

Discover South America

Escorted Tour 26days/25nights

Departing Australia 30April 2007

One of the most complete "Around South America" tours possible visiting Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and Brazil. An incredible discovery of different cultures and a great combination of natural areas. In Chile you will stay in cosmopolitan Santiago. In Ecuador visit Quito and the famous Andean market of Otavalo. In Peru you will visit Lima and Cuzco plus the "lost city of the Incas" Machu Picchu. In Bolivia take an hydrofoil cruise on the highest lake in the world and visit the Uros Islands, Copacabana shrine, Sun island and La Paz famous "witches' market". In Argentina you will tour incredible Buenos Aires, the "Paris of South America" and marvel at magnificent Iguazu Falls. Your tour will end after a visit to Rio de Janeiro, located in one of the most beautiful natural bays of the world.

Itinerary:

Day 01 Sydney/Santiago
Mon 30Apr LAN Airlines LA800 10.55/12.45

Meet and assist at the airport and transfer to hotel **NH Ciudad de Santiago 4*** or similar. Rest of the day at leisure to recover from long trip.

Welcome to one of the continent's largest cities, a delightful blending of 19th century Europe, some Spanish colonial and, increasingly, modern architecture, both downtown and in newly erected suburbs served by an efficient subway system. Expansion has been mostly northward where some plush hotels, restaurants and shops have sprung up. You can get there quickly by subway, a fun experience and thrifty-only 10 cents to ride in modern graffiti-free cars. Hi-rise garden apartments dot the landscape at the end of the various subway lines. Both new and old residential sections have tree-shaded avenues, gardens are beautifully landscaped, ablaze with color. Gardens along the streets feature an amazing array of gorgeous plants, flowers, trees and shrubs. With a hovering backdrop of snow capped mountains, Santiago at 1800 ft. beckons the air traveller with one of the most dramatic views to be seen anywhere.

Day 02 Santiago
Tue 01May Morning City Tour

Morning city tour. Breakfast. Half day city tour of Santiago, visiting the city's most outstanding attractions, including a walking tour in the city centre visiting the main square "Plaza de Armas", Santiago's Cathedral, boulevard Ahumada, the Government Palace "La Moneda". Then, by vehicle, visit to the main avenues of the old Santiago, crossing the bohemian neighbourhood of Bellavista and drive up the San Cristobal Hill, for a magnificent panoramic view of the city and the Andes Mountain Range. Then visit to the modern part of Santiago including its elegant neighbourhoods, shopping and financial centres. Rest of the day at leisure.

In the evening, experience a dinner - show which gives the opportunity to enjoy Chilean food in a restaurant decorated in traditional style. There is a show, which consists of different examples of dances and costumes from the different regions of Chile. Transfer to and from the hotel included. **(B,D)**

Day 03 Santiago/Quito
Wed 02May LAN Ecuador XL446 15.10/20.50

Breakfast. Morning at leisure. Early afternoon transfer to the airport for your flight to Quito. Meet and assist at the airport and transfer to **Hotel Alameda 4*** or similar. **(B)**

Welcome to **Quito**, considered one of the most beautiful cities in the Western Hemisphere, has an astonishing location -more than a mile sea level, nestled in the Andes Mountains beneath the sparkling snow-cone of the Pichincha mountain, and almost directly on the equator! Among the most impressive of the capital's architectural treasures is La Compania Church, whose richly carved facade is the most ornate in the city and whose interior is a daze of golden altars, gilded columns and balconies. Hues of gold also shine on the altars and ceilings of San Francisco Cathedral, one of the first great religious buildings in the continent. Sculpture and paintings produced by the "Escuela Quiteña"- the school of native artists trained by the church friars- decorate the walls with traditional religious subjects mingling with pagan symbols.

Day 04 Quito
Thu 03May City Tour & Middle of the World

Breakfast. Visit the broad avenues of the northern residential section. Continue to Independence Plaza, the Government Palace, La Catedral, El Sagrario, La Compania and San Francisco Churches and Le Panecillo. A few miles north of Quito is the Equatorial Monument at latitude 0 00' 00" which marks the place where an 18th century expedition established the exact geodesic position of the Equator. This is a wonderful opportunity to be in two hemispheres at the same time. Lunch and return to Quito. Rest of the day at your leisure. **(B,L)**

Day 05 Quito
Fri 04May Full Day Otavalo Market



Morning breakfast at the hotel, and then depart to the north, via the Panamerican Highway to the Province of Imbabura, one of the most popular destinations in Ecuador: a magical land of lakes, snow-covered mountains and terraced farmlands. Here is the town of Otavalo, with its famous Indian market that dates back to pre-Inca times and is known for its textiles woven on back-strap and shuttle looms and its fine handicrafts. For centuries, regional markets have played an important role in Indian life, providing regular gathering places for trade and socializing. Here Otavaloenos barter in silence, in marked contrast to the raucous noise of other markets. The tour is a treat of brilliant scenery and artisan villages, like Calderon, a small town where bread dough figurines are . made in many shapes and sizes. Return to Quito for overnight. **(B,L)**



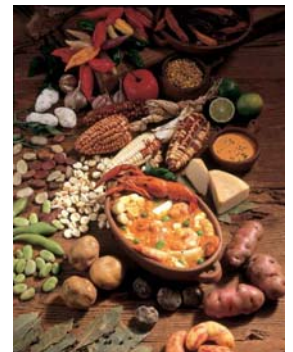
Day 06 **Quito/Lima**
Sat 05May **LAN Peru** **LP581** **20.30/22.45**

Breakfast. Morning at leisure to either relax or do last minute shopping. Normal check-out is around 1300, luggage will be left in custody with the concierge until our evening transfer to the airport for flight to Lima. Late arrival and transfer to Hotel El Pardo 4* or similar. **(B)**



Lima is situated in the central western region of Peru between the sea and the western cordillera of the Andes. It is home to more than 6 million inhabitants and has been the nation's capital since the Spanish Conquest, having been founded in 1535 by Francisco Pizarro. From that period in history still survive old mansions, churches and convents as well as the bullring Plaza de Acho, the third most ancient in the world; likewise the original building of the University of San Marcos, the oldest in America.

Lima has grown and modernized; it has many excellent hotels and restaurants where one can savor both local and international dishes. It is important to note that Peruvian cooking is offering an abundance of varied and exquisite dishes. As regards to museums, the most outstanding are the Anthropological and Archaeological, the Larco Herrera, the Amano, and the Gold Collection. Neighboring Lima, the port of Callao has been prepared for reception of tourists on cruises.



Day 07 **Lima**
Sun 06May **Morning City Tour/Gold Museum – Evening Dinner Show**

Breakfast at your hotel. Tour of Colonial and Modern Lima. This half day tour visits both the colonial and modern sections of this "City of Kings." Colonial sites include the lovely Plaza de Armas with its cathedral and palace, and the exquisite Torre Tagle Palace modern day seat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In modern Lima, drive along the exclusive residential areas of Miraflores and San Isidro. Afternoon at leisure to further explore the city. In the evening, we will enjoy a nice dinner at a tourist restaurant and a marvellous Peruvian folklore show. **(B,D)**

Day 08 **Lima/Cuzco**
Mon 07Oct **LAN Peru** **LP027** **1120/1235**

Breakfast and transfer to the airport for your flight to Cuzco. Meet to assist at the airport and transfer to **Hotel Novotel 4*** or similar. **(B)**



Welcome to **Cuzco**. City living in the past as well as in the present. Almost half a millennium after the Spaniards arrived, Cuzco is a meeting point for two cultures. The Indian traders on the markets speak Spanish with the tourists and Quechua amongst themselves. The Incas called their most important city Cuzco, the navel of the world, as they held the navel for the centre of life.

Warning Altitude:

Cuzco is approximately 3800Mts above sea level. This is something that anyone can suffer on first arriving at high altitude (anything over 3,000 metres). The cause is the thin air. The symptoms could be: Headache, loose bowels, shortage of breath, insomnia, dizziness and maybe even nausea. To combat this, it is advisable to rest for a few hours, avoid alcohol, smoking and big meals, just generally take things easy for at least the first 24 hours and drink plenty of water, as altitude sickness causes dehydration. This is particularly relevant to anyone flying from sea level to join one of our tours in Lima, Quito, Cuzco, Juliaca (Lake Titicaca) or La Paz. It can also affect some people when we travel to higher altitudes by land, so take things easy whenever possible.



In the afternoon visit the principal monuments and points of interest in Cuzco, considered to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the Western Hemisphere, including the nearby important Inca ruins of Sacsayhuaman, Kenkko and Tambo Machay.



Day 09 **Cuzco**
Tue 08May **Full Day Pisac Indian Market and Ollantaytambo Fortress.**

Drive through the fertile countryside to the colonial village of Pisac. During your visit to the bustling marketplace you will have the opportunity to bargain with the natives for many different types of Peruvian handicrafts and jewellery (This is the place to buy beautiful hand-woven ponchos and other handicrafts). After lunch the tour continues to the village of Ollantaytambo for a visit to its impressive Inca fortress. Overnight. **(B,L)**



Day 10 **Cuzco**
Wed 09May **Day at leisure/Evening Dinner Show.**

Breakfast. Day at leisure to either relax or explore on your own. In the evening, Dinner/Show with Andean music and dances in the heart of Cusco offering creole, international and novo-andina cuisine. **(B,D)**

Day 11 **Cuzco/Machu Picchu/Aguas Calientes**
Thu 10May **Overnight Train Exc to Machu Picchu**

Morning departure on one of the world's great train journeys over and through the Andes to Aguas Calientes where shuttle buses take you up a 2000 foot serpentine road to the entrance of Machu Picchu, fabled Lost City of the Incas, never found by the Spanish Conquistadores and only rediscovered in 1911 by American archaeologist Hiram Bingham. Enjoy a guided tour of the ruins followed by lunch. Overnight in Aguas Calientes at Hotel Hatuchay Towers or similar. **(B,L)**



Day 12 **Aguas Calientes/Cuzco**
Fri 11May **Return to Cuzco**

Breakfast. The morning is free to further explore this unique mountain citadelle or relax (Bus and entry fee not included on this day). In the afternoon return to Cuzco by train. Overnight at **Hotel Novotel 4*** or similar. **(B)**

Day 13 Cuzco/Puno
Sat 12May Bus Cuzco to Puno

Breakfast at your hotel. Bus journey through the Peruvian Andes to Lake Titikaca - Today one of South America's most extraordinary overland trips takes you by bus to Puno passing through striking highland scenery and picturesque Andean villages. Upon your arrival in Puno on the edge of Lake Titikaca, a host will meet and assist you in transferring to the hotel and help you to register. Box lunch is included. Overnight at Posada del Inca 3* or similar **(B,L)**

Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, at 3,808 mt, approximately 8,100 sq.kms. in area, 194 km. long and having an average width of 65 km. At over 170 km long, it is also the largest lake in South America. Its altitude means the air is unusually clear and the azure waters particularly striking. Interesting boat trips can be made from Puno, the major port on the lake. The area is also known for its folk dances and huge herds of alpacas and llamas. In the parts of the lake where its depth is over 25 m. its waters are blue and in the shallower areas it is transparent and green in hue due to the presence of aquatic plants. It is home to extraordinary fauna such as: flamingoes, duck; fish such as "suche", "capache" and trout which has found the Lake to be a great habitat.

As for flora, the 'totora' (a kind of cat-tail or red mace) abounds here and serves as a food both for people and cattle and as construction material for houses, rafts, etc. From the river port at Puno town interesting excursions may be made to the Uros islands. It is said that the inhabitants of these islands descend from one of the most ancient peoples of America. Their dwellings sit on the surface of Lake Titicaca.

Day 14 Puno
Sun 13May Uros Indians Floating Islands/Taquile Island

Breakfast. You will be picked up from your hotel at 7:30 am, after a 2 hour motorboat ride, you will arrive at the Uros island in the Titikaca lake.

Fishermen and hunters inhabit the floating islands of the Uros. The residents of the Uros use the cattail, a type of rush, which grows in the lake, to create the conditions that ensure the islands stay afloat. The dense roots that the plants develop support the island. The roofs are waterproof and the houses are extremely humid because of the surrounding water. At present, they speak Quechua and Aymara. Then we will visit the Taquile Island, where we will have lunch in the cooperative restaurant.

There is also a cooperative shop on the plaza that sells exceptional wool goods, which are of very fine quality and somewhat expensive. Taquile Island is famous for its craft production, particularly for its beautiful textiles.

The island is narrow at about 1 Km. wide and 6 to 7 Km. long. The visit could be exhausting because of the 533 steps on the stone stairway to climb to get to the village and because of the altitude (13,000 ft above sea level). On Taquile there are numerous pre-Inca and Inca ruins as well as Inca terracing. We will return in Puno in the afternoon. Overnight in Puno. **(B,L)**

Day 15 Puno/Sun Island
Mon 14May Lake Titicaca Crossing

Drive to Copacabana. Then, by boat to Sun Island where, according to legend, the first Inca appeared. After exploring the island's Inca remains and majestic views of Lake Titicaca and surrounding Andean mountains, overnight at **Posada del Inca 3*** or **Hotel Inca Utama in Huatajata 4***. **(B,L,D)**

Day 16 Sun Island/La Paz
Tue 15May Lake Titicaca Crossing

Morning visit of the Inca Steps and Sacred Fountain on Sun island is followed by lunch at Uma Kollo. In the afternoon continue the hydrofoil cruise to Moon Island and Huatajata where the Hotel Inca Utama is located. Visit the hotel's Andean Roots Cultural Complex with Altiplano and Eco Museums, explore the ancient "chullpas" (mortality towers) and in the evening enjoy an audio-visual on the Kallawayas (high altiplano medicine men) and a visit to a museum highlighting the natural abundance of the altiplano. Overnight at **Hotel Raddisson Plaza 4*** or similar. **(B,L)**

La Paz is the highest city in the world. Set like a jewel, flanked by the Andes, it is an unforgettable sight to those who visit. It is Bolivia's largest city and has a population of over a million, of which more than half are of Indian heritage. La Paz has a cool climate as it is situated 4000 meters above sea level. There are many hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues and colorful back streets and markets where one may learn about Quechua and Aymara culture which predefines the Bolivian way of life.

Day 17 La Paz
Wed 16May Morning City Tour

Morning half-day city tour of La Paz, visiting the area of the street markets, rich in handicrafts, weavings and witchcraft artifacts. Then the colonial part of the city, San Francisco church, Gold Museum, Murillo Square and the outdoor replica of the Tiahuanaco temple. Finally the modern area of the city and the Valley of the Moon. Afternoon free. **(B)**

Day 18 La Paz/Buenos Aires **Aerosur 5L 230 07.45/14.05**
Thu 17May

Morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Buenos Aires. Arrive in Buenos Aires, transfer to **Americas Tower Hotel 4*** or similar. **(B)**

Buenos Aires, capital city of Argentina is, with over 11 million inhabitants, one of the largest cities in the world. It is also the most elegant, sophisticated and active city in South America and undoubtedly the one that summarizes the varied and heterogeneous essence of the Argentine being. A city with modern structure and dynamic activity that has nevertheless found the way to preserve old traditions and lovely spots. Its ambiance fascinates for the different personality of each of the neighbourhoods, the warm welcome of the people and the wide cultural and commercial offer. Buenos Aires is, undeniably, the great gateway to this magnificent country and to South America. (Take some time to do some shopping here: Leather goods, shoes, bags and clothes are a real bargain)



Day 19 Buenos Aires**Fri 18May Morning City Tour/Evening Tango Dinner Show**

Breakfast. Discover the beauty and wonders of Buenos Aires, visit the National Congress, The Metropolitan Cathedral next to the Government House in may square area. Admire the Colon Theatre, one of the most important opera houses in Latin America.

Visit San Telmo, traditional neighbourhood where Tango performances can be seen in many bars and restaurants. Stop at La Boca colourful neighbourhood, which was, seat of immigrants - manly Italians - and now home of some artists. Enjoy Palermo, an area that combines its architecture and history with entertainment and amusement in its green spaces. Finally, La Recoleta, an exclusive and elegant district where the famous cemetery is found. Although it may seem unusual, fashionable restaurants, bars, cafes, discos and a cinema complex also surround the area. Afternoon free.

In the evening, Tango Dinner-Show

The ideal way to get to know the city. A delicious meal, good wine and the best Tango: a perfect combination.

Taste Argentine cuisine specialities accompanied by excellent wines and finish the evening enjoying a Tango and folklore show long to be remembered. (the tour includes round trip transfers and can also be taken without the dinner)

Duration: including dinner 4 hours. (B,D)

Day 20 Buenos Aires**Sat 19May Full Day Fiesta Gaucha Exc.**

You will visit the Argentine countryside with its customs and traditions spending a day at a ranch. This delightful and unique tour will allow you to enjoy the traditional dances and songs of the Argentine countryside, taking part in a real Gaucho Festival. A welcome reception with typical "empanadas" (meat pies) and superb Argentine wine is offered. Then you will be enjoying a delicious Argentine barbecue:

"Asado". This will be followed by a folklore show with singing and dancing, and a demonstration of "gaucho" skills on horseback: riding, rodeo, as well as a horse exhibition and the "sortija" (ring race). You may also have a horse ride or get on a typical carriage to have a better feeling of the gauchos' way of life. The first sight of the vast Pampas and its people. (B,L)

Day 21 Buenos Aires/Puerto Iguazu**Sun 20May Aerolineas Argentinas AR1724 10.35/12.20**

Breakfast. Morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Puerto Iguazu and further transfer to **Hotel Tropical das Cataratas 4*** or similar.(B)

Welcome to **Iguaçu Falls**, located in the unspoilt, tropical jungle at the borders of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, belong to the most spectacular nature attractions of South America. They are bigger and more breathtaking than the Niagara falls and they even top bigger than the Victoria falls in Africa. On a spread of 2.5 km the Iguacu descends with such force into the deep of the Garganta del Diabolo that one can hear it miles away. This spectacle of nature with the brown jungle stream gently flowing until it suddenly plunges straight down into the deep creating a huge cloud of water is an experience that will remain unforgettable.

In the afternoon, tour of the falls, Brazilian side. Walk along the paths following cascades and then walking along the catwalk that leads very close to the bottom of the Devil's Throat. You will enjoy magnificent views.

Day 22 Foz do Iguassu**Mon 21May Morning Argentinean Falls Excursion.**

Breakfast. Morning tour of the falls on the Argentinean side. The tour stops at the Visitor's Centre and proceeds from there to the Inferior Circuit, the down-river falls, and then to the Superior Circuit, the up-river cascades. Taking the Ecological Jungle Train that leads visitors to and from the most impressive observation point of the falls - The Devil's Throat. Return to the Hotel. Rest of the day at leisure to enjoy the hotel facilities.(B)

Day 23 Foz do Iguassu/Rio de Janeiro**Tue 22May TAM Linhas Aereas JJ3152 17.45/19.30**

Morning free to relax. Afternoon transfer to the airport for your flight to Rio de Janeiro. Transfer to **Hotel Ipanema Plaza 4*** or similar. (B)

Rio de Janeiro - founded in 1556, the city of St. Sebastian of Rio de Janeiro became the capital of the Colony of Brazil in 1776. Rio is graced by its topography. The city is situated in a 15-mile-strip of land, wedged between mountains and sea. There are some thirty miles separating downtown Flamengo, from far-flung Recreio, bordered on one side by the blue sea, on the other by verdant hills. Between them lies a colourful state of mind called CARIOCA, with almost 8 million locals who samba their way through life, relaxed and high-spirited. That is just the way it should be in Rio, surrounded by natural beauty on all sides, with Christ the Redeemer perched on top of Corcovado blessing the city and Sugar Loaf, one of the most famous postcards of our country.

Day 24 Rio de Janeiro**Wed 23May Morning Corcovado Tour**

Departure from the hotel to the Corcovado railway station at the foot of the Corcovado mountain. A 3,5 kilometer (25 minutes) train ride through the lush mountain greenery to the station on the top of the mountain. Take elevator and escalator from the end station to the 38 meter high statue of Christ the Redeemer, 710 m above sea level. Time at leisure. Return to the train and ride back to the Corcovado railway station. Lunch and return to hotel.

Evening BBQ/Dinner Show

Departure from the hotel to one of Rio's many "Churrascarias", or barbeque restaurants where you will sample some of the country's magnificent barbecued meats. Here they serve up to 12 different kinds of meat, chicken and sausages, plus salads, French fries and enough other accompaniments to satisfy anyone.

From the restaurant, a short transfer to Plataforma 1, located in Leblon, to experience a fantastic and colourful show. The show takes the visitor on a journey through Brazil's cultural past with music, typical Afro-Brazilian dances, Samba-schools, Carnival dresses and much more. The show begins at 22:00 and ends at 23:30. Return transfer to the hotel. Entrance fees included. (B,L,D)



Day 25 Rio de Janeiro
Thu 24May Day at leisure to relax
Free day to relax or explore on your own. (B)

Day 26 Rio de Janeiro/Santiago LAN Airlines LA751 14.35/19.35
Sat 25May Santiago/Sydney LAN Airlines LA801 22.55/07.05 +2
(Arrive Sydney 27May)

Breakfast. Late morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Sydney via Auckland. (B)



End of Services

Price per person in Double/Twin Share **AU\$11315** plus airport taxes and surcharges of (AU\$650 to \$750, subject to change)

Triple Reduction: **AU\$335** p/pers

Single Supplement: **AU\$2210** p/pers

Tour Highlights:

Santiago, Colonial Quito, Otavalo Market, Lima, Cuzco and nearby ruins, Pisac Market & Ollantaytambo Fortress, Magnificent Machu Picchu, bus trip along the Altiplano from Cuzco to Puno, Uros floating Islands, Taquile Island, Lake Titicaca and Sun Island, La Paz and its witch market, cosmopolitan Buenos Aires and the breathtaking Iguazu Falls and finally Rio de Janeiro and its beautiful bay.

What's Included:

- Accommodation in first class hotels, standard rooms (4* and 3*Sup) with private facilities
- All breakfasts, 7 lunches and 7 dinners
- Transport and sightseeing as per program with entry fees to sites
- Escort from Australia with a minimum of 10 persons
- Airfares as per program (Sydney/Santiago/Quito/Lima/Cuzco/Surface/La Paz/Buenos Aires/Iguazu/Rio de Janeiro/Santiago/Sydney).

What's Excluded:

- Tips to drivers, guides and hotel staff
- Expenses of personal nature such as: Laundry, telephone calls, meals not mentioned in the program
- Visae (Brazil AU\$90 p/pers. Obtained before leaving Australia and Chile US\$56 for Australian passport holders payable on arrival
- Travel insurance (A comprehensive travel insurance must be taken when taking this tour)
- International departure taxes of: (Approx) Ecuador US\$31, Peru US\$31, Bolivia US\$30, Argentina US\$25 and domestic airport taxes for 4 flights of approx. US\$6 per flight.
- Optional tours on free days.
- Domestic airfares within Australia.

Transport

Plane, air conditioned buses, mini buses, vans, boats, planes, foot (To lodge in Taquile and Sun Island)

Important Conditions:

- Please note that the tour costs are based on using special airfares which may require early payments. Therefore an additional payment may be required between the time the deposit is paid and final payment is due to cover the costs of the airfares.
- Comprehensive Travel Insurance must be taken when booking this tour. Please request General Conditions Sheet with this dossier.
- Passport must be valid at least for 6 months from our last day in South America.
- We reserve the right to deviate the itinerary and substitute hotels should circumstances such as weather, local political situation etc... so dictate.