake Traful, source of the Traful River, a meandering icy blue river with excellent fly fishing (advance notice required to arrange licences). The main house on the estancia is elegant and comfortable, with splendid views of its manicured gardens and the Patagonian countryside. The warmth of the open fires and that of the owner Meme and her family makes for a delightfully relaxed welcome. Dinner and night at Estancia Arroyo Verde. (B,L,D)



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**Day 5** - Breakfast is when the decision is made for the day ahead. You may be feeling quite weary after the previous days' long rides so the plan depends on the group's enthusiasm. A full day ride is possible, also a relaxing day with a short ride with lunch at the lodge and afternoon at the lake. Dinner and night at Estancia Arroyo Verde. (B,L,D)

**Day 6** - Breakfast at the lodge before a road transfer to Bariloche airport at 11.00 for your flight north. A short drive from airport to the riverfront and then a 20 minute transfer on the private restored "cacciola" boat to Isla Don Felipe on the famous Tigre river, part of the Paraná Delta. Dinner and night on the island in restored prefabricated house shipped from England in 1904. (B,L,D)



**Day 7** - The day spent on the island with a boat trip through the enchanting channels of the area. Transfer back to the airport in the late afternoon for the short flight to Mar del Plata, about 400 km south of Buenos Aires. Transfer by car (about ½ hour) from Mar del Plata airport to El Golf, on the estancia El Boquerón. Dinner and overnight El Golf. (B,L,D)

**Days 8, 9 & 10** - Three days to explore and spend at your leisure. There is a team of masseuses on standby, swimming pool, tennis court, putting green, croquet pitch and a polo pitch, and plenty of Clericots, Argentina's answer to Pimms. For those who feel the need to trigger their adrenaline there is cross country course and a steeplechase course, and beautiful rides across neighbouring estates extending 10,000 acres. Dinner and nights at El Golf. (B,L,D)



**Day 11** - Flight back to Buenos Aires after a farewell lunch. Own arrangements for onward travel. (B,L)

## RATES

**Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are now quoted in USD. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the USD/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.**

**RATE** - USD 6200 per person.

This rate **INCLUDES** all riding, 10 nights twin accommodation, all meals (lunch on the first day to lunch on the last), local drinks, guides, back up team, grooms and equipment, camping equipment including sleeping bags for fly camping and also all road / boat transfers as described.

The rate **EXCLUDES** international flights to Buenos Aires and internal flights (approx USD 650), personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, optional activities such as fishing, any extra nights accommodation, personal items such as telephone calls and tips.

**Single Supplement** - this is subject to availability. No single supplement is charged but it is not possible to guarantee single rooms in Patagonia, though generally it is throughout the rest of the ride.

**Departure Dates 2012-13****4th to 14th January****18th to 28th January****1st to 11th February****15th to 25th February****27th November to 7th December****10th to 20th December****5th to 15th January 2013****19th to 29th January 2013****2nd to 12th February 2013****16th to 26th February 2013**

**Flights and travel information** British Airways currently have daily direct flights to Argentina via Sao Paulo, usually leaving London Heathrow at about 21.00 arriving Buenos Aires at about 10.00 the next day, with non-stop flights planned from March 2011. Iberia and Aerolineas Argentinas also have daily flights from London to Buenos Aires with a change in Madrid. Other options include TAM, Air France and Lufthansa, or via the USA. Fares start at about £850 per person economy return London to Buenos Aires although this will vary depending on the date required, availability and how long in advance you book. Please call us for more flight information or if you would like a fare quote. We would be happy to book flights for you (our ATOL number for flight sales is 6213).

Internal flights as detailed will be booked for you at an additional cost (approx USD 650).

**A Note on Tipping** Tips for the staff are entirely at your discretion and are **NOT** compulsory although they will of course be appreciated. If you would like to leave a tip we recommend you leave it with Jakob, your host, to distribute amongst local staff. If you wish to leave a tip, the amount is entirely up to you, though around USD15 a day is about average.

**General visa and health information** (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

**Visas** If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Argentina for less than 3 months, you do not need to arrange a visa in advance although visa requirements are always subject to change and you should always check up to date requirements before you travel

**Health** No jabs are required as a condition of entry from the UK and Europe. The Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London recommends that you ensure you are up to date with Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A. If you are not up to date with these you should visit your GP or a travel clinic about 4 weeks before departure.

**(Update 05/12/11)**