



# WILD PATAGONIA & SOUTHERN CHILE

*November 7 - 22, 2026*



*Puma, Torres del Paine National Park © Andrew Whittaker*

A Puma hunting Guanaco against a backdrop of snow-capped spires, the raucous antics of a King Penguin colony, a pair of Magellanic Woodpeckers in a towering southern beech forest, fine wine in a comfortable lodge: Where else but Chile!

This tour showcases the majestic scenery and abundant wildlife of Southern Chile—a region widely recognized among the most beautiful in the world. Mighty ice-capped Peaks of the Andes dominate the topography, while the Pacific coastline teems with life. From Chiloé Island to wild Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, we will seek the special birds, mammals, and vivid landscapes for which Chile is so justly famous. Our visit takes place in the radiant southern spring, when the weather is good, colorful wildflowers abound, birds are in stunning breeding plumage and singing, and photographic opportunities abound.

From Santiago we'll travel south to Puerto Montt, where the temperate forests of Chile's Lake District and Alerce Andino National Park are home to an avifauna rich with endemic and range-restricted birds like Rufous-tailed and Chilean hawks, Slender-billed Parakeet, and Black-throated Huet-huet. We will pay an exciting visit to a mixed colony of Humboldt and Magellanic penguins, while a comfortable ferry crossing Chiloé Island should yield such special seabirds as Black-browed Albatross, Red-legged Cormorant, Magellanic Diving-Petrel, and our first Southern Giant-Petrels.

Tierra del Fuego, South America's Land of Fire, is the home of Imperial Cormorant, Magellanic Oystercatcher, and Dolphin Gull. In the wetlands between the wild sea and the giant walls of the Paine Massif, Ashy-headed, Upland, and endangered Ruddy-headed geese breed among hordes of other waterfowl. We'll search for the highly sought and rare Magellanic Plover and colorful Rufous-chested and Tawny-throated dotterels. Magdalena Island is home to a thriving colony of Magellanic Penguins. Always a highlight is our opportunity to visit a rookery of King Penguins, complete with fluffy chicks.

We'll travel to Torres del Paine National Park, where Pumas are often seen at close range and are fearless due to the lack of hunting and persecution! Imagine observing them stalk their prey amid glistening glaciers, turquoise lakes, and hillsides ablaze with scarlet, orange, and yellow wildflowers. We will also enjoy herds of wild Guanaco, flocks of Lesser Rhea, and majestic Andean Condors and Magellanic Woodpeckers.



*Magellanic Woodpeckers © Andrew Whittaker*

Those eager to experience more of Chile beyond the southern tier of the country can join our connecting tour, Majestic Central Chile. With a different suite of birds and landscapes our objective, we'll travel from the Chilean capital area to the breathtaking Andes and the rich Pacific Coast in pursuit of a host of range-restricted birds. Regional specialties include Humboldt Penguin, Andean Condor, Stripe-backed Bittern, Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, and the remarkable Diademed Sandpiper-Plover. Other highlights include a pelagic trip in the Humboldt Current and a visit to the house of Pablo Neruda, perhaps Chile's most famous poet.



*Cuanaco bushes in Torres del Paine National Park © Andrew Whittaker*

## November 7–8, Days 1–2: Departure from home; arrival in Santiago, Chile

Participants will depart the USA on November 7 and arrive in Santiago on the morning of November 8 into Arturo Merino Benítez Airport (airport code SCL). Most flights from the United States arrive in Santiago between 6:00–10:00 a.m. Upon arrival, please proceed outside of the baggage claim area, where you will be met by a representative of our ground operator who will provide transportation to our hotel, **Sheraton Santiago Hotel & Convention Center**.

After checking in, you will have the rest of the day to yourself, with time to rest following the international flight. Lunch is on your own. This evening, we will meet in the lobby at 6:00 p.m. for a tour welcome and orientation, followed by dinner together.

The hotel features spacious rooms, a restaurant and bar, and a swimming pool among many other amenities. Additionally, the hotel grounds are certainly worth a walk as a number of locally common birds may be found including Southern Lapwing, Chimango Caracara, White-crested Elaenia, Tufted Tit-tyrant the endemic Chilean Mockingbird, Austral Thrush, Black-chinned Siskin and Long-tailed Meadowlark.

Home to over 6 million people, Santiago is one of South America's most modern and cosmopolitan cities. This vibrant capital stands on a rich inland plain, the Santiago Basin, bounded by mountains on three sides.

**Travel notes:** We recommend arriving in Santiago a day or more before the start of the tour to minimize the risk of flight misconnections or other travel delays, or simply to be well-rested for the start of our tour. Most flights to Santiago are overnight flights. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with air ticketing and additional arrangements.

**NIGHTS:** Aboard aircraft, in transit to Santiago (November 7)

Sheraton Santiago Hotel & Conference Center, Santiago (November 8)

## November 9, Day 3: Flight to Puerto Montt; afternoon birding

This morning, we will return to the airport for a flight to Puerto Montt, gateway to southern Chile.

The distance to Puerto Montt is 600 miles, and our flight path takes us along the spine of the Andes, with snow-clad volcanic peaks as far as the eye can see. Puerto Montt itself is dominated by the volcanoes of Osorno and Calbuco, the latter having blown its top as recently as 2015. On landing at El Tepual International Airport, we will find ourselves in the Chilean Lake District,

formed by hundreds of rivers flowing down from the mountains through beautiful, forested valleys.

Thanks to its strategic position at the southern end of Chile's Central Valley and as the gateway to the Chiloé Archipelago, the coastal city of Puerto Montt quickly grew into a permanent settlement after its founding in 1853, during the period of German colonization. In the 1990s and 2000s, Puerto Montt was the second largest salmon-producing center in the world. The city's cultural heritage is a rich combination of indigenous Chiloé, Spanish, and German influences.

We will likely arrive in Puerto Montt in the late morning, perfect timing for lunch and an afternoon birding excursion. Our destination of choice will depend on timing and local conditions; regardless, our time in the field will provide a pleasing first look at the birds and habitat of this beautiful region.

One option is the large wetland complex outside the community of Chamiza. Just south of Puerto Montt, this marshland habitat provides good opportunities for observing a variety of wetland species including waterfowl, herons, and other birds. A sample of the many species of birds found here includes Chile Wigeon, Yellow-billed Pintail, Brown-hooded and Kelp gulls, and Black-faced Ibis. Another option is a visit to Parque Katalapi, a private conservation park situated along the Carretera Austral (Southern Highway), about 20 kilometers south of Puerto Montt. This well-preserved area of Valdivian temperate rainforest offers excellent birding for forest species such as Chucao Tapaculo, Black-throated Huet-huet, and Des Murs's Wiretail.

We will return to the hotel in the late afternoon. The views from our hotel of the picture-perfect Osorno Volcano are truly spectacular.

Travel Note: The timing of the day's activities is based on the domestic flight schedule, and we must be flexible in our planning to accommodate changes to the departure time from Santiago.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Cumbres, Puerto Varas



*Picture-perfect Osorno Volcano from our hotel © Andrew Whittaker*

## November 10, Day 4: Alerce Andino National Park

Today we will drive along the coastal road to Alerce Andino National Park, arriving early for an exciting morning in the park. On the southern shore of Lake Chapo, Alerce Andino is another of Chile's natural wonders, with enormous mountains, deep valleys, blue lakes, and *Nothofagus* trees dating back 1,500 to 2,000 years, their stunted, twisted shapes reflecting the harsh conditions of southern Chile. The park takes its name from the Alerce trees that cover most of its nearly 100,000 acres; though "Alerce" is typically translated "larch," the tree is a member of the cypress family, the only species in the genus *Fitzroya*, and a key component of the local temperate, or Valdivian, forest.

In our time in these huge forests, we'll seek a marvelous array of tapaculos, their wild and often explosive voices echoing through the valleys. The largest and most spectacular species here, in the tapaculo capital of the world, are the enigmatic Chucao Tapaculo and the much more secretive Black-throated Huet-huet; dense bamboo thickets are the habitat of the skulking,

mouse-like Ochre-flanked and Magellanic tapaculos. Hopefully, this will be the day that we all fall in love with tapaculos.

The supporting cast includes the rare Chilean Hawk, the rare Rufous-tailed and uncommon White-throated hawks, Austral Parakeet, Des Murs's Wiretail, Tufted Tit-Tyrant, the local Patagonian Tyrant, and colorful Torrent Ducks.

We will enjoy a picnic lunch in the park, where we may well be visited by the local Patagonian Gray Fox. As we follow the coast road back to Puerto Montt, we may have an opportunity to study the subtle differences distinguishing the Blackish, American, and Magellanic oystercatchers, which are often found side by side here. We may also encounter Black-faced Ibis, Ringed Kingfisher, Southern Lapwing, Baird's Sandpiper, Peruvian Pelican, or the colorful Austral Negrito.



*The enigmatic Chucao Tapaculo © Andrew Whittaker*

**NIGHT:** Hotel Cumbres, Puerto Varas

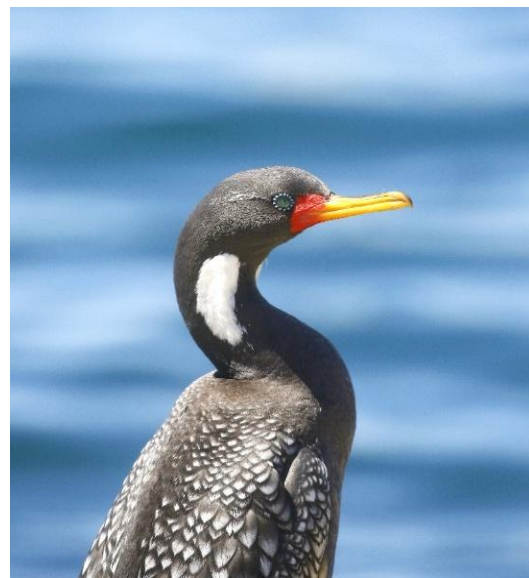
## November 11, Day 5: Puniuil Bay and the tidal mudflats of Chiloé Island

After breakfast we will depart from the hotel for a trip to Chiloé Island and Puniuil Bay, where we will spend the better part of the day. From Puerto Varas, the transfer requires an hour's drive to the community of Parguas on the coast, from which we'll board a ferry for a crossing of the Chacao Canal, the narrow body of water that separates the mainland from Chiloé Island. The ferry crossing will be approximately 30 minutes and offers a chance for a bit of birding from

the ferry deck. Waterfowl, penguins, shearwaters, and cormorants are possible. The route from the hotel to the ferry terminal also offers possibilities to spot Slender-billed Parakeet.

Upon arrival in Chacao on Chiloé Island, we'll make our way west to Punihuil Bay. Here, we should encounter our first Kelp Geese, feeding on the bay's abundant kelp, before we board a private boat for an hour-long excursion around the rocky islands of the bay. Our main objective will be to observe the highly charismatic Humboldt and Magellanic penguins at their colonies. Nearby rocky cliffs hold breeding cormorants including Magellanic Cormorant and the exquisite Red-legged Cormorant. There is also a good chance of observing Marine Otters fishing.

Come lunchtime, we will indulge in excellent seafood empanadas in a restaurant overlooking the beach. This afternoon we will bird our way back to Puerto Montt, visiting bird-rich estuaries and mudflats en route. These rich tidal flats are a vital wintering area for 70% of the world's Hudsonian Godwit population as well as significant numbers of Whimbrel, Baird's Sandpiper, yellowlegs and Red Knot along with lots of waterfowl.



*The stunning Red-legged Cormorant © Andrew Whittaker*

**NIGHT:** Hotel Cumbres, Puerto Varas

## November 12, Day 6: Birding Lahuen Ñadi Natural Monument; flight to Punta Arenas with afternoon birding nearby

Our final day in this amazing region will commence with a final round of birding at Lahuen Ñadi Natural Monument before returning to the airport in time for a mid-afternoon flight to Punta Arenas.

Located just outside Punta Arenas and only about 15 minutes from the airport, Lahuen Ñadi is a small, protected area that preserves a remnant of the ancient Alerce forest and provides an excellent opportunity to observe several species characteristic of the Valdivian temperate rainforest. During our visit, we'll walk along well-maintained trails through the forest where we will look for species such as Chilean Pigeon, Ochre-flanked and Chucao tapaculos, Black-throated Huet-huet, and Des Murs's Wiretail among others. In addition to birdwatching, the site offers a very nice introduction to the lush forest ecosystem of southern Chile, with giant ferns, moss covered trees, and ancient Alerce trees up to several hundred years old.

At the time of publication of this itinerary, the flight departure time is 3:26 p.m., with an arrival in Punta Arenas at 6:38 p.m. Please note that this schedule may change without prior notice, in which case we will simply adjust our planned activities and timings accordingly.

Punta Arenas is the capital of the country's southernmost region, Magallanes and Antarctica Chilena. Punta Arenas lies at 46° South latitude, where it serves as the gateway to Patagonia. The city's early growth was fueled by waves of immigrants during the gold rush of 1883–1906.

Sheep farming boomed here, too, with the largest company controlling 3,800 square miles of Patagonian Chile and Argentina from its headquarters in Punta Arenas. In 2000, a special "composite" breed was created here; the large, hardy Goldensheep is characterized by superior fertility, leaner meat, and faster lamb growth. On one of our evenings here, we will visit one of the city's best restaurants to savor the delicious local specialty: Golden Lamb, Chilean barbecue style.

In recent decades, Punta Arenas has grown considerably with the increase in tourism and commercial shipping. Since 1977, it has been one of only two free ports in Chile.

If our arrival time today in Punta Arenas allows, we will bird our way from the airport to our hotel overlooking the Strait of Magellan; abandoned piers nearby are alive with breeding Imperial and Magellanic cormorants and Dolphin Gulls.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Cabo de Hornos, Punta Arenas

## November 13, Day 7: Magdalena Island penguin colony and San Juan River

We will start the day with a boat trip to Magdalena Island in the Strait of Magellan, home to a thriving colony of Magellanic Penguins. It is an hour to the main island, where a well-designed and well-marked trail lets us walk through the colony without disturbing it. We will gain close-up insights into penguin life, including the birds' strategies for coping with the ever-present Chilean Skuas and Kelp Gulls, which prey on eggs and chicks. We will also enjoy the antics of a large colony of South American Terns in full breeding plumage. Common Miners are often seen as well.



*Magellanic Penguins © Andrew Whittaker*

After an hour's brisk stroll, we will be served a very welcome hot chocolate, then "set sail" for an islet with a noisy colony of South American Sea Lions. The huge male beach masters will be guarding and fighting for control of their harems. Landing is not permitted here, but we can enjoy the abundant wildlife from a safe distance. The same beaches are also home to Dolphin Gull and the odd Snowy Sheathbill. The sheathbill is rarely seen away from the Antarctic, but we have been successful seeing it on three out of four trips on average. Afterward, we will head back to town for a marvelous meal in a family-run restaurant.

In the midafternoon, we will drive south toward the San Juan River, a rich wetland system that provides chances for a variety of waterfowl. Our target species here is the highly sought and endangered Ruddy-headed Goose, but we are also likely to enjoy Upland and Ashy-headed

geese, Flightless Steamer-Ducks, Crested Duck, Yellow-billed Pintail, Chiloé Wigeon, and a variety of shorebirds including Magellanic Oystercatcher and Magellanic Snipe. Even Short-eared Owls are possible here. Imperial and Magellanic cormorants breed on the old town pier. Please note that we may not go all the way to the reserve if we are fortunate enough to encounter Ruddy-headed Geese en route.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Cabo de Hornos, Punta Arenas



*The endangered Ruddy-headed Goose © Andrew Whittaker*

## November 14, Day 8: Ferry crossing of the strait to Tierra del Fuego and visit to a King Penguin colony

This morning we'll take our picnic lunches and board a ferry to cross the Strait of Magellan to Tierra del Fuego. This short voyage is essentially an awesome two-hour pelagic trip. With the right winds, this famous channel can be a conduit for seabirds moving between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. We should see scores of Black-browed Albatross, Southern Giant-Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, ghostly Southern Fulmars, "Fuegian" Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Magellanic Diving-Petrel, Chilean Skua, and Dolphin Gull. On one crossing, we once were fortunate enough to see Fin and Humpback whales, and even a Southern Rockhopper Penguin on another. More likely is a group of playful Peale's Dolphin.

Arriving on the enchanted island of Tierra del Fuego, the “Land of Fire,” we’ll pass by brackish lakes ablaze with pink-hued flocks of Chilean Flamingos, the avian emblem of Chile’s Patagonia coast.



*Another trip highlight is the spectacular King Penguin colony on Tierra del Fuego  
© Andrew Whittaker*

A good dirt and asphalt road takes us across the remote landscape to Bahía Inútil and a close encounter with a thriving colony of King Penguins; there are more than 130 birds in this colony, which is still increasing. We will enjoy these marvelous birds’ fascinating behavior from a blind at close range. Fluffy young birds should be in evidence, products of a breeding cycle longer than that of any other bird: it takes 14–16 months to fledge a single chick. Because of the length of the chick-rearing cycle, adults can rear only two chicks every three years. In the winter, chicks may fast from one to five months. Double-banded Plovers also breed here, and we should keep a sharp eye out for the Patagonian Tuco-Tuco, an odd subterranean rodent.

Late afternoon we will find us in the remote town of Cerro Sombrero. Sandy areas here are home to the local subspecies of Common and Short-billed miners, Buff-winged Cinclodes, Patagonian Yellow-Finch, and maybe our first beautiful Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant or uncommon, striking Chocolate-vented Tyrant, with its long, kestrel-like wings.

We’ll also keep an eye out for the rare pallid subspecies of Peregrine Falcon. Afterward, we’ll enjoy a relaxed evening and a home-cooked Chilean dinner.

**NIGHT:** Hosteria Tunkelen, Cerro Sombrero



*Chocolate-vented Tyrant © Andrew Whittaker*

## November 15, Day 9: Return to Punta Arenas

After an early breakfast, we'll recross the Strait of Magellan, giving us a chance to spot the stunning Commerson's Dolphin. Once back on the mainland, we will head north on a well-maintained road leading through coastal grassland and barren steppe on our way to Punta Arenas for the night.



*Commerson's Dolphins © Andrew Whittaker*

The stark wilderness of this Patagonian steppe is truly magnificent. Here, on the arid grasslands in the rain shadow of the Andes, we will enjoy our first looks at herds of wild Guanaco, a member of the camel family. This habitat is just as fascinating botanically, and we hope to run across spectacular carpets of flowering Virgin's Slipper.

The barren steppe is also the breeding ground of stunning Tawny-throated Dotterels. We may also be so lucky as to hear the songs of Least Seedsnipes echoing overhead as they perform their aerial displays, or to encounter the uncommon Austral Canastero serenading us from the stunted brush. Other likely species along our route include the handsome Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, and we may spend time looking for both Elegant-crested and Patagonian tinamous in areas of taller grass.



*Tawny-throated Dotterel © Andrew Whittaker*

We also plan a stop at a large marsh, where we hope to encounter flocks of the odd Coscoroba Swan, the prized Rosy-billed Pochard, and, hopefully, Silver Teal. We can hope for close views of Silvery Grebes in their lovely breeding plumage, and a variety of shorebirds including Magellanic Snipe, before arriving in Punta Arenas for the night.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Cabo de Hornos, Punta Arenas

## November 16, Day 10: Birding the higher Patagonian steppe and on to Puerto Natales

As we make our way ever nearer Torres del Paine, the scenery will gradually change from grassland to stunted Andean Patagonian Forest. Rising in elevation onto the remote Patagonian steppe, we'll keep our eyes open for hunting Patagonian Hog-nosed Skunk. The botany here is truly fascinating in this harsh environment and we will certainly enjoy many interesting and colorful flowers. Birdwise, we will concentrate on three wonderful Patagonian specialties: the

striking, White-bridled Finch, the summer visitor Chocolate-vented Tyrant, and Rufous-chested Dotterel.

Another target bird in this area is the rare and sought-after Magellanic Plover, the sole member of the family *Pluvianellidae*. Unique in almost every regard, the Magellanic Plover is anatomically more like a dove than a shorebird, with striking pink legs, a blazing red eye, a short peg-like bill, and dove-gray plumage. Similar in appearance to the turnstones, and often seen looking under stones, the Magellanic Plover's most frequent foraging method is to stomp around in shallow water with its strong legs while moving in quick circles and pecking at food items brought to the surface. Like doves, these birds secrete crop milk to feed their young. Molecular data, however, confirm that this is indeed a shorebird, likely most closely related to the sheathbills.

Thereafter we enter the scenically stunning realm of the snow-capped southern Andes and extensive fjordlands. We will overnight in the town of Puerto Natales en route to the spectacular Torres del Paine National Park, sometimes designated "the eighth wonder of the world." Puerto Natales was founded in 1911 as a port for the sheep industry; today, the town's most important economic activity is tourism, as the gateway to Torres del Paine; cattle and aquaculture are also significant here. Our hotel has a magnificent view over the fjord to snow-capped mountains, with nearby fjords home to many breeding Black-necked Swans.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Remota Patagonia Lodge, Puerto Natales



*The sought-after and unusual Magellanic Plover is the only species in its family.*  
© Andrew Whittaker

## November 17, Day 11: Torres Del Paine National Park

After an early breakfast, we will drive to magnificent Torres Del Paine National Park, where we will be welcomed by snow-covered mountain peaks, incredible turquoise lakes, vast glaciers, and the spectacularly vivid scarlet hues of the fire bush. We'll make our way from view to panoramic view beneath the three granite "towers" of the awesome Cordillera del Paine, each of them rising to an elevation of more than 9,000 feet above sea level.

We will explore several sectors of the park, stopping for birding and short walks while enjoying the extraordinary scenery. Forest patches, lakeshores, and open steppe provide opportunities to encounter species such as Magellanic Woodpecker, Patagonian Sierra Finch, Austral Parakeet, and possibly our first Dark-faced Ground-Tyrants. Weather in this region can change quickly due to the influence of the Southern Patagonian Ice Field, and strong winds are common.

Around midday we will enjoy lunch within the park while continuing to absorb the spectacular surroundings and wildlife.

In the afternoon, we will continue our journey across the park toward Cerro Castillo, making additional scenic and birding stops along the way. Our accommodation for the next three nights will be Estancia El Ovejero Patagónico, a comfortable Patagonian estancia located just outside the park. From here we will have convenient access to nearby estancias and steppe habitats that are well known for wildlife and, especially, pumas.

**NIGHT:** Estancia El Ovejero Patagónico, Cerro Castillo, Torres Del Paine National Park

## November 18–19, Days 12–13: Torres Del Paine National Park and Puma safari

We have two full days to enjoy this incredible location, its special birds, and its wild Pumas. Simply going to a place and expecting to see wild Pumas is a recent phenomenon, inconceivable until a decade ago. This is all possible thanks to an excellent tracking system. We will embark on our 4x4 "safari" or take a longer hike to follow the hunting cats; we are normally able to observe

their behavior from the comfort of vehicles. We have enjoyed a 100% success rate in the past with Pumas, often finding multiple cats on our tours.



*Puma cubs at play © Andrew Whittaker*

The Pumas here, of the subspecies *Puma concolor puma*, are enormous, much larger than their Mountain Lion counterparts in North America (*P. c. cougar*). Adult males, larger and bulkier than females, may exceed eight feet from nose to tail, and they weigh an average of about 260 pounds. They are not as rufous in Chile as in North America, more the color of a Guanaco, which, along with European Hares, is their main prey item here. Because they are protected and have never been hunted, the Pumas here have no fear of humans, and we can anticipate seeing them at close range, engaged in a variety of behaviors, including actively hunting, caring for cubs, and with luck, even feeding on a kill. The Puma is an apex predator here, able to run as fast as 43 miles per hour. They can jump as far as 20 feet from a standing position and leap 8 feet into the air—and have been known to jump 40 feet horizontally and almost 16 feet vertically.

Famous for its astonishing scenery, with photo opportunities at every bend in the road, Torres del Paine also hosts special birds. We will venture to the myriad lakes, ponds, and reed-fringed pools of the east side of the park, seeking waterfowl and the recently rediscovered Austral Rail. Other birds of the area include Andean Condor, Cinereous Harrier, Short-eared Owl, Silvery

Grebe, Red-gartered Coot, Spectacled and Andean ducks, Magellanic Snipe, and “Austral” Grass Wren.



*Silvery Grebes displaying © Andrew Whittaker*

We will also keep our eyes open for small flocks of migrating Dark-faced Ground-Tyrants or resident Austral Canasteros. On one morning, we’ll travel farther afield, into remote foothills outside the park where we can search for the highly local Band-tailed Earthcreeper (once thought to be an Argentine endemic but recently recorded in Chile), Sharp-billed Canastero, the rare Gray-bellied Shrike-Tyrant, Patagonian Mockingbird, Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant, and Yellow-bridled Finch. More common residents include Austral Pygmy-Owl, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Crested Caracara, Chilean Flicker, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, Rufous-banded Miner, Scale-throated Earthcreeper, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Long-tailed Meadowlark, Gray-hooded Sierra Finch, and Greater Yellow-Finch. We could be lucky enough to spot the rare elk-sized Southern Huemul Deer in the nearby forest. Other mammals we hope to encounter in the park are Humboldt’s Hog-nosed Skunk, Culpeo (Andean Fox), and with luck, Patagonian Hairy Armadillo.

**NIGHTS:** Estancia El Ovejero Patagónico, Cerro Castillo, Torres Del Paine National Park



*Guanaco, the Puma's favored prey, at Torres del Paine National Park © Andrew Whittaker*

## November 20, Day 14: Torres Del Paine National Park and return to Punta Arenas

We'll bird our way out of the park this morning and drive to Puerto Natales for a wonderful lunch and some time to shop. Afterward, we will drive on to Punta Arenas, with time for some late afternoon birding along the coast. We will have great opportunities for close-up photography and great looks at a wide variety of waterbirds, with Chilean Flamingo, White-tufted Grebe, various geese, Red Shoveler, Flying Steamer-Duck, Magellanic Snipe, and Red-gartered Coot among the possibilities. This evening, we'll gather for a final checklist session followed by dinner.

**NIGHT:** Hotel Cabo de Hornos, Punta Arenas

## November 21, Day 15: Return to Santiago

Today we'll fly back to Santiago. Depending on the departure time of our flight, we will have a relaxed few hours of morning birding around Punta Arenas; among the options are a visit to the

Reserva Canquen Colorado or a drive south of Punta Arenas. Time permitting, we'll have lunch at a splendid French restaurant in town before catching our flight to Santiago.

We expect to arrive back in Santiago in the late afternoon, at which time we'll transfer to the nearby **La Quinta by Wyndham, Santiago Airport** hotel, where day rooms have been reserved. In the evening, we'll gather for a final field checklist session and a farewell dinner before transferring to the airport. International flights to the USA generally depart late at night (or just after midnight), arriving in the United States the following morning.

**DAY ROOM:** La Quinta by Wyndham, Santiago Airport

## November 22, Day 16: Arrival home

Flights that departed Santiago the previous evening will arrive in the USA this morning.

### **ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION**

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour is limited to 10 participants.

**TOUR LEADER(s):** This tour is led by **Raymond VanBuskirk** and **Eduardo “Lalo” Navarro**



**Raymond L. VanBuskirk** is an expert birder who has been guiding tours for over a decade. Raymond has led tours throughout the Western Hemisphere from Alaska to Chile and most parts in between. He has guided in almost every country in Central America, across the Caribbean, and down both sides of the Andes in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. Raymond's experience is not limited to the New World—he has traveled widely across the globe, has spent a great deal of time in the Pacific studying pelagics, and

has led tours in Asia and Africa.

Raymond has had a longtime commitment to ornithology. In addition to guiding, he has conducted research with USFWS in the Arctic Ocean, North Pacific, and New Mexico. He has held leadership roles in the Central New Mexico Bird Alliance and Western Field Ornithologists. Raymond also helped guide the next generation of birders by being a regular instructor at the ABA's youth birding camps and at the Hog Island Audubon camps in Hog Island, Maine.

Raymond is also committed to including everyone in birding, and organizes and leads annual conferences for QBNA, an informal club for LGBTQIA+ birders. When not leading tours or conducting research, Raymond can be found at his home in St. Louis, Missouri with his partner, Marissa; stepdaughter Savannah; and their dog and two large snakes.



**Eduardo Navarro, or Lalo**, was born in Santiago, but grew up in Punta Arenas, in Chilean Patagonia. Surrounded by wilderness, it was simply impossible for these landscapes not to awaken a curiosity for exploration. Lalo studied veterinary sciences in Santiago, where he created the first student group that brought together people with a passion for nature, remaining active to this day. At university he participated in conservation efforts in Bolivia, the altiplano, and Chilean

Patagonia, sparking an interest in travel and other cultures. Around the same time, he started rock climbing, and once he finished his studies, he took his backpack and began traveling and climbing around the world. Starting with Australia and New Zealand, then discovering the markets and beaches of Southeast Asia, he walked through rice plantations in China, hiked between the world's highest peaks in the Himalayas in India and Nepal, and visited cities and parks in Europe—always with binoculars around his neck, searching for new birds. Lalo lived in Australia for a year and a half and helped with migratory bird surveys around Sydney.

### **TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION**

**TOUR FEE: \$18,325** per person based on double occupancy. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 through dinner on Day 15, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, boat excursions as described, and guide services provided by the

tour leaders. It does not include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour are included (three internal flights in economy class: Santiago–Puerto Montt, Puerto Montt–Punta Arenas, and Punta Arenas–Santiago). The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the “TIPPING” sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:** If you request single accommodations, a single supplement of **\$2,265** will be added to your tour fee.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. A second deposit of **30% of the remaining tour fee** is due 180 days prior to departure (May 11, 2026). We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (July 10, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges have been passed on to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**FUEL SURCHARGES:** Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TIPPING:** An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

## **CANCELLATION & REFUNDS**

### **CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:**

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

#### **CANCELLATION BY VENT:**

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A ***“Force Majeure”*** event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

#### **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

**MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE/PROTECTION REQUIREMENT:** This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. **For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist** plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please refer to the TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION section for additional information.

**SUGGESTED OPTIONS:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

#### **About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan**

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing

medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.\*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: [Ripcord Travel Insurance](#); or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

### **About Medjet’s MedjetAssist Plan**

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company’s primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](https://www.Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

## **GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

**AIR TRAVEL:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.\* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

\*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

**BAGGAGE:** We request that you limit your luggage to one medium or large bag and one carry-on bag, if possible. Soft-sided luggage with wheels is recommended.

This tour includes three internal flights. The airlines are typically strict about luggage limits and impose a more restrictive weight limit on domestic flights than on international flights. For

checked luggage, the limit is currently one bag at 23 kilograms (50 lbs.) per person; for carry-on luggage, the weight is limited to 5 kilograms (about 11 lbs.) per person. The overweight charge for checked luggage amounts to a little more than a dollar per kilogram. In truth, weight allowances are not always strictly enforced; however, we recommend that travelers adhere to the stated limits. **Please do not bring large carry-on bags.** At present, smaller roll-ons up to about 18" in height are permitted, while anything over that size will probably have to be checked. In general, packing lighter is better. Extra baggage can be securely stored in Santiago while we are in the far south of the country. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag.

Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

#### **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:**

**PASSPORTS:** A passport is required for entry into Chile and must be valid for the duration of your stay. Please check the expiration date on your passport. You will also want to make sure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport for stamps. A tourist card is issued at the international port-of-entry.

If you need a passport, you should get it well in advance of the tour departure date. Allow four to six weeks to obtain a passport. For additional fees, a passport can be issued on an expedited basis. In the United States this can be done at the nearest passport office, many post offices, or the county clerk's office. You may also visit <http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html> for information on how to get or renew a passport.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport. Keep the photocopies in a safe place, so if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so **do not pack it in your checked luggage.**

**VISAs:** Visas are not required for U.S. and Canadian citizens for entry into Chile for a stay of up to three months. Note that the “reciprocity” fee that formerly applied to all U.S. and Canadian citizens entering Chile has been eliminated. Rules and regulations pertaining to non-U.S. citizens may vary; please check with the consulate or embassy of Chile.

**Tourist Card (PDI Form):** A small paper slip given at immigration upon arrival. Keep this safe; it must be surrendered upon departure.

### **WHAT TO BRING**

**CLOTHING:** This program is a very casual birding and natural history trip. We suggest you bring primarily field-type clothing and be prepared to dress in layers, as it will certainly be cold at times in Patagonia, especially early in the morning. Casual attire will be appropriate for all occasions. The following items are recommended:

- **Pants:** A couple of pairs of pants are essential. Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable. Lined thermal pants are great against the cool winds sometimes encountered in Patagonia or on our ferry crossings.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela’s and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight durable and dull colored materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular.
- **T-shirts (long- and short-sleeved):** Simple cotton shirts for wearing under warmer outerwear.
- **Jackets:** A warm, water- and wind-proof jacket is essential for the Andes, especially the south, and for Patagonia.
- **Rain Pants:** Can do double duty as both rain protection and an extra layer in lieu of long underwear on cold or windy days.
- **Warm, waterproof gloves and mittens:** Strongly recommended. Although Chile warms up quickly in the spring, cold weather is very much a possibility, particularly in Patagonia with wind chill.

- **Warm Socks:** Thin cotton or polypropylene socks are a good choice, in combination with a few pairs of wool socks. It is important to have clean, dry socks when in the field.
- **Hats, scarves, and gaiters:** A hat for protection from the sun is essential, while a warm pull-down hat and scarf or neck gaiter will come in handy in windy conditions.
- **Outerwear:** A warm jacket is strongly recommended. A polar fleece is recommended when a jacket may not be necessary. It is important to come to Chile well-prepared with insulation against cold temperatures.

**FOOTWEAR:** For footwear, we recommend a good trail-walking shoe or light hiking boot (waterproof or Gore-Tex) when in the field. Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled in muddy conditions. A good walking shoe (such as an athletic shoe) may be preferred for down times or when traveling between destinations. Rubber boots are not necessary.

**EQUIPMENT:** Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Below is a list of items that will ensure you are well prepared:

- **Daypack:** Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all land excursions
- **Notebooks and pens**
- **Travel alarm clock**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions:** Sunscreen of at least SPF 30 is strongly recommended.
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Water bottle:** Please bring your favorite water bottle as it helps to reduce waste.
- **Cameras, lenses, memory cards, and extra batteries**
- **Collapsible walking stick:** A highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking.
- **Folding stool:** Recommended for those who have trouble standing for more than 10 or 15 minutes at a time. The typical folding stool is small, lightweight and portable,

consisting of three aluminum legs connected by a central bolt, with a sturdy but pliable material seat.

- **Tissue packs**

**Binoculars:** We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please do not bring mini binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

**Spotting Scopes:** Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

## **DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS**

**CLIMATE & WEATHER:** This tour will operate during the austral spring, when the weather can vary markedly. The geographic breadth of the tour means we are certain to encounter a diversity of conditions. We're likely to experience cooler conditions in Patagonia and somewhat milder conditions farther north, around Puerto Montt. Moreover, temperatures and conditions will vary according to elevation. The coastal regions will be more moderate in temperature while the inland areas around Torres del Paine will be cooler, especially in the early morning and at night, when temperatures can drop significantly. Around Santiago, where we will be only briefly, temperatures may range from the 60s to low 80s (°F); and in Patagonia, from the upper 30s to upper 60s.

Please note that conditions in Chile in the early November period can run the spectrum from sunny and warm to overcast, windy, and cold. If spring arrives late, participants should be prepared for the possibility of cold temperatures, heavy overcast, strong wind, and rain. Snow is also possible (which did occur on our 2023 tour).

**CONDITIONS:** While birding will receive heavy emphasis, this program encompasses other aspects of natural history including scenery, mammal viewing, star-gazing, and doses of botany (the flowering plants can be incredible). The scope of the tour and the planned range of activities

necessitate to travel by multiple means, including bus, coaster and/or Sprinter; airplane, of which there are three internal flights; and auto ferry.

Water and snacks will always be available.

We try to minimize the amount of time we spend in vehicles, but there will indeed be one or two days with long drives (with some birding stops) in Patagonia.

Walking conditions are generally easy, as our activities in most of the areas we visit are along flat roads and trails. There are some gradual climbs in both Altos de Lircay and Torres del Paine national parks. No activities will take place above 3,300 feet elevation, and we have never had any problems with altitude sickness.

**Puma Excursions:** Our excursions to view wild Pumas entail driving to various points along roads either in the park or on an adjacent private property, then potentially walking from one to three miles across open and rolling grassy terrain interspersed with short, stunted bushes. These excursions are not overly difficult, and we will make frequent stops to scan the surrounding terrain, especially if the Pumas are hunting. This activity also involves stopping to sit or stand quietly as we observe the animals engaging in undisturbed behavior such as sleeping, playing with cubs, or attending a kill. **Please note: Leaving the road for Puma observations will certainly require physical hiking and is therefore optional.**

We emphasize that no one will be subjected to physical demands that exceed their capabilities. All walking will be done at a slow pace, except for the Puma hiking. Meals will also be good to excellent, and we will be able to enjoy high quality Chilean seafood on more than one occasion, as well as lamb barbeque and French cuisine in Punta Arenas on the main tour. **Those who are not fit for light to moderate physical activity, including those with physical disabilities that affect mobility and balance or other conditions associated with poor health, are advised not to join the trip.**

**Special Note:** This tour is intended as a natural history extravaganza, with virtually no time included for exploring the country's historical and cultural attractions. Participants with an interest in enjoying more of Santiago or visiting other parts of the country should come early or

stay after the tour ends. Santiago is a European-flavored blend of colonial and modern architecture, reflected in its many churches, museums, theaters, and parks. Some of the city's famous landmarks you can visit on your own are the beautiful horse track Club Hipico, the Pre-Columbian Art Museum, and the summit of San Cristobal Hill, where an enormous statue of the Virgin Mary overlooks the city.

**FOOD & WATER:** Food is generally safe to consume at all locations we visit. Consuming tap water should be avoided. Bottled water will always be available. Your tour leaders will advise you of food and water safety considerations at all locations.

**CURRENCY & SPENDING:** Your trip to Chile includes all necessary expenses. You will want to bring enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as gifts, laundry, special gratuities, meals on your own, and personal items. It is best to carry small denominations of cash as many places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. While U.S. dollars may be accepted in more populous areas, it is always convenient to have a supply of local currency for such items. It is best to acquire local currency before leaving home, or at the airport or a bank upon arrival in Santiago. Most places accept credit cards, especially Visa and MasterCard.

Should you extend your vacation in Chile beyond what is offered in the program, you'll want to obtain local currency. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information regarding banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas.

The official currency of Chile is the Chilean Peso (CLP). You can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting "XE—The World's Favorite Currency Site" at <http://www.xe.com/>.

**ELECTRICITY:** The electrical current in Chile is 220V (110-120V in the U.S.). Most electrical outlets are of the European standard socket "Type C or Type L." These outlets are ungrounded, with openings for two round pins. A less common outlet features openings for three flat blades, with two of the blades angled. Both types are in use in most of the hotels we will stay in. A few hotels may provide plug-in adapters that can accommodate standard American-type plug-ins with two flat pins of similar size (but not with one flat blade larger than the other). Many appliances now are dual designed to operate on European electrical voltages, but you definitely

should bring adapters and an all-purpose transformer if there is any doubt whether your appliances are suitable for higher voltage.

**INTERNET ACCESS:** Internet and Wi-Fi service is available at all of the hotels.

**LANGUAGE:** Spanish is the language primarily spoken in Chile.

**TIME:** Chile is on Chilean Standard Time (CLT) and is 2 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST).

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Laundry service is available at all hotels we stay at more than one night, and will be available at extra charge.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**

**HEALTH:** VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

As of this writing, no major shots or inoculations are required for entry into Chile.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high

filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance for avoiding COVID-19.

**TYPHOID:** VENT recommends vaccination against Typhoid, a bacterial disease endemic to Chile, caused by *Salmonella typhi*. It is transmitted through consumption of contaminated food and water, typically when someone who is infected uses the bathroom and does not wash their hands. Symptoms may include high fever, weakness, stomach pain, headache, diarrhea or constipation, cough, and loss of appetite.

**SUN EXPOSURE:** The sun's ultraviolet rays are more dangerous in Chile than many other places in the world, due to the long daylight hours in a far southerly destination. The sun's ultraviolet rays are damaging to the eyes and skin with prolonged exposure. Anytime you are outdoors, you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. Severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high-SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultraviolet-blocking, polarized sunglasses.

**BITING INSECTS:** Biting insects are not a serious problem in most places we visit on this tour, and there are no chiggers at all; however, we may encounter some mosquitoes in some of the forests in the south. To protect yourself, we recommend wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants and applying insect repellent when necessary. Lotions are preferable to sprays, as they are less obtrusive to others and tend to come in smaller, more easily packed bottles. Cutter and OFF! are leading brands.

**INSECT REPELLENTS:** There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- **DEET:** (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes.

The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.

- **Picaridin:** A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- **Herbal insect repellents:** Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- **Permanone® (Permethrin):** is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- **Insect Shield® apparel:** Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Canadian citizens should check the website

of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

### **SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION**

A few traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

### **FIELD GUIDES:**

**Birds:** Either of the following field guides are highly recommended for this tour.

Jaramillo, Alvaro. *Birds of Chile*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. This excellent guide has long been the standard for bird identification in Chile. It is arguably the best all-around field guide to the birds of this country, featuring excellent plates, text, and interesting taxonomic notes. It is also lightweight and easily portable.

Cifuentes, Gonzalo E. Gonzáles and Daniel E. Martínez Piña. *Field Guide to the Birds of Chile*. Helm Field Guides. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021. An excellent newer guide showing new additions to the country's avifauna. Plates are excellent, especially non-passerines. Text good, too, and updated showing all vagrants recently recorded. It's lightweight and easily portable.

### **BIRDING RESOURCES AND GENERAL NATURE:**

Chester, Sharon. *A Wildlife Guide to Chile*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. Excellent read and a perfect all-around natural history guide. Full of information and good illustrations; coverage ranges from plants, animals, fish, cetaceans, and butterflies to the country's various habitats, zones, and weather types.

## **HISTORY AND CULTURE:**

Bridges, E. Lucas. *Uttermost Part of the Earth: The First History of Tierra del Fuego and the Fuegian Indians*. London: Overlook/Rookery Publishing, 2007. (Earlier editions from other publishers are also available). Excellent background on Tierra del Fuego; essential reading for those on the main tour.

Shipton, Eric Earle. *Tierra del Fuego: The Fatal Lodestone*. Readers Union, 1974. Long out-of-print but recently republished, this classic work recounts the history of the discovery of sailing routes in the region of Tierra del Fuego and of the settlement of the region. Part historical narrative and part autobiography, Shipton chronicles some of the most remarkable adventures imaginable. Essential reading for those on the main tour.

## **TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.**, a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on April 5, 2026, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete [Terms and Conditions](#) on our website.

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