Antarctica's White Wilderness

SMALL SHIP CRUISE TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

Bariloche, Argentina: Patagonian Andes & Lakes; Iguassu Falls, Argentina & Brazil

ATC/ATP 2014

Grand Circle Cruise Line
Antarctica's White Wilderness
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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK
We've gathered some helpful introductory information for this Grand Circle Cruise Line itinerary. For detailed and timely information, it's wise to visit appropriate websites and confirm luggage regulations, weather conditions and other variable elements of your trip. If you expect to embark on personal exploration, or wish to discover more about the countries you visit, we suggest that you consult your choice of the many in-depth travel guidebooks devoted to your destinations. Refer to our additional resources lists (at the end of the handbook) for other sources of insight.

ABOUT GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL
Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel, adventure and discovery for Americans aged 50 and over. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel+Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, among other publications. But our most impressive reviews come from the more than one million people who have traveled with us and from readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* who placed Grand Circle Cruise Lines, the cruise branch of Grand Circle, in the Top 10 of the World's Best Cruise Lines for eight years — in 2012 ranking Grand Circle Cruise Lines the #1 World's Best River Cruise Line. Grand Circle has earned a spot on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List for seven consecutive years as well. For 2011 *Condé Nast Traveler* named seven Grand Circle Cruise Line river ships among the 20 best river ships in the world; for 2012 the Grand Circle Cruise Lines was named to their Platinum Circle of top cruise lines.

YOUR GCCL PROGRAM DIRECTOR
During your Grand Circle Cruise Line Small Ship Cruise Tour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. Along the way, your Program Director is supported by local tour guides who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle Cruise Line, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Escorted Tour, and during the optional trip extensions in Bariloche and Iguassu Falls if you choose to take them.

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

U.S. citizens need a valid passport for this itinerary.

Note

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled "Visas" at the top. Pages labeled "Amendments and Endorsements" are not acceptable.

Recommended number of blank pages:
This recommendation is based on a "worst case" scenario. On this trip you might use fewer pages depending on the whims of the Immigration officials you meet. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we take a *better safe than sorry* stance, and we recommend these guidelines:

- **Main trip only:** If you are taking only the main trip, you will require 2 blank passport pages.
- **Pre-trip extension Bariloche:** This extension does not require any additional pages beyond the 2 black passport pages needed for the main trip.
- **Post-trip to Iguassu Falls:** In addition to the 2 pages required for the main trip, you will need 1 more page for a total of 3 blank passport pages.
- **Both the pre- and post-trip extensions:** You will need a total of 3 blank passport pages.

Please take moment to ensure that your passport meets *all* of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country and **you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, which would be at your own expense**.

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:
Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You can renew your passport by mail if it is not damaged, you obtained it within the last fifteen years, and it's in the name you want on your new passport. Many local post offices carry forms for renewing by mail or obtaining extra pages. Allow several weeks for processing your passport. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at 1-800-556-9990 for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.

Visas not required for Antarctica, Argentina
Visa required for Brazil

For a U.S. citizen holding a U.S. passport, the visa requirements below apply. **We will send you the necessary visa application forms, with instructions and the amount of the visa processing fees approximately 100 days prior to your departure**. This information is provided by PVS International, a national passport service that we highly recommend.

- **Antarctica (main trip)—visa not required:** No visas are required to visit Antarctica.
- **Argentina (main trip and optional extensions)—visa not required:** For a U.S. citizen, a visa is not required for entry into Argentina. However, Argentina does charge an entry fee, called a reciprocity fee. This fee must be paid in advance; see the section below labeled "Airport Departure Taxes & Reciprocity Fees"
- **Brazil (optional Iguassu Falls extension)—visa required. Can only be obtained in advance:** If you are taking the optional extension to Iguassu Falls, you will need a visa to join the activities on the Brazilian side of the falls. You must obtain your visa for Brazil before you leave home. At the time this handbook was printed, the Brazilian government was charging approximately $200.00 per person for visa processing. This information is being provided only as a guideline for budgeting purposes—the fee is subject to change.

If you are staying longer in any of these countries, you should check with their embassy or consulate for the applicable regulations:

Embassy of Argentina: (202) 238-6400

The Brazilian consulates can be reached at: **Atlanta** (404) 949-2400, **Boston** (617) 542-4000, **Chicago** (312) 464-0244, **Hartford** (860) 760-3100, **Houston** (713) 961-3063/961-3064/961-3065, **L.A**. (323) 651-2664, **Miami** (305) 285-6200, **New York** (917) 777-7777, **San Francisco** (415) 981-**8170** and **Washington** DC (202) 461-3000

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or, you may contact PVS International directly, who can also assist non-U.S. citizens.

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

Backup Photocopies

The smartest and easiest security precaution you can take is to carry photocopies of the personal information pages of your passport, your air ticket, traveler's check serial numbers (if you're carrying these checks), and your credit cards. Store them separate from the originals. Bring along extra passport-sized photos. Add phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, for your travel protection plan

company if you have purchased one and for your medical emergency network. This can save you immeasurable time, money, and bother if your documents are lost or stolen during your trip. In addition, you can scan these photocopies and email them to your personal email address so that a replacement can be printed out if needed (if/when Internet service is available.)

Your Flight Itineraries

You will receive a preliminary flight itinerary approximately 75 days prior to your departure. Please examine it carefully to ensure that your first and last names appear exactly as they do on your passport. (We do not need middle names). You will receive your finalized flight itinerary in your final documents package approximately 14 days prior to your departure. If the airlines make a change in your flight times, we'll adjust your reservation accordingly. If time permits, we'll send you an updated flight itinerary. If the change is made close to your departure, you'll be advised by way of the finalized flight itinerary. You may also view your most up-to-date flight arrangements through the My Account feature of our web page, **www.gct.com.**

All flight arrangements are subject to change at any time for reasons beyond GCCL's control.

Depending on your airlines, you will most likely receive electronic tickets (E-tickets) for your flights. But occasionally, specific airlines or specific flights may require paper tickets instead. If needed, paper tickets will be sent as part of your final documents package. If you receive paper tickets, please guard them the way you would guard cash, as they cannot easily be reissued. Plus a reissue always entails a fee from the airlines that you would be responsible for.

During the course of your trip you may have regional flights within the destination. Due to international ticketing regulations, some of these flights must be ticketed within the country they originate from. If so, these flights may not be listed in your air itinerary, but your Program Director will advise you of these flight schedules during the trip. To see if your tour includes regional flights, please refer to your brochure.

Please note: If you've made your own international air arrangements, transfers are ***not*** included.
You are responsible for your transfers to and from the airport. Please refer to the enclosed hotel contact sheet for hotel information. The option to purchase your tour without international air is not available on all tours and may depend on the extensions you have chosen.

Round-trip airport transfers are available for purchase on this Cruise Tour. To take advantage of this offer, you simply need to arrive and depart on the same day and from the same airport as our air-inclusive travelers. Round-trip transfers will cost $100 per person, and are available for purchase up to 30 days prior to your departure. For more details, please visit our webpage at: www.gct.com/AirportTransfers. Or to purchase a transfer today, please call our Traveler Support Team at 1-800-321-2835.

Overseas Taxes and Reciprocity Fees

This tour has airport departure taxes and reciprocity fees cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. This information is being provided only as a guideline for budgeting purposes—the taxes and fees are subject to change. We will advise you of the most up-to-date amounts in your Final Documents.

Airport Departure Taxes: When you fly from Ushuaia to Buenos Aires, you will be required to pay a tax of 32 Argentinean pesos (approximately $7.50 U.S.) at the Ushuaia airport.

Reciprocity Fees: Argentina currently requires all U.S. citizens to pay a $160 per person entry fee. This fee is known as a reciprocity fee because it is equal to the amount an Argentine citizen would have to pay to enter the U.S.

For Argentina, the reciprocity fee must be paid in advance. We will send you detailed information on how to do this in your Visa Packet about 100 days prior to departure. Because Grand Circle Cruise Line cannot reimburse for changes to the reciprocity fee program or for unused fees, we suggest that you wait until you are at or inside 90 days from departure to make this payment. Once paid, the fee permits multiple entries into Argentina for ten years in accordance with United States visa reciprocity.

The amount, payment method, and enforcement of the reciprocity fee is subject to change by the Argentine government without prior notice. Please consult your final documents for most current information for your departure.

Regional Flights in Argentina

In Argentina, it is simply a fact of life that schedules for regional flights often change on short notice. When this happens, our air travel experts strive to get you on internal flights as close to the original schedule as possible, but limited availability of seats may require us to use early-morning flights or change the day of the flight. If schedule changes make it necessary, we may have to rise before dawn on some days where early-morning wake-ups are not mentioned in your printed itinerary. Though travel in South America can be unpredictable, we have considerable experience at responding to changing circumstances on the spot. We appreciate your understanding that we cannot always follow your published itinerary to the letter.

Special Forms Required for Antarctic Cruise

In order for your cruise tickets to be issued, you will be required to fill out a return a Medical Form and have proof of Mandatory Emergency Evacuation Insurance. Please see the next two sections for details.

Mandatory Emergency Evacuation Insurance

Due to the remote nature of the Antarctic cruise portion of your trip, the cruise lines that we sail with requires that all passengers have emergency evacuation coverage of at least $50,000. If you purchased the Travel Protection Plan through GCCL, then you will be covered for the minimum required amount.

If you do not purchase the Travel Protection Plan through GCCL, then you must purchase an alternate plan that meets the minimum required emergency evacuation coverage of $50,000. In addition, you will need to send evidence of your policy to our Traveler Support Department either by mailing it in with your medical form (see below) or by fax to 1-617-346-6899. Please include your reservation number. We must receive this information by 90 days prior to your departure in order to ensure there is no delay in the release of your cruise tickets.

Please be advised that your cruise tickets will not be released unless you purchase either GCCL's Travel Protection Plan or provide us with proof of alternate coverage (that includes $50,000 in emergency evacuation insurance) by 90 days prior to departure.

Confidential Medical Form

For this trip you will be required to complete a medical form. We will send you detailed information on completing this form approximately 120 days prior to your departure. The medical form must be completed, signed, and stamped by a physician to certify that you are physically fit for this trip.

This information is needed from you at least 90 days before your departure in order to ensure there is no delay in the release of your cruise tickets. If you are mailing in proof on an alternate plan that meets the minimum required emergency evacuation coverage of $50,000; you should send proof of this coverage in with the medical form.

Please note your cruise tickets will not be released unless we have received these completed forms by 90 days prior to departure.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

Is This Adventure Right For You?

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this adventure that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.**

We travel to remote areas more than 2 days away from major medical facilities; travelers with medical conditions that might require immediate attention or evacuation may be denied boarding of our cruise ship in Ushuaia. We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

Physical requirements This is an expedition, not a typical GCCL adventure, and the nature of this expedition requires a higher level of fitness than that of other GCCL trips. This adventure is not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. You'll spend 3-4 days sailing the Drake Passage, which is known for its bad weather and rough seas. It is imperative that you have a good sense of balance and strong "sea legs" in order to be able to move safely aboard the steadily rocking ship. In order to enjoy this trip you have to be able to walk unassisted. Walking canes and wheelchairs are not allowed on the ship.

You must be able to hike 3 miles unassisted over the course of each day, exploring uneven, snowy, and icy terrain on foot and standing for up to an hour at a time. Good balance and agility are required for climbing in and out of inflatable Zodiac boats from a gangway during "wet" landings on shore excursions. You must also be comfortable participating in 6-8 hours of daily physical activities.

Pacing *3 locations and 9 nights onboard ship in 15 days with 1 one-night stay; early mornings including one pre-dawn departure. We also have 2 internal flights of about 4-5 hours each.*

Climate & terrain In Argentina, you will encounter both warm and humid weather in Buenos Aires, and cool and windy climate in Ushuaia. Because conditions are inhospitable in Antarctica during its winter season, we only travel only during the austral summer—from November to February—when daylight lasts up to 18 hours and temperatures average 32°F. We'll encounter unpredictable weather during our 3-4 day expedition through the Drake Passage's notoriously rough seas. In the Drake Passage it is common for the ship to roll considerably. We'll navigate rugged paths and trails in Argentina, and bumpy, gravelly, sometimes icy roads by bus and foot. In Antarctica, we'll encounter rough, wet terrain covered with ice, rocks, and snow. You must have an excellent sense of balance and strong "sea legs" to enjoy this adventure.

Transportation We travel by bus and on a 98-passenger ship shared with other GCCL groups. We'll also board small inflatable craft for shore excursions during our expedition.

Health Checkup and Inoculations

For this trip you will be required to complete a medical form. We will send you detailed information on completing this form before you depart. See the section entitled "Confidential Medical Form" above for details. As this form needs to be filled out in part by your doctor, we suggest that you schedule your doctor's visit three to four months before your trip. Let your doctor know about any medical condition you have, particularly cardiac or respiratory disease or diabetes, and discuss the details of the trip itinerary as it pertains to your health. Your trip will take you into remote areas, with no nearby medical facilities. For the cruise portion of your trip the ship's physician reserves the right to deny any traveler from boarding if they are deemed unfit for the trip, or if they have a medical condition that can not safely be managed onboard.

Vaccinations in General

Check with the CDC: To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the geographical region that you are going to travel. You can contact them at:

- **On-line:** if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's website at **wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel** where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.
- **By phone:** at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your Doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician—at least 6 weeks prior to departure—concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations that were legally required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary (but the CDC and your doctor may have recommendations specific to you, so please check).

Yellow Fever Vaccination – *Recommended* for extension

The CDC does not recommend the yellow fever vaccination for any of the areas we travel to on the main trip. However, travelers on the extension to Iguassu Falls should note that the CDC does recommend the yellow fever vaccination for this region, if your health allows. This is not a legal requirement, but a health recommendation that you should discuss with your doctor. (He or she can offer a suggestion tailored to your personal medical history.)

Yellow fever is a mosquito-borne disease, so the easiest preventative steps against the disease are to prevent mosquito bites. For example, use insect repellent (preferably containing DEET at 30-35% strength) and to wear clothing that keeps your arms and legs covered. There is also a vaccination against yellow fever that is widely available at doctor's offices and sometimes available through clinics run by your local/state health authority. When you receive this vaccination your doctor will give you a Yellow Fever Card, also known as an International Certificate of Vaccination. This card is valid beginning ten days after your vaccination and good for ten years.

TIP for travelers on the Iguassu extension: *We recommend that if you have received the vaccination, you have your Yellow Fever Card with you when traveling. If you cannot receive the vaccination for medical reasons, we suggest you bring with you a letter from your medical provider stating so. If either Argentina or Brazil (the two countries we visit at the falls) makes a last-minute change to its entry policy before you leave, having one of these documents with you could make all the difference.*

Malaria

The CDC states that malaria is **not** present in the areas that we visit on the trip, but it does occur in other regions. Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease, so the most important steps you can take to prevent malaria are to use insect repellent (preferably containing DEET at 30-35% strength) and to wear clothing that keeps your arms and legs covered. Malaria is also easily treatable by use of a prescription anti-malarial drug.

To confirm that nothing has changed with the CDC recommendations, a quick check of the CDC website will let you know if there have been updates.

Prescription Medications

If you take **prescription medications** regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name. However, please note that once you begin the cruise portion of your trip there will be no opportunities for you to obtain any type of medication. Therefore, if you are taking any vital medication, you will not be allowed to board the ship without it. We strongly suggest that you keep your medications with you at all times, and that you do NOT pack them in your checked luggage.

Also, when you visit your doctor, we suggest getting a **prescription for an antibiotic medication** and a **prescription for a pain medication**, such as Tylenol with codeine. You might need this in the unlikely event of an injury in a location where medical attention would be delayed. Our Program Director does not carry prescription medications. The motion sickness medication called Dramamine will be available onboard ship, free of charge, to help alleviate any seasickness. Please be aware that motion sickness patches are not available in Argentina, so if you feel you may want them, you should bring them with you from the U.S.

Dental Exam

A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling in a remote area. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

Jet Lag Relief

You will feel better on the first days of your trip if, shortly before you leave home, you start to adjust to the different time zone of your destination. Since you will cross several time zones to reach your destination, you may lose many hours of regular sleep. On arrival, your body then will have to suddenly adjust to new sleeping and eating patterns. The result is jet lag. Its symptoms are fatigue—often compounded by insomnia and general restlessness—irritability, and vague disorientation. You cannot totally avoid jet lag; but you can minimize it. Here's how:

- Start your trip well rested. Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave.
- Switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane. Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Try to sleep on overnight flights.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before–and during–your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying.
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane, and make an effort to get up and walk about the cabin a few times to keep your blood circulation normal.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Safe Water
Tap water is safe to drink in Argentina, but it is processed differently than in the US, so it may feel "heavy" if you have a sensitive system. If you prefer bottled water it is readily available and inexpensive, but it is not included in the cost of your tour. (On board the ship, bottled water is included.)

Safe Food
We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals. Be very careful with food sold from vendors on the street, and with uncooked fruit and other foods. Fruits and vegetables are safe to eat in Argentina.

Drink Plenty of Liquids
When you travel, you can easily become dehydrated without knowing it. If your fluid balance is low, you are more susceptible to fatigue and illness. Air travel will dry you out, so drink liquids and avoid alcohol on your flights. During the trip, don't wait until you feel thirsty to drink. Instead, drink by the clock: drink one to two quarts of water or juice each day, in addition to drinks at meals. If you find yourself tired or unwell, and don't know why, it may be that you simply need to drink more. Note that tea, coffee, and alcoholic beverages are diuretics, and do not help maintain hydration. Antarctica is very dry; you will need water bottles when going ashore.

Sun and Heat Exposure
Be sure to wear your hat, and use plenty of sunscreen. Be aware of the signs of heat exposure. Be especially concerned if you feel hot, but are not perspiring. Let your Program Director know if you are not feeling well. Most importantly, you must drink plenty of liquids when temperatures are high. In Antarctica, you don't think of sunburns, but due to the thin ozone layer and all the reflection from snow and water, good sunscreen is a must.

Tips for the Drake Passage
The Drake Passage is known for its strong waves and rough seas; it is common for the ship to roll considerably. As it is hard to know how your body will react, bringing seasickness remedy would be a good idea, if only as a precaution (Dramamine will be available onboard ship). If you are planning on taking medication for seasickness or wearing patches, your Program Director will advise you on the best time to start taking them to prevent illness. Other tips for the Drake Passage include and don't over eat. The best thing to do for seasickness is to have your stomach full, but with nothing too heavy—crackers, bread, and pasta with light sauce is advisable. Avoid alcoholic drinks the night on the embarkation, as you will be in open waters within 3 hours after boarding.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

It may seem early to discuss luggage and packing, but if you know current industry standards for international flights you can start to plan what type of luggage you'll use, how much clothing to bring, etc. The following information can help you in your trip preparations. We'll remind you to confirm your U.S./international luggage limits (and update regional limits, if applicable) in your final documents (arriving about two weeks before your departure).

In addition to the international flights, you will also take domestic flights within the region on your main trip. The luggage limits on these flights are less than the average allowance for international flights. **This means that even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions, as indicated in the following chart.**

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current **standard** is **50 lbs for checked bags** and **17 lbs for carry-on bags**. (If you have an ***Aerolineas Argentinas*** flight, **the weight limit is 33lbs**.)
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (*length+width+depth*). Generally, **62 linear inches is the checked bag limit**; **carry-on limit is 45 linear inches**.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights. **Note**: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: *Do I feel lucky?* And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?
Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit then the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, sometimes even on international flights. Others will charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price**; they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the "Air Travel" section of your Important Information booklet.

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule**: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure. Note that this rule is used increasingly throughout the world.

For flights that originate in the U.S:
To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, do not lock your bags when checking in for flights originating in the U.S. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for screening all checked luggage at commercial airports throughout the U.S. TSA baggage-handling agents may need access to your luggage and will break locks if required. TSA "accepted and recognized" locks are widely available: screeners can open and re-lock bags using these locks if a physical inspection is required.

For flights originating outside the U.S.:
On all flights outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend you lock your luggage. This is not a legal requirement but merely a precaution against theft. Have the keys handy, as you may need to open your luggage for a security screening or for customs in the U.S. or Europe.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

GCCL Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCCL Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time and at the gate one hour before your departure time (security permitting).

Please note that if you are arriving at your international gateway city via a connecting domestic flight, the Grand Circle Cruise Line Representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Important note on porters: *Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart, which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motor coach. Your motor coach driver will load your luggage onto your motor coach.*

Arrival in Buenos Aires—main trip & optional pre-trip extension: When you deplane from your flight a Grand Circle Cruise Line Representative will meet you at the airport after you exit Customs and assist you with the transfer to your hotel.

U.S. Return: At the end of your base trip or optional post-trip extension, you'll be transferred by motor coach to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCCL Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCCL Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

Name Tags: *Please remember to wear your Grand Circle Cruise Line nametag when you exit Customs, upon arrival and when you return to the U.S., so that you are readily identifiable as a GCCL traveler.*

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

Generally speaking carrying a mix of different payment methods is the best option—some cash for exchange, a couple of credit/or debit cards, and *maybe* a few traveler's checks as a last resort—so that you'll be prepared for any situation. In this section, we offer some tips on each type of payment method.

Cash or Traveler's Checks?

Traveler's checks are not easily exchanged and are rarely accepted in Argentina. Cash is the best choice for rural or undeveloped areas where ATMs and credit card machines are scarce. It's more practical to view traveler's checks as an absolute last resort in the event of a special situation.

Bringing cash is a good idea—does that mean U.S. dollars or local currency? **There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip.** You can change money when you arrive — at banks and money exchange offices. **Please note that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills may not be accepted; new currency is the most reliable for exchange.** In some countries you do not even need to exchange money at all—U.S. dollars are sometimes fine. For more information on what type of currency can be used on this trip, see the "Currency" section.

ATMs

When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

During this trip, ATMs are not always readily available, especially in remote locations or onboard the ship. ATMs are available in large cities, such as Buenos Aries. It might be a good idea to bring a store of cash with you or to obtain a store of cash in Buenos Aries to prepare for your travel in more remote areas. Your Program Director will advise you on ATM availability and locations during the trip. ATMs in this region will dispense local currency, not U.S. dollars.

TIP: *Many banks charge a fee ranging from $1 to $5 for every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. Others will charge you a percentage of what you withdraw. Check with your bank on what fees they charge before you leave the country. That way you can decide if it is better for you to take out one or two large sums, or make smaller but more frequent withdrawals. Your Program Director can advise you on ATM locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.*

Credit Cards (and Debit Cards)

Even if you do not plan on using it, having a credit or debit card as a "backup" is helpful in an emergency. Though major American credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) and debit cards with a credit card logo are accepted abroad, not every shop will take every card. So it is best to ask if your type of card is accepted before deciding on your purchase, and having a couple different cards can be useful. Note that Discover cards are not widely accepted outside of the U.S.

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Buenos Aires for major purchases and in shops associated with the tourist trade (souvenirs, museum gift shops, etc.), but may not be accepted by smaller shops or restaurants in Patagonia. In remote locations, credit/debit cards are usually not accepted; cash is the preferred form of payment.

***TIP**: Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company or bank that you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure.*

You should also double-check what phone number you should call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1-800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

Optional Tour Payments

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Program Director. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. **Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card.** We accept Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit cards only. (We also accept debit cards with the logo of one of these credit card companies, but it must be a card that allows you to sign for purchases.)

In order to process these charges, there can be a delay of 2-3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2-3 months following your return. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).

Aboard Our Antarctic Cruise Ship

Upon embarkation, an account will automatically be opened for each cabin for purchases made aboard ship. (You will be asked to provide your credit card information after checking in.) This will include optional items such as bar services, laundry, postage, and communication charges. If you are sharing a cabin and would like separate accounts, please advise the Hotel Manager immediately.

A "chit" system will operate for onboard payments and you will sign for any charges. An account for payment will be presented on the final day of the voyage. Final payment can be made using cash in US dollars or major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. All prices are in U.S. dollars. Personal checks and the Discover Card are *not* accepted onboard.

Currency By Destination

For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

In Argentina
The official Argentinean currency is the peso. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes come in denominations of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 pesos
- Coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 peso

U.S. dollars *might* be accepted at tourist-related businesses, but generally local currency is preferred.

Shopping

It is Grand Circle Cruise Line's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason there may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Cruise Line cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

By Destination

Souvenirs
Argentina is world-famous for its leather goods and you'll find them readily available in Buenos Aires. Popular buys include belts, jackets, boots, shoes, skirts, pants, briefcases, and purses. These come in a rainbow of pastels and vivid colors, and a variety of textures from rough suedes to soft leathers. Other items worth considering include wool sweaters, clothing made of the Argentine equivalent of cashmere, ponchos, wine, and antique silver gaucho accessories. Top-quality jewelry is also sold, with the best buys being items made with Inca Rose or rhodochrosite. Argentina is one of the few places in the world where this is found and it is used in everything from jewelry to carved figures.

In the much smaller and more remote city of Ushuaia, there is excellent souvenir shopping—you will find everything from T-shirts to leather goods to divine chocolates, and even a local craft market. As you'd expect, you won't find any shopping malls in the wilderness of the Antarctic Peninsula.

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping abroad. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price, and ultimately, you must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked.

Bargaining
Argentina does not have a bargaining culture; prices in shops are fixed.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

Exemption Amounts
Articles totaling $800, at fair retail value where they were acquired, may be imported free of charge if you bring them with you. A flat rate of duty—usually a percentage—will be applied to the next $1,000 worth (fair retail value) of merchandise. The U.S. Customs Inspector determines the value of your items when you enter, and is not bound by your bill of sale. In almost every case, however, a genuine bill of sale will be honored.

Fees on Items Shipped Home
Items shipped home are *always* subject to duty when received in the U.S. There will also be charges for shipping. Although some shops abroad may offer to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the customs facility closest to you and payment of the *export* duties (the fee to remove an item from its country of origin) not door-to-door shipping or *import* duties (the fee the U.S. government charges to bring an item into the U.S.). All additional duties or shipping charges would be the responsibility of the purchaser—you.

Therefore unless the item is small enough to mail or to be sent by a global parcel service (like FedEx) you should be prepared to pay customs duties and for shipping or pick-up from the nearest customs facility. This is why the U.S. Customs & Border Protection service states: "The most cost-effective thing to do is to take your purchases with you if at all possible."

Illegal Items
It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins. For more information on what you may or may not bring back into the United States, you can obtain the publication "Know Before You Go" from the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection by phone, mail or from their website:

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229
Tel. **1-877-227-5511**
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer the question "**to tip or not to tip** (and how much to tip if you so choose)" is ***always*** a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars and tips can be paid in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should ***never*** be used for tips).

GCCL Program Director: It is customary to express a personal "thank you" to your GCCL Program Director at the end of your trip, especially if he or she has provided you with individual service. As a guideline, many travelers give $7-$10 per person per day.

Shipboard: Shipboard gratuities to the cruise personnel are not included in the cost of your cruise. The ships' tipping guidelines recommend a flat tip of $16 U.S. per person, per day, which will be pooled among the crew. For your convenience tips for the crew can be paid in U.S. cash or can be put onto credit card.

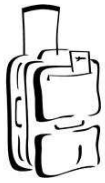
Expedition Staff: On board the ship you'll have a group of Antarctic experts handling the day-to-day operation and lectures. The Expedition Staff does not share in the pooled crew tip. You may tip them separately if you wish, however, you cannot charge to a credit card. The suggested guideline is $40 per person for the entire trip in U.S. cash.

Local driver/guides: $3-$4 per person, per day

Housekeeping staff at hotels: $1 per night

TIP*: We recommend you carry small-denomination banknotes (totaling about $75-$100 U.S., per person) in U.S. dollars to facilitate tipping.*

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



In General

Travel light: **PACKING FOR TRAVEL** Just as no two people are the same, your packing needs aren't like anyone else's. The trick of packing is to bring only what you need to be comfortable – and only you can determine what answers that need. We've compiled some suggestions from our local Program Directors and from past travelers to help you refine your packing – and to ensure that nothing critical is forgotten.

Our travelers' top three comments about packing are "I wish I had brought less," "I should have double-checked the weather," and "You said I'd need (*insert something you don't need here*) and I didn't." These suggestions are springboards, **not** requirements – take them with a grain of salt. Finally, remember the **Golden Rule of Packing Light**: whatever you think you need at first—take half the clothes and twice the money.

Pack casual clothes: Comfortable, informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, sportswear, everyday dresses/skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. Our list suggests several layers of clothing, so you can adjust to warmer and cooler conditions. Most of your clothing can be cotton or cotton-synthetic blends. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, bring socks, underwear, and even shirts and pants made of synthetics or cotton/synthetic blends that will dry overnight. You can also buy clothing specially designed for travel.

Functional Tips
As you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions, our list suggests several layers of clothing. For the warmer climates you visit, most of your clothing can be made of cotton or cotton-synthetic blends. For the colder climes, consider long-sleeved underwear made from water-wicking synthetics beneath outer layers of wool-synthetic blends and fleece, to stay dry and warm. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, bring socks and underwear, even shirts, made of silk, synthetics, or a cotton-synthetic blend that will dry out overnight. You can buy clothing designed especially for travel.

Expedition Gear: Other than boots, parkas, and waterproof pants, it is not necessary to have expedition gear for this adventure. For more on boots, GCCL's complimentary parkas, or waterproof pants, please see below.

Footwear for the Antarctic shore excursions: In order to reach the Antarctic Peninsula, we step from the Zodiac into icy water that can be up to 10 inches deep – making protective boots a must. GCCL will provide you with knee-high rubber Wellington-type boots from a stock selection of available sizes (men's sizes 6 to 14; and women's sizes 5 to 12; with a calf diameter of 15.7 inches). The boots will be distributed in Ushuaia before embarkation. You may use them for the duration of your cruise and then return them before disembarkation.

As boots are provided you won't need to bring any unless your size is outside the sizes cited above (boots are *medium* width), or if you prefer to wear your own (for comfort or future use). In that case the ship staff recommends a pair of waterproof knee-height rubber boots with sturdy soles, such as *Rocky* rubber mud boots or *Wellingtons*. Make sure to break in any new footwear ***before*** your voyage. Travelers should also bring lightweight boot liners and/or heavy hiking socks for additional warmth.

Parkas are included: GCCL will provide you with parkas for this trip. We will send you an order form so that you may select your size. The GCCL parka will be sent to you before you depart and will be yours to keep.

Waterproof pants: Essential to any layering system is keeping the outer layer dry. You must bring water and windproof rain (or ski) pants to wear over your long underwear/leggings and regular pants to keep warm and dry. These waterproof pants should be worn over your knee-high boots when going ashore. We recommend pants with side zippers on the lower part of the leg; they are easier to get on over your boots. Gore-Tex and similar fabrics that are waterproof and "breathable" materials that keep out wind and water without trapping excess heat may be excellent. However, these fabrics are expensive and can be damaged by prolonged exposure to salt water. Gore-Tex should be rinsed in freshwater after exposure to salt.

On excursions: The interior of the ship is heated to a comfortable 70-75° F, but the outdoor environment in the Antarctic summer resembles moderate winter weather in temperate climates. Since the majority of your days during this trip are spent on the Antarctic cruise, part of the list below emphasizes what you will need to dress in layers for this portion of the trip. For an Antarctic shore excursion, a typical layering system consists of long underwear (top and bottom), a warm long-sleeved shirt, warm pants, a sweater, fleece jacket, liner socks plus one to two pair heavier socks for warmth, rubber boots, liner gloves inside heavier outer gloves, warm hat, water- and wind-proof outer jacket, and waterproof outer pants.

Style Hints
Dress on our trip is functional and casual. Generally, the atmosphere onboard ship is informal and relaxed; sportswear is acceptable for both men and women. You might want to bring one slightly dressier outfit for city evenings and the Captain's Dinner aboard ship, but that is totally up to you.

Comfortable, supportive walking shoes are essential on the extensions: You'll be on your feet and walking a lot, sometimes over rough and slippery surfaces, so choose your footwear carefully. The soles of your shoes should offer good traction. You can find especially supportive or light hiking shoes designed for walking.

Clothing Options

We've included information below on the weather you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the climate you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, easy to care for and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

Inner bags: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

Tip**:** *Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

NOTE**:** Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage change frequently. To avoid inadvertently packing any restricted items in your carry-on luggage, we strongly suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website, at **www.tsa.gov** which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a daylong trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

Our hotels/ships provide basics like soap and shampoo, but if you are sensitive to fragrances or new products, you may wish to bring your preferred brands. Most hotels do *not* provide a washcloth, so you may wish to pack one.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Don't Forget: Emergency photocopies of your passport, air itinerary, and prescriptions, a list of your credit card numbers and phone number to reach the credit card company or bank to report loss or theft.

Clothing for land stays

- ❑ Shirts: short and long-sleeved in a breathable fabric, (cotton or blend.) Polo shirts are more versatile than T-shirts
- ❑ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ❑ Shoes and socks: comfortable walking, running shoes, or light hikers
- ❑ Consider casual good-traction shoes, or sport sandals
- ❑ For cooler months (October-March): sweaters, fleece, warm jacket
- ❑ Pants/jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting is best for comfort and movement.
- ❑ Walking shorts: long cut for modesty
- ❑ Cotton sweater or sweatshirt for the air-conditioned bus
- ❑ Wide-brim sun hat or visor (seasonal)
- ❑ Swimsuit, for hotel pools
- ❑ Underwear and sleepwear

Clothing for your Antarctic Cruise

- ❑ Shirts: Several cotton turtlenecks and T-shirts for layering and aboard ship. Woolen, knit, cotton sweaters/tops, or polar fleece tops in medium weight for layering.
- ❑ Trousers: Sturdy, warm trousers such as wool-synthetic blends, sweatpants, jeans, or corduroys. Bring a pair of warm ski pants if you have them.
- ❑ Waterproof outer pants (rain pants): roomy enough to wear over other clothing.
- ❑ For layering: wool or fleece sweaters, Polartec fleece jacket
- ❑ Scarf or other face protection
- ❑ Long underwear bottoms and long-sleeved undershirts: In silk, polypropylene, or similar. Lightweight is best unless you chill easily, in which case bring medium or heavier weight
- ❑ Warm woolen or synthetic hat or cap that protects your ears
- ❑ Boots: GCCL will provide boots during your cruise. If you prefer to buy your own, please see the “clothing suggestions” section on the previous pages.
- ❑ Warm socks: High socks “outer” in a natural fiber like wool or cotton, plus thin liner or “inner” socks in polypropylene or other moisture-wicking synthetics.
- ❑ Parka: GCCL will send you a parka before you depart. Make sure you bring it with you, as you will need it during your Antarctic cruise.
- ❑ Rain jacket/windbreaker: At least medium-weight with a hood in a waterproof/windproof material (like Gore-Tex). For on deck wear.
- ❑ Gloves: 1 pair light liner gloves plus 1 pair heavier outer gloves

Consider …

- ❑ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- ❑ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ❑ Sunglasses and a neck strap
- ❑ Sunscreen, SPF 45 or stronger (**essential** for Antarctica)
- ❑ Insect repellent with 30-35% DEET (for optional Iguassu extension)
- ❑ Washcloth (not always supplied)
- ❑ Pocket-size tissues
- ❑ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
- ❑ Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- ❑ Passport, air ticket, credit card photocopies
- ❑ Extra passport-sized photos
- ❑ Moisturizer, lip balm
- ❑ Travel money purse, worn under your shirt or jacket; money belt
- ❑ Compact umbrella

Medicines

- ❑ Your own prescription medicines
- ❑ Vitamins
- ❑ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ❑ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ❑ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ❑ Antihistamine: Benadryl
- ❑ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ❑ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ❑ Band-Aids
- ❑ Moleskin foot pads
- ❑ Antibiotic: Neosporin/Bacitracin
- ❑ Motion sickness medicine (recommended for Drake Passage cruise)

Optional Gear

- ❑ Travel alarm or watch with alarm
- ❑ Compact binoculars
- ❑ Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- ❑ Hair dryer (this is provided on board and in all hotels)
- ❑ Washcloth, handkerchiefs
- ❑ Basic sewing kit
- ❑ Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- ❑ Electrical transformer & plug adapters—see “Regional Electricity” below
- ❑ Travel journal/note pad/reading material
- ❑ Home address book
- ❑ Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- ❑ Phrase book
- ❑ Collapsible walking staff
- ❑ Pocket calculator for exchange rates

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll have on your travels – our local weathermen are lucky to get tomorrow right! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the *My Account* feature of **www.gct.com** for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe accordingly. You'll find historical averages and general information on local climates below – but, given recent weather extremes, it's even more important to consult up-to-the-minute resources.

Southern Hemisphere: South of the equator, the seasons are the reverse of those in the northern hemisphere; the warmest months, therefore, are between October and March, and the coldest are between April and September. In South America, however, because of the range of latitudes that the continent covers, and because of the great variations in altitudes and climatic zones, there are several different types of weather within each country. Still, there is one generalization that does apply to the entire continent: winters in South America lack the harshness of those in North America.

Buenos Aires, Argentina: While the official high temperatures in summer (December through February) are usually in the 80s, with the humidity it often feels much hotter. It is common to think it is actually in the 90s, so be prepared. The changeable spring and mild fall of Buenos Aires are similar to those seasons in New York City, but the proximity of the South Atlantic makes winter temperatures milder than New York's comparable months and the possibility of snow almost nonexistent. You might experience some rain at almost any time of the year, as there is no true rainy season. The almost-constant breezes during all seasons except summer refresh this city's air and renew its skies.

In Ushuaia: The climate is significantly cooler than at Buenos Aires, but the ocean moderates temperatures and prevents extremely cold or hot weather. The weather here is varied and unpredictable. There is a constant wind from mountains that are snowcapped year-round, which can change from a gentle breeze to a ferocious gale in minutes. The weather on a summer day in Ushuaia can start sunny, turn windy and rainy, return to dazzling sunshine, and then become very cloudy. All the while, temperatures may hold steady around 50-60°F.

Antarctic Peninsula: When you cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula, even though this is the warmest part of Antarctica, high temperatures on many summer days only reach the high 30s. The weather is unpredictable and highly variable, so can be cold and windy, but it can also be quite pleasant with bright sun and blue skies. The Antarctic summer brings very long hours of daylight, which are advantageous for observing the area's wildlife. Temperatures average in the 30s, but the wind chill can make it feel much colder. It is a very dry cold.

Bariloche, Patagonia (optional extension): Technically, the city is named San Carlos de Bariloche, but is known locally as Bariloche. Located in the foothills of the Andes Mountains, the local climate is generally windy, sunny, and cool. In the summer (December to late February/early March) highs are pleasant—in the 60s and 70s—but lows are usually in the 40s. Fall and winter are progressively colder, with snowfall arriving in May and running through September. Spring is mixed—mostly in the 50s, but with an occasional late dusting of snow.

Iguassu Falls (optional extension): If you are taking the optional trip extension to Iguassu Falls, you travel to a part of Argentina that has a humid subtropical climate. Temperatures are hot year-round – around 90° (and sometimes feel hotter than they really are because of the humidity). Rainfall is distributed fairly evenly throughout the year. The average humidity most mornings is more than 90%, but it lessens in the afternoon.

Climate Charts

The following charts reflect the average *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. As your departure approaches you may wish to monitor current weather conditions online. Here is the official data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

Here are the data from the weather observation stations at or closest to our destinations:

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity, & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	BUENOS AIRES, Argentina			ANTARCTIC PENINSULA*		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	85-64	72	4.2	36-30	86-79	16
FEB	82-63	71	4.0	36-29	83-77	13
MAR	79-59	72	4.0	32-23	82-78	15
APR	72-53	71	3.3	25-15	81-79	14
MAY	65-47	74	3.1	20-10	82-80	14
JUN	59-42	75	2.1	19-8	82-78	13
JUL	58-41	75	2.3	19-8	80-81	14
AUG	62-43	73	2.3	20-9	80-79	13
SEP	65-46	70	2.4	25-15	78-76	15
OCT	71-51	72	4.0	30-20	81-78	16
NOV	76-55	70	3.6	33-26	81-78	15
DEC	82-61	67	3.3	37-30	84-78	15

* Data from Esperanza Station, Antarctica (latitude 63°24’S, longitude 56°59’W)

MONTH	IGUASSU FALLS, Argentina/Brazil (optional extension)			BARILOCHE, Argentina (optional extension)		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (Avg)	Avg. number of days with rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	88-71	75	6.9	70-47	76-41	1.0
FEB	88-71	77	3.9	70-46	77-40	1.0
MAR	86-68	77	6.6	65-42	81-47	1.6
APR	80-63	78	5.5	57-37	83-56	2.4
MAY	74-58	80	6.1	49-35	85-67	5.9
JUN	69-53	81	5.9	44-32	87-73	6.1
JUL	71-55	77	3.3	42-30	86-73	5.7
AUG	73-55	77	3.8	46-32	84-64	4.5
SEP	76-58	74	5.8	51-34	83-53	2.5
OCT	81-63	74	6.7	56-37	81-46	1.6
NOV	84-65	75	4.4	62-41	80-42	1.1
DEC	86-69	74	7.3	66-45	78-42	1.3

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree ***average*** high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

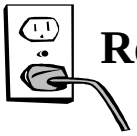
In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (***Tip**: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.)*

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.



Regional Electricity

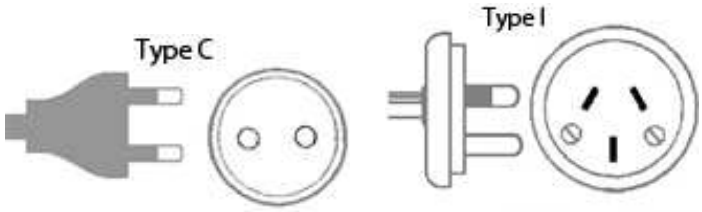
The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can often be found at hardware or online stores. Note that transformers can be unreliable: a broken one will leave you lugging a useless 110V appliance. Battery-operated alternatives are an option, but will need a supply of batteries.

Electricity in Argentina is generally 220 volts, 50 Hertz. In Argentina, the two most common plugs are Type C and Type I. Aboard ship, the plugs are standard American plug. Each cabin features more than one electrical outlet in the cabin. Of these outlets, one is a dual 110/220v outlet; it is located in the

bathroom of your cabin. This outlet is only for low-voltage appliances, like electric shavers. (The bathroom in your cabin also has a hair dryer).



If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressors and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of a device-specific plugs.

A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays. Passengers dependent on electricity supply (as in the case of those with sleep apnea) should consider a different GCCL vacation.

Can you hear me now?

Just picking up the phone or getting a paper can be a new experience in a foreign country. You will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your final documents package. One copy is for you to bring, and one to leave behind with relatives should they need to contact you.

When calling overseas from the US, dial 011 for international exchange, then the country's code, then and the number. The country code, which is indicated by a plus sign (+), is +54 for Argentina. When calling from the US, you may need to drop the first digit of the area code. When calling the US from abroad, generally you dial 00 for international exchange, then the US country code +1, and then the number with area code.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of the apps via available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at some cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry …), so again you'll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders … one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you're likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can be a drawback for some uses (maps, extended reading, etc.)

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures and are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's good to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are ***not*** permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim *or* bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. YOUR SHIP

Aboard Ship: the *Corinthian*

The *Corinthian* is designed for Antarctic cruising. The ships complies with the latest international and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations and is outfitted with the most current navigational and communications technology, retractable fin stabilizers, ice-strengthened hulls, and a fleet of Zodiacs for shore landings. The *Corinthian* has 75 officers and crew.

Cabin Amenities: Your cabin amenities include a private bathroom with shower, hairdryer, TV, in room heating, internal telephones and a mini-refrigerator. Each cabin is appointed with a sitting area, plus the decks and dining rooms are spacious and attractively decorated, providing welcoming locations for relaxing with your traveling companions.

Dining: All meals are taken either in the stately restaurant or al fresco on the umbrella-studded sun deck. 24-hour room service is also available. The food on board includes continental cuisine created by master chefs who select fresh local ingredients. Fine regional wines are complimentary with lunch and dinner. If you require a special diet please request this in advance, you may do so by contacting one of our Travel Counselors.

Dining times will vary according to the scheduled daily activities. In keeping with regional custom, dinner is served at a later hour (7:30 pm) than Americans may be accustomed to.

Electricity: Cabins are equipped with 110-volt outlets. In your bathroom you will find a dual 110/220-volt outlet, for use with electric shavers. (Your bathroom also comes equipped with a hairdryer).

Internet: There is Internet service available on board in the library. Travelers can purchase a card from Reception (about $45 for 100 min). This service is only payable in cash.

Public Spaces: Both ships feature a library with Internet access, a lounge with audiovisual equipment, a dinning room, a sun deck, an exercise room, a beauty salon, a Jacuzzi, and a swimming platform.

Medical Services: There is always a doctor onboard, as well as all of the basic First Aid supplies. All physician's fees will be debited to your shipboard account and be presented for settlement at the end of the voyage (around $50 for a consultation). All specific medicines are the responsibility of each passenger

Sea Sickness: Complimentary Dramamine pills are available on board at the Front Desk.

Laundry Services: There is laundry service available on board, but no dry cleaning. Prices range from about $3 to $9 per piece.

Shipboard Payments: US Dollars or major credit cards are accepted for purchases made on board.

Ship-to-Shore Communications: The ships have satellite-telephone connections, which permit passengers to call to any part of the world, in accordance with the current, local tariffs. The cost of using this service is approximately $5 per minute.

Smoking Policy: Smoking is prohibited on board, with the exception of two outdoor deck areas reserved for smokers.

Water: Tap water onboard ship is filtered and safe to drink. If you prefer bottled water, it will be available on board free of charge.

Wheelchairs: The ship is not built to accommodate wheelchairs.

10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Small Ship Cruise Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an Internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Travel in South America

Part of the adventure of this trip is the possibility that things may change. Local influences may make it impossible for us to follow the planned itinerary exactly and the sequence of sites visited may change. The cruise portion of your itinerary is, as is any marine undertaking, subject to weather conditions, tides and the whims of the waters you travel. In addition, Grand Circle Cruise Line may be required to adjust the cruising schedule to adhere to government regulations. Rest assured that we have considerable experience at responding to changing circumstances on the spot. Our goal is always to offer you the best adventure travel experience and the most memorable explorations of this intriguing land.

Cuisine

Dining is integral to the cultural experience, especially in Argentina, where European influences have combined with local ingredients to create unique flavors. Table manners are closer to the more formal European style, and like Europeans, Argentines tend to dine much later than Americans—dinner is no earlier than 7:30pm and usually closer to 9pm! Yet the influence of local produce and meats cannot be ignored, especially the pervasiveness of beef and lamb in Argentina. Vegetarianism has never really caught on here, so options will be limited.

Beef and lamb have taken over Argentina to such an extent that roughly one half of all Argentine land is used towards cattle or sheep husbandry. Restaurant menus everywhere in the country feature some type of beef and/or lamb selection. At-home diners, too, often have beef as the main staple of their diet.

Some typical dishes you may see on menus in Argentina are: *asado* (a mixed grill of meat cooked over coals and usually served with chimichurri marinade), *chorizo* (pork sausage), *empanadas* (snack-sized pastries with meat or cheese or vegetables inside), and *carbonada* (beef stew with rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, squash, and sometimes fruit). The influence of Argentina's Italian immigrants is apparent in dishes like *noquis* (gnocchi), pizzas, and deserts with *dulce de leche* (caramel sauce).

Language Barrier

You can have some great "conversations" with local people who do not speak English, even if you don't speak a word of the local language. Indeed, this non-verbal communication can be a highly rewarding part of travel. To break the ice, bring along some family photographs, or a few postcards of your hometown. If you want to meet kids, bring a puppet or other interactive toy. Your Program Director can help get the ball rolling.

Your attire is a key part of your non-verbal presentation. Your clothing should show a respect for local tradition. In South America, this means you should dress in a relatively modest style.

Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing most people in the countries on your itinerary is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph an older woman. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject, try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK. Your Program Director can help.

Safety & Security

Common Sense and Awareness

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open; thefts occur in any large city. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash in your pocket. Carry most of your money, and your passport, in a travel pouch or money belt under your shirt. Replenish your pocket supply when you are in a safe and quiet place, or in our vehicle. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Every hotel will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful. Con artists sometimes target travelers.

We recommend that you leave your passport in your hotel safe when walking around the city. It is a good idea to keep a photocopy of your passport with you instead.

Communications

Newspapers and Magazines

Several English-language newspapers and magazines are available in Argentina including the Buenos Aires Herald and the Buenos Aires Times. Some business, such as hotels and airports, may also stock US or London papers. Usually English-language materials will be available only in large cities.

Responsible Travel in Antarctica & Argentina

We do our best to have a minimum negative impact on local cultures and the natural environment in every country where we operate trips. In 31 years of travel, our travelers and staff have learned techniques that encourage rewarding cultural exchange. Our goal is to leave no trace on the natural environment, or to leave places better than we find them.

As you travel in Antarctica, your GCCL Program Director and the ship's expedition staff will follow strict guidelines to protect the environment. Please cooperate enthusiastically, and make it your own priority to keep this uniquely unsullied wilderness intact in all its pristine beauty. Here's what we ask of you as part of this effort:

Buenos Aires in Brief

City Layout and Details

The real heart of downtown Buenos Aires is only about a 16- by 10-block rectangular area. Outside of that hub, the city sprawls for mile after mile in all directions. Within this central zone you'll find the city's major commerce, shopping, and nightlife spots. The streets you'll need to know to get around on your own are Avenida de Mayo, Avenida 9 de Julio, Avenida Corrientes, and Calle Lavalle—plus Calle Florida, a lively shopping thoroughfare that runs from Plaza San Martin to Avenida de Mayo, near Plaza de Mayo. Florida and Lavalle streets are closed to vehicles.

Avenida 9 de Julio is so wide that each side has its own name—Carlos Pellegrini on the near (east) side and Cerrito on the far (west) side. The central portion is called 9 de Julio. The Plaza de la Republica, marked by a 220-foot-high obelisk, is on 9 de Julio. It fringes the entertainment and theater district that thrives particularly on two parallel streets—Calle Lavalle and Avenida Corrientes. These two streets represent the "Broadway" of Buenos Aires. The area bustles day and night.

Buenos Aires's "in" area is Recoleta, home of many posh restaurants and clubs and a popular meeting place, as well as Puerto Madero, located near the dock area. San Telmo is the oldest part of town and Caminito is the colorful main street of La Boca, an old picturesque Italian section.

Cuisine

Beef or *bife* (beef-eh), as they say in Spanish, is the tale of Argentina, the golden El Dorado of her economy. Somewhere around 50 million Aberdeen Angus and Hereford cattle graze on nutritious pampas fields and, thanks to the gauchos, provide locals with abundant, tasty fare. Restaurant menus everywhere in the country feature some type of beef selection. At-home diners, too, often have beef as the main staple of their diet. Gauchos themselves have spent lifetimes eating native beef—and sometimes nothing else. That's why they know how to prepare it so deliciously!

There simply is nothing quite like the flavor of *bifes* grilled over the coals or roasted on an open fire (*asado*). The truth of the matter is, you've never really tasted charcoal-broiled steak until you dine in Argentina. Their cooking techniques are apparent in Buenos Aires's many steakhouses, from deluxe establishments to fast-food types, as well as at *estancias* (ranches).

Argentinean wines of excellent quality are currently available. You will want to try a Malbec, the local grape. And if you celebrate with the "bubbly" in South America, why not do it with Argentina's superb, inexpensive champagne? Just a note of precaution: Argentines thoroughly salt almost everything, particularly meats and salads. If you dine out, you may want to request unsalted food. When you order, simply tell the waiter *no use* (oo-say) *sal, por favor*. You may also want to try *dulce de leche* ("sweet milk"), a caramel topping that Argentines eat with everything.

Drinking Water

Water from the tap is safe to drink in Buenos Aires, although it is usually heavily chlorinated. You may prefer to stick with bottled water, which is both inexpensive and readily available.

Post Office

The main post office is at Sarmiento 151. It is open from 8 am to 6 pm and closed Saturdays and Sundays.

11. DEMOGRAPHICS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

We encourage you to learn about the regions of the world you will soon be exploring before your departure. The ancient and contemporary cultures of this area are rich and complex. Even a small amount of background reading can help you make sense of the kaleidoscope of facts and impressions that will come your way. Having some knowledge in advance can complement and enrich what you can learn from your expert Program Director.

Argentina at a Glance

Argentina Today
Capital: Buenos Aires
Population: 40,091,359
Ethnic groups: White (mostly Spanish and Italian) 97%, mestizo (mixed white and Amerindian ancestry), Amerindian, or other non-white groups 3%
Languages: Spanish (official)
Religions: Roman Catholic 92% (less than 20% practicing), Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, other 4%
Time zone: Argentina is 2 hours ahead of Eastern Time. When it is noon in New York, it is 2:00 pm in Argentina.

Argentina today is perhaps the world's most liberal country when it comes to immigration. The national constitution cites that an Argentinean is "anybody in the world who wishes to reside in Argentina." As a result the majority of the nation's 40 million residents came from abroad. Most are Europeans, especially Spanish and Italians, but Germany, Britain, and France are also represented. More and more Southeast Asians, too, are making Argentina their home. Many of these people left their homelands to escape wars or persecution.

The Land
Argentina is the eighth-largest country in the world and is approximately one third the size of Europe. It is bordered on the east by Brazil, Uruguay, and the Atlantic; on the west by Chile; on the north by Bolivia and Paraguay; and on the south by Chile and Antarctic waters. It is 2,300 miles long and measures 980 miles at its widest point.

The country is a plain rising from the Atlantic to the Chilean border and the Andean mountain peaks. The northern area is the swampy and forested Gran Chaco, extending to Bolivia and Paraguay. South of that are the undulating, fertile pampas, which support the country's rich agriculture and grazing industries. Farther south is Patagonia, a region of cool, arid steppes with some forested patches.
Historical Overview
Little is known about societies that occupied prehistoric Argentina, though fossil records indicate a presence here as early as 11,000 B.C., in today's Patagonia. Millennia later, as the first settled cultures formed in South America, the Inca took an interest in Argentina, conquering the northwestern region and incorporating it into their empire. Central and southern Argentina remained nomadic.

European explorers arrived in the early 1500s, and Spain established Buenos Aires as a colony in 1580. Spanish immigrants and their descendants, indigenous people, and descendants of slaves developed the area over the next 200 years. Many colonists settled in Buenos Aires while others took to the surrounding *pampas* to live as *gauchos*. The Viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata, consisting of today's Argentina and several surrounding countries, was created in 1776.
After two failed attempts by the British to overtake Buenos Aires in the early 1800s, word arrived that Napoleon had overthrown the Spanish king. This prompted a push for independence and the country's first assembly was formed. A formal declaration of independence was signed in 1816. Four years later, the viceroy and his armies were defeated. Bolivia and Uruguay broke off from Argentina during this period (Paraguay had seceded in 1811).

Investment and immigration after 1870 bolstered Argentina's economic strength, industry, and agriculture. Through 1929, both its population and its economy grew at an alarming rate, but often to the detriment of the working class. Juan Perón, who was elected president in 1946, recognized this and sought to empower workers, increase union membership, and expand social and educational programs. His first lady, Eva Perón, became a staunch supporter of the working class. Her Eva Perón Foundation provided basic needs to the poor and built schools, orphanages, and hospitals throughout Argentina. She died at the young age of 33, a national heroine. President Perón, having been pressured to increase industry more than support its workers, was overthrown in a violent coup in 1955.

Perón returned to office in 1973 after he wielded his influence from afar to encourage student and labor protests against an increasingly oppressive regime. But his next term was short-lived; he died in 1974, leaving his third wife, Isabel (also his vice president), to take his place. However, she was loyal to Perón's more fascist advisors, which led to social unrest and financial chaos. She was deposed by a military coup.

But what followed was far from an improvement. Opposition and left-leaning groups were oppressed. Many dissidents disappeared. A policy of wage-freezing was frequently put in place. Living standards plummeted, foreign debt soared, and the peso collapsed. Finally, when Argentina lost the Falklands War to the British in 1982, the military's credibility languished, leading to the next free elections.

It took Argentina 20 years and seven presidents to dig out of this dire economic and social instability. Administrations through the '80s and '90s were marred by corruption, the freezing of bank accounts, violent protests, and political infighting. In late 2001, the country saw three different presidents over a two-week period. Trust in the government was low.

Things turned around in late 2002, and the economy has been growing since, largely under the presidency of Néstor Kirchner, a Peronist. In 2007, he forfeited the office to his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Her stated objectives included the reduction of inflation, and to that end new tariffs on agricultural exports were introduced in March of 2008. But the tariffs proved to be widely unpopular, and provoked a 129-day strike by farmers and agricultural unions. Eventually the tariffs were defeated in the legislature. (With Néstor Kirchner's passing in October 2010, public opinion has increasingly supported his widow, Cristina, and her efforts to reduce the national debt.)

Other recent controversies in Argentine politics have included the mounting tension over the possible oil reserves under the Falkland Islands, which have rekindled the debate as to if the islands should belong to Argentina or Great Britain.

Antarctica at a Glance

Antarctica Today
Today, under the Antarctic Treaty, no claims on Antarctic territory by any nations are recognized, and the entire continent is an international preserve set aside for scientific research.
Land area: Approx. 5,500,000 square miles; an area twice this size is covered by ice in winter
Population (estimate, south of 60°S): Approximately 1,000 year-round residents (scientists and supporting staff); about 4,000 residents during the Antarctic summer
Governance: Since 1961, Antarctica is protected as a natural reserve devoted to peace and science by the Antarctic Treaty (signed by 45 nations, including the U.S. and all other countries with Antarctic research stations)

Geography
Antarctica is the world's fifth-largest continent, larger than either Europe or Australia and about 1.5 times the size of the continental U.S. It is a land of rugged superlatives: the coldest, windiest, driest, and highest (on average) of the world's large land masses. Its highest point is the Vinson Massif, a mountain 16,864 feet high. Antarctica's lowest point is at the Bentley Subglacial Trench, 8,200 feet below sea level, where the overlying ice is nearly 10,000 feet thick. The Antarctic icecap holds the majority of all fresh water on earth.

Historical Overview of Antarctica
Although Antarctica was not formally discovered until the early 1800's, its existence was speculated on as early as the 2nd century AD, when the Greek cartographer Marinus of Tyre coined its name. With the Age of Discovery in the 15th and 16th centuries, it became accepted belief that a southern land, acting as a counterweight or "balance" to Europe and the Arctic must exist, but there was wide uncertainly as to how this land fit into the world at large. Many early explorers theorized that the *Terra Australis Incognita* (southern unknown land) must simply be an extension of Africa or South America. It was only with the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope in 1487 and Cape Horn in 1615 that is theory was disproved.

With the sighting of Australia by the Dutch in the 1600s, it seemed for a brief time that the southern land had been discovered. But further explorations showed Australia was an island unattached to the fabled southern continent. But the discovery of large islands like Australia and Tasmania in the Pacific Ocean led new expeditions to search for Antarctica from the South Pacific. Thus British captain James Cook, who today is known for being the first European to land on the coastline of Australia and the Hawaiian Islands, was actually looking for the South Pole.

But Cook was the first European explorer to sail south of the Antarctic Circle, which he did around 1773, though he never saw the continent. It was not until the 1840s that French, British, and American sailing expeditions confirmed for the world that Antarctica is indeed a continent and not simply a cluster of large islands in the Pacific. The first person whose landing on the Antarctic Continent is firmly documented was the Frenchman Jules Dumont D'Urville, in 1840.

The exploration of Antarctica has continued to be an international effort. One of the most famous expeditions is certainly that of Ernest Shackleton in 1914, with its incredible drama of surviving a shipwreck. Other renowned explorations included those engaged in the race to the South Pole—the Norwegian Roald Amundsen, who reached the Pole in 1911, and Englishman Robert Scott, who perished in the attempt.

12. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

Recommended Reading

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (albris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

Antarctica:

Antarctica by Kim Stanley Robinson (Literature). A science-fiction adventure set in a not-too-distant future. On an overcrowded Earth, the Antarctic Treaty is about to expire, and the race is on to see which country can grab the largest piece … if the eco-terrorists don't grab it first.

Antarctica, A Guide to the Wildlife by Tony Soper (Natural History). Designed for the field, this compact handbook features all the species of birds, seals, and whales the traveler is likely to encounter on a voyage to Antarctica. It includes color drawings by Dafila Scott, the granddaughter of Antarctic explorer Robert Scott.

Antarctica, Firsthand Accounts of Exploration and Endurance by Charles Neider (History). An anthology of eyewitness reports by 14 Antarctic explorers including Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen, and Sir Edmund Hillary. Look for the recent reprint of the 1972 edition, which includes many of the best-known accounts.

Below the Convergence: Voyages Toward Antarctica 1699-1839 by Alan Gurney (Exploration). Gurney provides a wealth of information about the discovery of a new continent and the life of the everyday sailors who made it possible. Especially interesting are the ingenious solutions that resourceful voyagers devised for tricky problems like shipwreck, scurvy, and even lovesickness.

Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage by Alfred Lansing (History). An extraordinary tale of survival that is better than most novels.

Natural History of the Antarctic Peninsula by Sanford Moss (Natural History). A handsome primer explaining the environment, ecology, and wildlife of the Antarctic Peninsula in clear, no-nonsense language. Recommended for the serious naturalist.

North Pole, South Pole: Journeys to the Ends of the Earth by Bertrand Imbert (History). Part of the illustrated *Discoveries* series, this compact introduction to polar exploration features hundreds of maps, historic photographs, journal excerpts, and concise summaries of all the great expeditions.

The Big Bang Symphony: A Novel of Antarctica by Lucy Jane Bledsoe (Literature). A novel about love, science, music, and cabin fever set in the scientific McMurdo station.

The Crystal Desert: Summers in Antarctica by David Campbell (Natural History). It's a little-known fact that Antarctica is the world's largest desert, and for many it is even more surprising to learn just how much life survives during the short Antarctic summers. The author's accounts of the three summers he spend at a research station include a wealth of information on the continent's natural history, especially its marine life.

The Last Place on Earth: Scott and Amundsen's Race to the South Pole by Roland Huntford (Biography). A dual biography of two very different polar expeditions—one well-planned and one doomed—but both admirable in their own way.

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket by Edgar Allen Poe (Literature). Poe's only novel, which was inspired by a real shipwreck, recounts the story of an adventurous (and unfortunate) stowaway on a whaling ship famously includes poor Pym's ordeal in the Antarctic.

The Storied Ice: Exploration, Discovery, and Adventure in Antarctica's Peninsula Region by Joan N. Boothe (History) A dramatic recounting of familiar and not-so-familiar stories of early explorers and adventurers who visited the Antarctic Peninsula between 1897 and 1917, more commonly known as Antarctica's Heroic Age. Richly illustrated with photos and maps. Recommended by GCCL travelers and members of GCCL's expedition team.

Argentina:

Argentina Since Independence edited by Leslie Bethell (History). A compact yet comprehensive review of the economic, social, and political history of Argentina since its independence from Spain in 1816.

Argentina, 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsin by David Rock (History). A thought-provoking history that does much to explain why a country with such potential regressed from a major world power to a developing nation.

In Patagonia by Bruce Chatwin (Travel Narrative) A masterpiece of travel, history and adventure. This engaging book captures the spirit of the land, history, wildlife, and people of Patagonia.

Natural Patagonia: Natural Argentina & Chile by Marcelo D. Beccaceci. (Field Guide). A natural history guide to Patagonia's incredible wildlife and plant types. Discusses the area's geological origins and evolution. Includes abundant photographs.

Night Flight by Antoine de Saint-Exupery (Literature). Follows a pilot alone in a storm over the Andes en route from Punta Arenas to Buenos Aires. In this wonderfully evocative novella by the author of *The Little Prince*, de Saint-Exupery captures the thrill of early flight and the courage of the pilots.

The Buenos Aires Quintet by Manuel Vazquez Montalban (Mystery). A Spanish detective travels to Buenos Aires to help an uncle find his missing son. Set against the backdrop of Argentina's repressive military *junta*, the mystery could be personal or political. One of the popular *Pepe Carvalho* crime series.

The Motorcycle Diaries: Notes on a Latin American Journey by Ernesto "Che" Guevara (Memoir/Travel Narrative). Even world-weary revolutionaries were young and naïve once. This is the true-life story of Che Guevara's attempt to see South America from the back of an old motorcycle at the age of 23. Later in life, he would claim that it was this journey that started to form his political beliefs.

The Whispering Land by Gerald Durrell (Travel Narrative/Nature). An account of the author's eight-month odyssey in pursuit of Patagonian wildlife from seals to parrots.

Tierra del Fuego by Francisco Coloane (Short Stories). These nine stories of adventure, exploration, and voyage are peopled with ravenous explorers, fortune hunters, foreign revolutionaries, ill-fated seafarers, intrepid ships' captains, and ruthless smugglers.

Guidebooks:

Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.
DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.
Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.
Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.
Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.
Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.
National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.
Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:

Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies

Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be harder to find, but they are usually available online.

Argentina and Antarctica:

Down Argentine Way starring Betty Grable and Don Ameche (1940, color). A light musical about a blossoming romance between an American heiress and an Argentine horse breeder. Features the feisty Carmen Miranda in her first American film.

Evita starring Madonna, Antonio Banderas, and Jonathan Pryce (1996, color). The film version of the famous musical by the powerhouse lyricist/composer team of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. Although only loosely based on the real life of Argentina's first lady, the detailed sets, period costumes, and real-life Argentine locations convey the glamour of Buenos Aires in the 1930s. Travelers interested in documentaries should look for ***Evita: The Woman Behind the Myth from A&E*** or ***Evita (The Documentary*)** directed by Eduardo Montes-Bradley.

Gilda starring Rita Hayworth, Glenn Ford, and George Macready (1946, B&W). A film noir set in the shadowy underworld of 1940s Buenos Aires with a strange love triangle: the casino kingpin, his lieutenant, and the sultry beauty that they can't trust. ***Gilda*** was the femme fatal role that defined Hayworth's career and made her a box-office star.

March of the Penguins directed by Luc Jacquet (2005, color). A stunning nature documentary about the incredible hardships that face emperor penguins in Antarctica during courtship, mating, and the birth of their chicks. The director is French, but a U.S. version narrated by actor Morgan Freeman is widely available.

Happy Feet with the voices of Elijah Wood, Robin Williams, and Brittany Murphy (2006, color). An animated movie starring a tap dancing emperor penguin in Antarctica. A cute family-friendly choice to watch with kids or grandchildren.

Tetro starring Vincent Gallo (2009, color). Two brothers reunite in Buenos Aires after one disappeared from his family for ten years. Director Francis Ford Coppola uses the strong visuals and operatic elements that are his hallmarks to dramatic effect.

The Motorcycle Diaries starring Gael Garcia Bernal and Rodrigo de la Serna (2004, color). Follows a 23-year-old Che Guevara and his friend Alberto Granado on a motorcycle journey across South America. An interesting, and effective, combination of biopic, buddy movie, and political commentary.

Whiteout starring Kate Beckinsale and Gabriel Macht (2009, color). When Antarctica's first recorded murder takes place at a lonely research station, the U.S. marshal on duty (Beckinsale) races to solve the crime before the sun sets for six months.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer good travel information:

Grand Circle Travel Store
www.grandcircleshop.com

Electric current and plug types
www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

Foreign exchange rates
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM locators
www.mastercard.com/atm for Cirrus ATMs
www.visa.com/pd/atm for PLUS ATMs

Tourist information
www.antarcticconnection.com **Antarctica**
www.turismo.gov.ar **Argentina tourism**
www.visit-uruguay.com/ **Uruguay**

Travel books
www.amazon.com
www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather
www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages
www.travlang.com/languages

Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.
www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe
www.cybercafes.com

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency that screens luggage in U.S.
www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information
www.travel.state.gov

Tourist Board Addresses

Embassies and tourist offices offer free brochures, maps, and pamphlets with information that pertains to many of your destinations. If these materials would enhance your vacation planning, you can write or call the following offices:

Argentina Embassy
Tourism Section
1600 New Hampshire Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Telephone: (202) 238-6416
Fax: (202) 238-6447
Email: econargusa@comcast.net

Brazilian Embassy
3006 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20008-3634
Phone: (202)238-2805
Fax: (202)238-2827

Uruguayan Embassy
1913 "I" Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20006
Telephone: -202-331 1313
Fax: 1-202-331 8142
Email: uruwashi@uruwashi.org
Website: www.uruwashi.org