

world.
JOURNEYS

A close-up photograph of a hummingbird in flight, hovering near a bright orange flower. The bird's wings are spread, showing intricate feather patterns. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

YOUR GUIDE TO SOUTH AMERICA



South America is a huge continent with so much to explore! From the cultural highlights of Peru and Bolivia to the Latin vibes of Brazil and Argentina to the rugged beauty of Patagonia. Whether you visit the lush Amazon, the enchanting Galapagos or trek the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu - South America will leave you wanting more!

PERU | BOLIVIA | ECUADOR

This part of South America offers travellers Inca ruins and the rich culture of the Andean highlands, along with amazing wildlife in the Amazon and the Galapagos Islands.

BRAZIL

Brazil's African and Portuguese influences are reflected in wonderful food, music and dance. You will also find great beaches and festivals (such as Rio's famous Carnival!) along with colourful locals who have a true zest for life.

ARGENTINA | CHILE

Chile runs down the Pacific Coast, alongside its neighbour Argentina. From the beautiful Atacama desert in the north, to the scenic Lake District in the south, and the wild rugged outdoors of Patagonia. This region is ideal for small ship cruising or perhaps even an Antarctic cruise!





PERU

Peru offers travellers incredible culture and diversity. From the ancient site of Machu Picchu to the vibrant city of Lima and the wildlife paradise of the Amazon rainforest—there is so much packed into this magical country.

Lima

Lima's fascinating history is reflected in its museums and rich colonial centre. It is also known for its fine restaurants, the best of which are booked out months in advance.

Cuzco & the Sacred Valley

Cuzco is layered with the history of the Incas and Spanish Conquistadors. The Sacred Valley is home to the incredible Inca sites of Maras, Moray and Ollantaytambo.

Machu Picchu

The ancient Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, set high in the Andes Mountains above the Urubamba Valley, is a true “bucket-list” experience.

Peruvian Amazon

Accessible via Iquitos or Puerto Maldonado, enjoy wildlife viewing and jungle walks from the comforts of an eco-lodge or a luxury cruise.

The Nazca Lines

South of Lima is the town of Nazca, famous for its mysterious lines carved into the desert. Best viewed by small plane!

Arequipa & the Colca Canyon

Arequipa is known for its picturesque whitewashed buildings. Nearby is the vast Colca Canyon where Andean Condors soar in the thermals.



When to go

While Peru is suitable year-round, the ideal months to visit are Apr-Nov. A moderate wet season occurs during the summer months Dec-Mar and typically most of the remainder of the year you can expect clear blue skies and temperate climate. Keep in mind that when at altitude temperatures are cooler. And if you are planning to hike the ‘Classic Inca Trail’ please note it does not operate in Feb.

Travel Tip

Book early for Inca Trail treks as permits are strictly limited and sell out quickly. We can also recommend plenty of other great hikes in this region.





BOLIVIA

With not much chance of outside influences over time, this land-locked country has the most preserved indigenous culture in all of South America. Bolivia is also home to stunning landscapes including the famous Uyuni Salt Flats.

La Paz

One of the highest cities in the world, La Paz will literally take your breath away! Visit the witches' market or enjoy panoramic city views from a gondola.

Lake Titicaca

Bordering Bolivia and Peru, this is one of the highest lakes in the world. Visit the floating Uros Islands and mysterious Sun Island to learn about the life of the people living there - direct descendants of the Incas.

Potosi

Famed for its silver mines during colonial times, the Spanish Colonial Mint is now the fascinating Casa Nacional de la Moneda museum. Enjoy a Coca Tea in the main square, which will help with the high altitude.

Sucre

Sucre's beautiful whitewash buildings and museums make it a cultural centre, best explored on foot. The surrounding area also offers great hiking.

Uyuni Salt Flats

Enjoy the serenity of the largest salt flats in the world! During the summer months the salt flats flood, creating an incredible mirror effect and a photographer's dream!

Altiplano

Extend your journey from the Uyuni Salt Flats across the Altiplano – an area of contrasts with incredible rock formations, bright red volcanoes and turquoise lakes.



When to go

Due to the altitude, climatic conditions range from cool to tropical depending where you are in the country. Winter months (Jun-Aug) in La Paz, Lake Titicaca and Uyuni can be very cold at night, but days tend to be sunny. There is no wrong time to visit, however clothing layers are necessary as the difference between day and night temperatures can be dramatic at higher altitude.

Travel Tip

Bolivia is a great combination with Peru. We suggest starting your journey in Peru and finish in Bolivia, which will help ease you into Bolivia's higher altitudes.





ECUADOR

Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands are one of our favourites! From the spectacular wildlife in the Galapagos Islands and the Cloud Forest, to the charming towns of Cuenca and Otavalo, and the dramatic 'Avenue of the volcanoes'.

Quito

A beautiful city with stunning colonial architecture. The old city is the best preserved and most beautiful of all the Latin American capitals.

Cuenca

A quaint and laid back city in southern Ecuador's Andes mountains known for its charming cobblestone streets, flowery plazas and museums.

Ecuadorian Cloud Forest

Renowned as one of the best places on earth for bird watching, it is home to more than 600 species of birds and incredibly rich biodiversity.

The Avenue of the Volcanoes

Stay in centuries-old haciendas and discover the local traditions and legends of this picturesque valley, dotted with impressive volcanic peaks.

Ecuadorian Amazon

Explore pristine rainforests while staying in eco-lodges. Enjoy canopy walks, birdlife aplenty and night excursions! Small ship cruises are also a great way to explore.

The Galapagos Islands

Located 1,000km off the coast of Ecuador the Galapagos Islands are one of the world's most prolific wildlife destinations – best explored by small ship.



When to go

Ecuador is pleasant to travel year-round, however there are several different climates and if you are planning to visit the Amazon, the Galapagos and other areas you will need to take layers. The Galapagos has exciting wildlife happenings in all seasons. Snorkelling is great year-round with wetsuits available for hire in winter. The Amazon is rainy and humid between Nov-Apr and the lodges kindly provide good old-fashioned gumboots for your comfort!

Travel Tip

For the ultimate wildlife experience, we recommend visiting the Amazon or Cloud Forest, followed by a small ship cruise around the Galapagos Islands.



BRAZIL

Brazil has its own flavour stemming from Portuguese and African heritage. Add to that vibrant cities, colourful culture, the Amazon and a stunning coastline – it is sure to bring your senses alive!

Rio de Janeiro

You will never feel more alive than when you are in Rio de Janeiro! Famous for its long stretches of white sand beaches, lush-green mountains, and of course, Carnival.

Buzios

A beautiful seaside resort dotted with fine restaurants and boutique hotels, Buzios is a laid-back paradise with cobblestone streets and a picturesque waterfront.

Salvador de Bahia

This colourful old city with African heritage is one of Brazil's great historical destinations, filled with churches and forts that reflect the Portuguese influence.

The Pantanal Wetlands

The world's largest wetlands, famous for bird and plant life – here you will see species that do not exist anywhere else in the world.

The Amazon

Base yourself in a jungle eco-lodge or on a boat cruise, and explore the Amazon in comfort and style. Venture along remote waterways, deep into the jungle.

Iguazu Falls

One of the most spectacular and panoramic falls in the world, bordering Argentina and Brazil. It is worth visiting both sides of the falls for the full experience!



When to go

Brazil, being almost the size of the United States, has varying climate regions. The Amazon and the Pantanal Wetlands have a summer rainy season Dec-Apr, so these areas are best travelled outside of these months. The North East region and Rio de Janeiro offer good temperatures year-round with the hottest and most crowded months being Dec-Feb.

Travel Tip

A few nights' stay in the charming beach resort of Buzios makes a wonderfully relaxing end to any Brazilian itinerary.





Argentina is the second largest country in South America and home to the famous tango, gauchos, wineries, glaciers and one of the most impressive sights on the planet– Iguazu Falls.

Buenos Aires

Fondly known as the “Paris of the Americas”. Highlights include the elegant historic city centre, colourful La Boca and experiencing the tango at great restaurants.

Northwest Argentina

Argentina’s north offers many archeological sites, colourful desert mountains and salt flats as well as the famous “Train to the Clouds”.

Mendoza

Dominated by the Andes and surrounded by world class Malbec grape vineyards and olive groves, Mendoza is a delight, and a must for wine lovers.

Bariloche (Lake District)

Known as the “Swiss Alps of South America” with mountains, lakes and volcanoes, the town of Bariloche is the gateway to the Lakes Crossing into Chile.

Iguazu Falls

The Argentine side of the falls offers an up-close experience allowing visitors to walk amongst the falls from the upper and lower levels.

Ushuaia

The southernmost city in the world, Ushuaia is a base for travellers heading down to Antarctica or starting a cruise through Patagonia.



When to go

Argentina’s climate varies from the hot dry north to the sub-Antarctic south. Buenos Aires is a year-round destination with mild winters (May-Sep) and hot summers (Nov-Mar). Iguazu Falls is spectacular year-round. Patagonia is best visited in the spring and summer months from Oct-Apr, as some areas are closed in the winter months.

Travel Tip

To get the best out of your visit to Iguazu Falls make sure you visit both sides!





CHILE

Chile is a land of extremes with the Atacama Desert in the north and the spectacular mountainous region of Patagonia in the south. It is also home to sophisticated cities and beautiful wine regions.

Santiago & Valparaiso

Santiago is the cosmopolitan capital city. Home to some excellent museums, it also has great wineries close by. Well worth a day trip is the historic port city of Valparaiso.

Atacama Desert

With its lunar-like landscape, thermal areas and salt lakes, the Atacama Desert is a photographer's dream. Travellers also enjoy star-gazing under its clear skies.

Colchagua Wine Valley

Home to many of Chile's boutique wineries, producing a variety of world-class red wines, this valley is ideal for a tasting tour!

Lake District

A land of lakes, mountains and volcanoes in southern Chile. Visit the charming island of Chiloe and enjoy crossing through the Andean lakes and mountains to Bariloche, Argentina.

Chilean Patagonia

This incredible region is home to towering peaks, huge glaciers and pristine lakes. Join a small ship cruise to the southernmost point of South America!

Easter Island

The island is a mix of Polynesian and South American cultures, endowed with 'moai' or stone statues, thought to be a representation of past ancestors.



When to go

Northern and central Chile have a temperate climate, with the north (including Atacama) enjoying sunny days virtually every day of the year. Travel to Patagonia is best between Oct-Apr but is not impossible during the winter low season, just much colder.

Travel Tip

For the ultimate star-gazing location, we suggest heading to the Atacama Desert, famous for its clear skies.





MEXICO & CENTRAL AMERICA

Mexico and Central America offer a kaleidoscope of colourful culture, breathtaking sights and stunning scenery. Fans of ancient history will delight in the many spectacular Mayan and Aztec ruins.

Mexico

Rich cultural heritage, delicious cuisine and incredible relics of the past are just some of the highlights. Visit the ancient ruins of Chichen Itza, jungle-enshrouded Palenque, Uxmal and the Sun & Moon pyramids of Teotihuacan. Walk the cobblestone streets in the charming towns of Oaxaca, Taxco and San Cristobal. Then relax in the sun at the famed beach resorts of Cancun, Acapulco, Playa del Carmen or Tulum.

Guatemala

This is the cultural heart of Central America, rich in tradition and culture. Outside of Guatemala City, you will encounter the spirit of the traditional Mayan culture. Check out the gorgeous village of Antigua surrounded by volcanoes. Visit Lake Atitlan, Chichicastenango and Quetzaltenango. The jungle-enshrouded ruins of Tikal are unmissable.



Costa Rica

Costa Rica has coastlines on the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. Tropical coastal plains rise to mountains, active volcanoes, and a temperate central plateau where you'll find the capital city of San José. Experience exotic flora and fauna in Monteverde Cloud Forest, where you can enjoy night walks and forest canopy tours, or tour the beautiful botanic and butterfly gardens.



Cuba

Havana, the capital, is a fascinating city with its crumbling colonial architecture and 1950's cars which give it an eccentric and very photographable quality. Travel further to visit charming Trinidad, declared a World Heritage Site and "living museum". Santa Clara, resting place of the revolutionary Che Guevara, and Cienfuegos are charming highlights.

Belize

Formerly British Honduras, Belize is a tiny English-speaking country on the Caribbean coast. Bordered by Mexico and Guatemala and home to some important Maya archaeological ruins, the country is 60% tropical rainforest with a rich biodiversity. Along the coast, you will find part of the second largest coral reef system in the world, a paradise for snorkelling or diving.

Panama

There is so much more to the tiny country of Panama than its famous canal. Its fascinating history includes 350 years of Spanish rule which attracted pirates looking for treasure. Nature lovers will enjoy Parque Nacional Coiba, a marine park home to dolphins, along with humpback, killer and sperm whales. In the lush rainforests you'll find howler monkeys, toucans and sloths.



ANTARCTICA

The last frontier, the great white continent, this is Antarctica! For those who have a yearning to tick this incredible destination off their bucket list, we can recommend the best exploration-in-style options.

Cruise Options

Most cruises depart from Ushuaia in southern Argentina. For those who are short on time or who prefer to avoid the Drake Passage, there are fly/cruise options from Punta Arenas in Chile to King George Island in the South Shetlands.

Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)

This sub-Antarctic archipelago, well known for its war back in 1982, is a popular addition to a journey to Antarctica. Along with a dramatic history, the scenery here is incredible, as is the proliferation of penguin and bird species.

South Georgia

Here is where you'll find the vast king penguin colonies along with fur and elephant seals. South Georgia also offers fascinating polar history as this is where Sir Ernest Shackleton first crossed the island in search of aid for his Antarctic expedition.

What you need to know

Book early! Like most cruises the higher cabin categories sell out first so book early to guarantee your preferred cabin and departure date.

We only recommend cruise lines with solid sustainability credentials, and ships which accommodate no more than 200 passengers. Only 100 people are allowed on the ice at one time, so your excursion time will be maximised on a smaller ship.

Certain optional activities such as kayaking trips must be pre-booked and generally cannot be booked once the cruise has departed. We highly recommend adding some land touring in South America either pre or post-cruise.



When to go

The season for Antarctic voyages is between late October and early March.

October – December is the early season. There will be lots of ice and the icebergs will be huge! The temperatures will be cool, but the landscapes pristine, snowy and beautiful. During this time you will see penguins tending to their eggs and elephant seals breeding.

December – Mid-February is mid-season, the warmer weather and longer days making this the most popular time to visit Antarctica. You will see cute and fluffy penguin chicks hatching, and it is also a good time to start spotting whales and seals.

Mid-February – March is late season and as the polar ice melts further exploration becomes easier. It is also a great time to see plenty of whales as they return to the region to feed.



OTHER JOURNEYS

There are many ways to experience South America, from luxury rail journeys, to hiking, small ship cruising and incredible wildlife encounters – all which can be included on a tailor-made holiday.



RAIL JOURNEYS

Belmond offer luxury rail journeys in Peru between Cuzco, Lake Titicaca and Arequipa, along with the Hiram Bingham train to Machu Picchu. More unique options include Argentina's Train to the Clouds and the Titicaca Train between Cuzco and Puno.

CRUISE JOURNEYS

Explore some of South America's most enticing destinations on board a small ship cruise, which offers access to inlets and secluded bays larger ships can't reach, with expert guides for shore excursions, and a more relaxed and personal atmosphere.

For wildlife lovers you can't go past the incredible ecosystems, bird and plant life of the Amazon and the Galapagos Islands. For those in search of wild rugged scenery, a small ship cruise in Patagonia will take you there.

SMALL GROUP HOSTED JOURNEYS

With no more than 18 guests and a host accompanying the group, this is the easy way to explore South America. Airfares and gratuities are included!

Grand Tour of South America, 34 days, six countries.

This annual (September) favourite covers all the highlights! Visit the Amazon jungle and cruise the Galapagos Islands. Visit the "Lost City of the Incas" at Machu Picchu, Lake Titicaca, marvel at the mighty waterfalls of Iguazu and embrace the beautiful cities of Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. We love the rich history and vast range of cultures.

ACTIVE JOURNEYS

Keep active on holiday in South America by enjoying a stunning walk! The famed Inca Trail trek takes in ancient ruins and beautiful mountain vistas, culminating in the first sight of Machu Picchu as you pass through the Sun Gate. There are luxury options, and other accommodated treks in the Sacred Valley including the Lares and Salkantay Treks. Patagonia also offers a range of fabulous treks, perfect for those with a love of the great outdoors.





PLANNING YOUR *South American Journey*

South America is a vast continent and unless you have plenty of time, we suggest visiting one area and exploring it well. While some regions may look like a short distance on a map, getting between places often requires more than one flight.

Take into consideration the following when planning your journey:

- How much time do you have? And have you allowed time to acclimatise to high Andean altitudes?
- What are you expecting to experience? History and archaeology, cuisine, wildlife, landscapes, culture...and more?
- What is your preferred style of travel, and budget?

Let us tailor-make the perfect itinerary for you!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL

