

CHILE - VENTUS AUSTRALIS: DARWIN'S ROUTE FROM PUNTA ARENAS



INTRODUCTION

Embark from Punta Arenas on this nine-day voyage that inspired the great naturalist Sir Charles Darwin. Navigate through the awe-inspiring archipelago of Tierra del Fuego, discovering amazing sights such as the mesmerising Cape Horn, the hulking mass of Pia Glacier and the immense penguin colonies of Magdalena Island. Discover mystical hidden bays, legendary glaciers and stunning panoramic sights on this amazing voyage.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE

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DEPARTURE

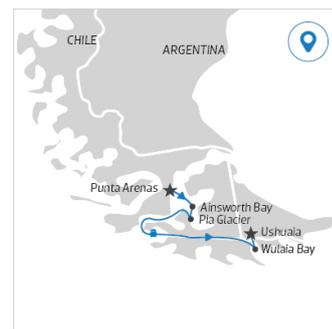
Departs select dates December through April. Please note this cruise does not have departures during May-August.

DURATION

9 Days

LOCATIONS

Chile, Patagonia



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DAY 1: Punta Arenas

Check in and luggage drop off is at the Cruceros Australis office, between 13:00hrs and 17:00hrs (1pm-5pm) at 1398 Av Costanera del Estrecho (at Prat Port) on Punta Arena's waterfront. Boarding commences at 18:00hrs (6pm) with departure scheduled at 20:00hrs (8pm). All passengers must be on board the vessel at least one hour before departure. Please note your luggage will be taken to your cabin. After a welcoming cocktail reception hosted by the captain and his crew, the ship departs for one of the remotest corners of planet Earth. During the night we cross the Strait of Magellan and enter the labyrinth of channels that define the southern extreme of Patagonian. The twinkling lights of Punta Arenas gradually fade into the distance as we enter the Whiteside Canal between Darwin Island and Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego.



DAY 2: Ainsworth Bay

By dawn the ship is sailing up Admiralty Sound (Seno Almirantazgo), a spectacular offshoot of the Strait of Magellan that stretches nearly halfway across Tierra del Fuego. The snowcapped peaks of Karukinka Natural Park stretch along the north side of the sound, while the south shore is defined by the deep fjords and broad bays of Alberto de Agostini National Park. We go ashore at Ainsworth Bay, which harbors copious bird life and a colony of southern elephant seals which can sometimes be spotted from the Zodiacs. Two guided excursions are available: one is along the edge of a stream, peat bog and beaver habitat to a waterfall-and-moss-covered rock face tucked deep inside a pristine sub-polar forest; the other is a more strenuous hike along the crest of a glacial moraine. Both afford views of Marinelli Glacier and the Darwin Mountains. Leaving Ainsworth Bay behind, we sail west along the sound to the Tucker Islets. After lunch, we board the Zodiacs again for a close-up view of the Magellan penguins that inhabit the tiny islands. More than 4,000 penguins use Tucker as a place to nest, give birth and nurture their chicks. Many other bird species also frequent the area including king and rock cormorants, oystercatchers, Chilean skuas, kelp geese, dolphin gulls, eagles and even the occasional Andean condor. In September and April -- when the penguins live elsewhere -- this excursion is replaced by a short walk to a glacier at nearby Brookes Bay.



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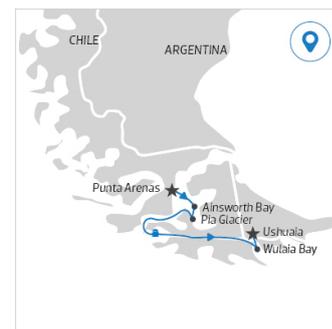
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DAY 3: Pia Glacier - Glacier Alley

Overnight we sail around the western end of Tierra del Fuego via the very narrow Gabriel Channel, Magdalena Channel and Cockburn Channel. After rounding the remote Brecknock Peninsula, the ship tacks eastward and enters the Beagle Channel again. By morning we are entering Pia Fjord and boarding the Zodiacs for a shore excursion to Pia Glacier. After disembarking we take a short hike to gain a panoramic view of the spectacular glacier, which extends from the mountaintops down to the sea or a longer much more difficult walk up a lateral moraine of the old Pia Glacier. No one knows for certain how the hulking mass of snow and ice got its feminine moniker, but one theory says it was named for Princess Maria Pia of Savoy (1847-1911), daughter of the Italian king. Back onboard, we continue east along the Beagle Channel through an area called Glacier Alley. Living up to its name, the passage features a number of impressive tidewater glaciers flowing down from the Darwin Mountains and Darwin Ice Sheet on the north shore. Most of them named after European countries -- Holland, Italy, Germany, Spain and France.



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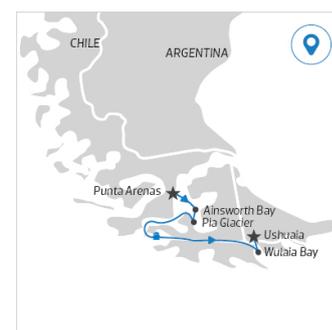
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DAY 4: Cape Horn - Wulaia Bay

During the early morning we sail down the narrow Murray Channel between Navarino and Hoste islands and drop anchor at historic Wulaia Bay. Australis is the only cruise ship company with permission from Chilean authorities to navigate the Murray Channel to Cape Horn, and because of its exclusive concession the only travel company allowed to land passengers at Wulaia Bay. Wulaia Bay is one of the few places in the archipelago where the human history is just as compelling as the natural environment. Originally the site of one of the region's largest Yámana aboriginal settlements, the bay was described by Charles Darwin and sketched by Captain FitzRoy in the 1830s during their voyages on the HMS Beagle. This area is also renowned for the mesmerizing beauty and dramatic geography. After a visit to the small Australis-sponsored museum in the old radio station -- which is especially strong on the Yámana people and European missionaries in the area -- passengers have a choice of three hikes (of increasing degrees of difficulty) that ascend the heavily wooded mountain behind the bay. On all of these you will be strolling through an enchanted Magellan forest of lengas, coigües, canelos, Ñirres ferns, and other endemic fauna to reach a panoramic viewpoint overlooking the bay. Before leaving Wulaia Bay, drop something into the wooden mail barrel inside the museum - letters or postcards meant to be hand delivered by future travelers - an ancient mariner tradition revived by Australis. In the afternoon we cruise across Nassau Bay into the remote archipelago that includes Cape Horn National Park. Weather and sea conditions permitting, we shall go ashore on the windswept island that harbors legendary Cape Horn (Cabo de Hornos). Discovered in 1616 by a Dutch maritime expedition -- and named after the town of Hoorn in West Friesland -- Cape Horn is a sheer 425-meter (1,394-foot) high rocky promontory overlooking the turbulent waters of the Drake Passage. For many years it was the only navigation route between the Pacific and Atlantic, and was often referred to as the "End of the Earth." The park was declared a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2005. The Chilean navy maintains a permanent lighthouse on the island, staffed by a lightkeeper and his family, as well as the tiny Stella Maris Chapel and modern Cape Horn Monument.



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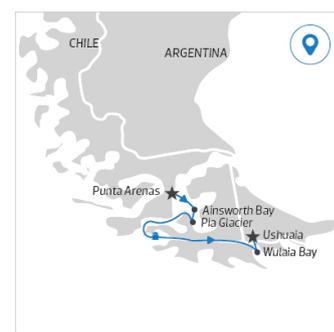
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DAY 5: Ushuaia

The following morning we sail into Argentine waters and dock in Ushuaia, the world's southernmost city. Disembarkation is scheduled at 8 AM. You have almost a full day to explore Ushuaia, founded in 1884 and one of the original points of contact between the indigenous Yámana and European cultures. Its name derives from the Yámana word for 'penetrating bay' and it's surrounded by the southernmost Andes peaks. With around 65,000 inhabitants, Ushuaia is the second largest city in Tierra del Fuego (after Rio Grande). Among its highlights is the Prison at the End of the World, a former penitentiary that is now a maritime museum, Antarctic collection and memorial to those once incarcerated there. The city is also good for shopping (especially locally made chocolate) or hanging out in its many cafes. Passengers are required to reboard the ship at 17:30 (5:30 PM). After a welcoming cocktail reception hosted by the captain and his crew, the ship departs for more adventures in Tierra del Fuego. During the night we traverse the Beagle Channel, cross back into Chilean territorial waters, and turn into the narrow Murray Channel between Navarino and Hoste islands.



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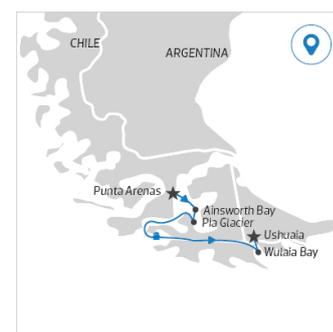
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DAY 6: Cape Horn - Wulaia Bay

By early morning, the ship is once again cruising across Nassau Bay to Cape Horn. Our itinerary day repeats the shore landings and other activities from Day 4. However, second landings at some of the more iconic spots along the route can sometimes be more rewarding than the first time around and give you more time to explore each place in depth. At Cape Horn you have a second chance to visit the Stella Maris Chapel, chat with the lighthouse keeper and his family, or photograph the unusual sub-polar flora that covers the heights. At Wulaia Bay, explore the museum in much more depth, strike out on a longer walk than last time, bird watch along the shore, or sort through the mail barrel to see if anyone lives close to your own home. This second approach also increases your chances of landing on Cape Horn Island.



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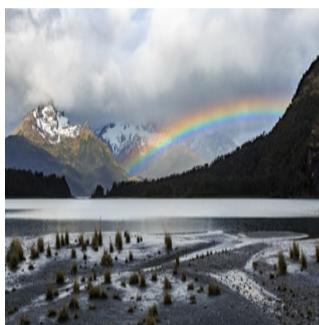
DAY 7: Pía Glacier - Garibaldi Glacier

After nightfall we reenter the Beagle Channel and sail westward along the southern edge of Tierra del Fuego into watery wonderland protected within the confines of Alberto de Agostini National Park. Rounding the Brecknock Peninsula as the western extreme of Tierra del Fuego, the ship is for a brief time exposed to the open Pacific. We then navigate a zigzag route through the Cockburn Channel, Magdalena Channel and Keats Fjord to reach scenic De Agostini Sound. Named after an Italian Salesian priest who worked among the region's indigenous people during the first half of the 20th century, De Agostini Sound is flanked by numerous glaciers and sheer saw-toothed peaks reminiscent of Torres del Paine. Our shore excursion this morning is Águila ("Eagle") Glacier, which hovers above a placid glacial lagoon surrounded by primeval forest. After a Zodiac landing on the beach, passengers hike around the edge of the lagoon to a spot near the base of the frozen facade. Condors can sometimes be seen winging high above, but there is always abundant bird life around the lagoon. This landing provides the perfect opportunity to experience the beauty of Patagonia's sub-Antarctic rainforest and to see how the power of nature has molded the spectacular landscape.



DAY 8: Agostini Sound - Águila Glacier - Cóndor Glacier

Early in the morning we will sail through Cockburn Channel and enter Agostini Sound, where it's possible to see glaciers that descend from the middle of the Darwin Mountain Range -- some of them reaching the water. We will disembark and go for an easy walk around a lagoon formed by the melting of the Águila Glacier, eventually reaching a spot right in front of that glacier with stunning views. In the afternoon, we will approach the Condor Glacier via Zodiac -- and hopefully see some of the abundant Andean Condors in the area.



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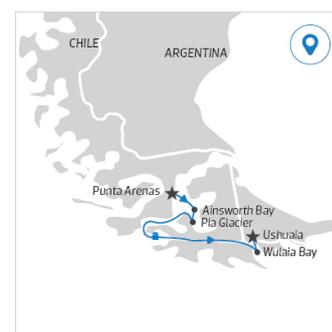
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DAY 9: Magdalena Island - Punta Arenas

After an overnight cruise through Magdalena Channel and back into the Strait of Magellan, we anchor off Magdalena Island, which lies about halfway between Tierra del Fuego and the Chilean mainland. Crowned by a distinctive lighthouse, the island used to be an essential source of supplies for navigators and explorers and is inhabited by an immense colony of Magellanic penguins. At the break of dawn, weather permitting, we go ashore and hike a path that leads through thousands of penguins to a small museum lodged inside the vintage 1902 lighthouse. Many other bird species are also found on the island. In September and April -- when the penguins dwell elsewhere -- this excursion is replaced by a ride aboard Zodiacs to Marta Island to observe South American sea lions. After a short cruise south along the strait, disembarkation at Punta Arenas is scheduled for around 11:30 AM. *Camera extension poles (tripods) are prohibited on Magdalena Island



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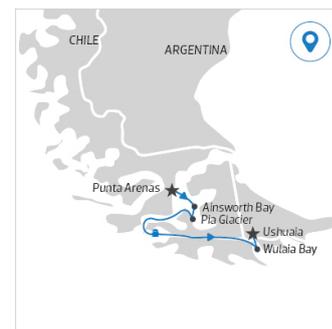
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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Superior

Inclusions

Accommodation and sea transportation
All meals
Port Tax
Open bar (when bartender is on duty)
Shore excursions
Onboard entertainment

Exclusions

Optional tours and transportation
Migration fee
National park fee

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge

Available upon request.

Notes

Contact us for more details.

Price Dependent upon

Season and Availability.

SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.
- 4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.
- 5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structured to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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