



VAGA
MUNDO

Eye to Eye with the Condor (16 days with 10 days Horseback Riding)



- 1 to 2 days tours
- 5 to 10 days tours

- 1 Base Camp in Rincón de Lobos (300 m)
- 2 Laguna de los Alerces and Laguna Espejo (840 m)
- 3 Puerto Patriada on the Shore of Lago Epuyén
- 4 Nature Reserve "El Desemboque"
- 5 Camp on the shore of Lago Puelo
- 6 Cerro Aguja (2230 m; border with Chile) - alternative route
- 7 Camp on the shore of Lago Esperanza
- 8 Glacier of Cañadon Norte
- 9 Cascade "Salto Juana"
- 10 Glaciers of Rio Turbio - alternative route
- 11 Cerro Plataforma (1600 m)

The Horseback-Trekking takes place in the Argentine North Patagonia. Starting point is Rincón de Lobos (1), a small valley of the Andean mountains. To be reached via the "new" route 40, which connects Bariloche with the next major city Esquel. Rincon de Lobos is a fertile valley with microclimate and lively agriculture. Lakes, mountains, rivers and the Patagonian forest characterize the landscape.

Our exploration zone covers an area of approximately 1,000 km² and includes the valley of the mighty Rio Turbio, multiple mountain ranges of the Andes and a system of lakes and lagoons. This zone combines the 240 km² large National Park "Lago Puelo" with the adjacent nature reserves "Rio Turbio" (Chubut Province) and "Lago Esperanza" (private Property).

Program

Saturday/Sunday

Outward Journey (on your own). Arrival in Buenos Aires on Sunday morning at the international airport of Ezeiza with subsequent transfer to the domestic airport Jorge Newberry. The flight will take you to San Carlos de Bariloche with a national carrier such as about LAN ARGENTINA, AUSTRAL or AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS.

Sunday

Arrival in San Carlos de Bariloche. There we will pick up the guests in the early afternoon. Transfer to Rincón de Lobos in car (1.5 hours approx.). Reception in Rincon de Lobos, Accommodation in Guestrooms and Welcome-Asado (BBQ) on open fire. Presentation of the team: Bernabé Mayorga (horse-Guide), Tamisietta Obleitner and Attila Missura (both guides and camp management). Depending on the size of the group also further guides.

Monday

Bernabé comes in the morning to us. After enjoying the traditional mate tea we get the horses of the paddock. It follows the assignment of horses, the introduction in dealing with the local equestrian equipment, the instruction of knots to tie up and the loading of the packhorses. In the early afternoon we ride to Lago Epuyen (3), a total of approximately 3 hours.

Tuesday

In the morning we drive to the nearby small town of El Bolsón. After the joint purchase of provisions utensils we explore this lively town, which is attraction for hikers in summer. The rest day belongs to the preparations for our trip, the definitive choices of horses and equipment, material check etc.

On Trail

Wednesday/Day 1

Bernabé and Tamisietta bring the horses to Basecamp (2). There we face the challenge of loading our equipment on the pack horses. Afterwards we ride to the Rio Epuyén, cross it at a favorable place and follow its course to Desemboque, its mouth to the Lake Lago Puelo (4). After the Estancia El Trebol, we pass through an natural reserve where we get to know beautiful Patagonian Myrtles.

Along the left bank of Lake Puelo we follow a narrow, rocky path on the flank of Cordón del Derrumbe. The relatively steep ascent is rewarded by a wonderful view of the Lago Puelo to the right. After a threehour ride we enjoy the lunch break on a clearing. A nearby rock offers us the view of our destination: the opposite lake shore with the mouth of the mighty Rio Turbio (5). Until then, there are still 3 hours ride, mostly through the mostly unexplored forest.

Usually, the Rio Turbio is fanned into several arms, embedded in a wide area from White River pebbles. In spring the river due to the 4 glacier melt water grows on him to a stream of up to 500 metres wide. Stone pyramids mark the shallows where the Rio Turbio is passable. Under the leadership of Bernabé we are crossing and after other 15 Mi-nutes we reach our camp (5) on the lakeshore and near the Arroyo Aguja Torrent. After setting up camp, we make the evening at your whim with swimming in the sea or just relaxing. Then cook on fire is in the plan.

Thursday/Day 2

To reach the turquoise lake Lago Esperanza (7), we have to cross several Andean foothills. We ride along a mountain flank, following the Arroyo Aguja torrent, to the Aguja massif (6). This mountain chain, which is strongly jagged, forms the border with Chile. After a few hours, the path turns left into a small valley, where we meet the Laguna de la Yegua. After a further ascent we reach the pass. Here we have the chance to observe condors. (In summer 2012 seven were flying over us.) After a short rest we ride down to the next wooded valley. Meanwhile we are on the road for 3 hours without traces of civilization and now look down on the valley of Lago Esperanza. It takes still 3 hours before we arrive at the southern end of the turquoise lake. The only people we meet here are Cachín and his co-workers: Gauchos, who live here in a simple wooden hut as "Puesteros" (housekeeper and cattle driver of secluded properties). Our camp is in the forest, directly on the shore of the lake.

Friday/Day 3

Time to take a break. Even if you do not enjoy fishing, here is the right place where you might taste it. At the latest when a 40 cm rainbow- or salmon-trout has bitten. Not with the fishing rod, but the local utensil: the fishing line is wrapped around a tin can, equipped with a hook and weights at the end and ejected like a lasso. The success is guaranteed. Smaller exploration trail rides are offered also.

Saturday/Day 4

Expedition to Salto Juana near Cañadon Norte (8), the glaciated origin of the Arroyo Esperanza.

The idyllic landscape around the lake is soon behind us and we ride into an ever tighter Valley in the mountains. We pass through zones of the so-called Selva Valdiviana, the jungle of Andean Mountains: With his giant rhubarb (mammoth sheet, Nalca, Chilean rhubarb), the forests of lokal Bamboo, as well as the ancient Alerce trees, he re-ssembles a subtropical rain forest. We reach the remarkable waterfall Salto Juana (9) after 2 - 3 hours where we make a stop. Depending on the timetable, we can either travel to the glacier of the Cañadon Norte or to the giant Alerce tree, estimated at 3'500 years. The whole journey takes 6-7 hours in the saddle.

Sunday/Day 5

Return to Lago Puelo, possibly via an alternative route along the Rio Bravo. This fierce mountain river connects the Lago Esperanza with the Rio Turbio. We ride long passages through the Patagonian forest, cross the Rio Bravo and set up our camp at Lago Puelo.

Monday-Tuesday/Day 6 and 7

Ride to Cerro Plataforma (11). Through a relatively gentle terrain we follow the course of the Rio Turbio upstream. Every now and then we discover small farms of settlers. It is a unique experience being in a zone where people live miles apart each from other. The impression of total human emptiness is unexpectedly broken when you suddenly a horseman appear on the path or you discover a house between the green. Our eye, which is accustomed to civilization, is not trained to interpret the signs in such a wide dimension.

Often Bernabé surprises us when he tells us about distant horsemen, tries to show us a dead animal somewhere on the mountain, or points to a tree and explains that this has served him years ago as a hint to the entrance to a hidden path. Often he explains the position of something with expressions like: "There, where the green is a little greener ..."

After repeated crossing of branches of the Rio Turbio and the passing several larger forests, we reach after a 5 to 6 hour ride the Puesto Moro, on the coast of a small mountain stream. Here we stay. On the next day a 4 to 5 hours-Ride awaits us, with two steep ascents, where we have to overcome about 900 m of altitude before reaching the camp at the foot of Cerro Plataforma.

Wednesday/Day 8

We climb the about 1700 meters high Cerro Plataforma, an exceptional geological phenomenon: a huge truncated cone, forming a 7 km wide plain. This is surrounded by the mighty, even in summer snow-covered, mountains of the region: the Cerro Tres Picos, the Cerro Piramide and the Cerro Anexo. After about 2 hours of riding and a 20 minute climb over boulders we reach the plane of the Plataforma, which resembles a strange planet. Small mountain lakes and cascades contrast with the landscape of a stone desert, which is made up of countless fossils. With some luck we see condors and – even flamingos.

Thursday/Day 9

Return to the camp on the shores of the Lago Puelo, to provide us with food that we have stored in the Station of the Rangers of the National Park.

As an option for the overnight accommodation we can visit the Fernandez family, who offers shared Guestrooms on his farm. There we have the opportunity to learn about the life of a typical family of settlers, who moved from Chile 3 to 4 generations ago. As Pioneers they are the only "legitimated" inhabitants of the national park. They live from cattle breeding, but in a completely different dimension than we know it.: the cattle live freely on an area of several thousand hectares which goes up into the mountains.

Once a year, during the summer months, relatives and friends meet to drive the cattle together. This is not a harmless undertaking, especially as the cows has become wild and can attack even riders. After the Cattle Work the animals has to be brand-marked. The young cattle, separated from the mother's cows, are driven into their own paddocks, and caught one by one with the lasso. Young cattle are drawn with the burning fire. Young bulls are also castrated with the knife.

The whole thing is a celebration and finishes with a lavish barbecue. Part of this festivity is that young Gauchos from the Region prove their courage with the ride on wild young Bulls and show their Lasso-skills. In the month of February it is possible that we can participate in the event.

Friday/Day 10

Return to Rincón de Lobos. Depending on the mood and the weather, we ride off in the afternoon and arrive after nightfall to the civilization.

Saturday

Is a relaxing day in Rincon de Lobos. If desired, we can drive to El Bolsón and visit for example the craft market, a nice cafe or a Gelateria. Often also there is opportunity to visit horseracing, a typical event of the local folklore, which we cannot miss.

Sunday/Return Journey

Transfer to Bariloche to the departure flight.

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Requirements

Riding experience in terrain and good general condition are prerequisites. Team spirit, self-responsibility and participation in all camp activities are further conditions for participation. Test Rides in the first two days will be used for the correct assignation of horses and the introduction to the local riding habits.

The tour has character of Expedition: we are advancing into deserted regions, riding in the mountains, may be up to the glacier zones. We expose us to the nature and its forces. In addition to the physical demands also the mental capacity of the participants will be challenged. The instability of weather conditions typical of mountain regions is a risk factor that can force us to make short-term decisions and to respect limits against our desires.

Services

The following services are included in the package:

- English/German/Portugues/French- speaking Guide during the entire stay
- 10 days horse riding with guide and pack horses
- Introduction day riding-skills, Equipment etc.
- All transports/transfers Bariloche - Rincón de Lobos
- Trips to destinations not accessible on horseback
- All entries in nature reserves, national parks and other fees
- Accommodation during the tour in tents (2 pers.) or mountain huts, the other days in our yurt or in group rooms.
- Use of the infrastructure at the base camp: Stay- and storage space, common kitchen, toilet & bathroom
- All meals and beverages with the involvement of the participants in cooking
- Accommodation in single rooms or cabins is possible on request

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About us

We are Tamisietta Obleitner and Attila Missura. Since 2000 we perform in Patagonia, together with our local partner Bernabé Mayorga, Trekking-Tours by Horse and by Foot.

Attila knows the region since 1997, when he acquired a small property in Rincon de Lobos, whereupon he later built a timber-framed house. Before that, in the late 80-ies years, he had lived for six years in Argentina. He is, therefore, very familiar with the Argentine culture and speaks Spanish perfectly.

In 2002, Tamisietta joined the project. She has been an enthusiastic horsewoman since her childhood and has relevant experience in the training of horses. Since 2011 we live with our three children Titus, Amadea and Avelina in the small valley Rincón de Lobos, 150 km south of San Carlos de Bariloche.

Bernabé is a local Gaucho from Rincón de Lobos. As partners and friends, we have been working together for over 16 years and are supported by other local guides.

In 2011 we finally founded the company Vagamundo Ltd., which represents us in Switzerland. We are certified guides and tour operators in the national park "Lago Puelo".

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[>> Rincon de Lobos in google map](#)

