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# **Antarctica's White Wilderness**

**SMALL SHIP CRUISE TOUR**

*Plus optional extensions in*  
**Bariloche, Argentina: Patagonian  
Andes & Lakes;  
Iguassu Falls, Argentina & Brazil**

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**ATC/ATP 2015**

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# Grand Circle Cruise Line

## Antarctica's White Wilderness

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# 1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

## **Passport Required**

U.S. citizens need a valid passport for this itinerary. Please take a 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.**

**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 blank 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.

**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](http://www.travel.state.gov)** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You may also contact our recommended visa and passport 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.*

## **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

## **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

## **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.)

## **Overseas Taxes and Reciprocity Fees**

This tour has airport departure taxes and reciprocity fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price. The information below 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 the Argentine reciprocity fee has been paid, it will be valid for the duration of your trip.

**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 the most current information for your departure.**

## **Special Forms Required for Antarctic Cruise**

In order for your cruise tickets to be issued, you will be required to fill out and 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, it is a requirement that all travelers 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 Final Documents.

**Please be advised that your Final Documents 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 of 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 Final Documents 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

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.**

#### Pacing

- 13 days, with 9 nights aboard the Corinthian, and 2 hotel stays, including a single 1-night stay
- International flights from U.S. to Buenos Aires depart around midnight; and 2 internal flights, 1 with pre-dawn wake up
- We travel to remote areas more than two 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

#### Physical requirements

- This is an expedition, and the nature of this trip requires a higher level of fitness than that of other Grand Circle Cruise Line vacations
- Travelers using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids will not be able to board the Corinthian
- You must be able to walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 6-8 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs, wet landings from Zodiacs, walking over hilly, uneven terrain and several feet of snow, ice, and rocks
- Crossing the Drake Passage involves a total of four days of usually 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
- Agility and balance are required for embarking inflatable Zodiacs boats from a gangway; all landings in Antarctica are wet landings

#### Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 30-45°F during cruising season, but can drop quickly
- January-February is the warmest season
- Expect high winds and rain in Ushuaia

#### Terrain

- Travel over some bumpy unpaved roads and uneven walking surfaces, including ice, slippery rocks, sand, and snow

#### Transportation

- Travel by 45-passenger coach, 98-passenger small ship, and Zodiac raft
- 2 internal flights of approximately 4 hours each

#### Cuisine

- Meals will be a mix of local specialties and familiar American standards
- Meals onboard feature a variety of entrée options, including vegetarian

#### Program Directors

- We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home if their limitations are impacting the group's experience

## **Health Checkup**

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**

**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:

- **On-line:** if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC’s website at [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel) where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.
- **By phone:** you can reach 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.*

## **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.

## **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.

# **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.

## **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.

## **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. Also, remember not to 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 of embarkation, as you will be in open waters within 3 hours after boarding.

### 3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

#### Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

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	
<b>Pieces per person</b>	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
<b>Weight restrictions</b>	Varies by airline. The current <b>standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 17 lbs for carry-on bags.</b> (If you have an <i>Aerolineas Argentinas</i> flight, <b>the weight limit is 33lbs.</b> )
<b>Size restrictions</b>	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches ( <i>length+width+depth</i> ). Generally, <b>62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.</b>
<b>Luggage Type</b>	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	
<p><b>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> 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: <i>Do I feel lucky?</i> And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.</p>	

#### **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 than 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.

## **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.

***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.*

## **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](http://www.tsa.gov/public), 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*.

**Follow the TSA's 3-1-1 rule for liquids:** 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.

**Locking your luggage:** To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, *either* do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. *or* use TSA-approved locks. (These are locks that TSA screeners can open and relock with a special tool, avoiding damage to your luggage or lock if a physical inspection is required. Look for the words "TSA" or "TSA-approved" on the lock's packaging.) Outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend that you lock your luggage as a preventative measure against theft.

## 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. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

**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.

***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.*

**Delays Do Happen – Despite the Best of Plans.** In the event your flight is delayed or you miss a connection and must be re-booked, please remember to let Grand Circle know by calling the emergency number provided in your final documents so that we can make appropriate arrangements for your arrival.

**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.

***Please note:** If you plan on booking your own international flights or arranging with our air department to arrive/depart on an earlier/later date than standard for your program, airport transfers will NOT be included in your program price. Transfers must be purchased separately, as an optional add-on, and are subject to availability. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at 1-800-321-2835. For more information, please see your Important Information booklet.*

**Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

## 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 not accepted in Argentina.** 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 Aires. You won’t need a lot of cash for this program, so to bring a small amount of dollars in smaller notes would be enough. 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.

***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, Discover Card, 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).

## **Shipboard Expenses**

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 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. Debit cards, including debit cards with credit card functionality (i.e. those with a Visa, MasterCard, etc. logo) cannot be used for payment onboard ship.

## **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

In Argentina, U.S. dollars might be accepted for payment at tourist-related businesses or in a large city. At time of writing, tips to our GCCL staff in U.S. dollars are generally more appreciated than tips in pesos because of the strong exchange rate. Previous travelers have suggested bringing a mix of different denomination U.S. bills—some small ones for tipping, and some larger ones for exchanging.

### **In Brazil**

The monetary unit of Brazil is the Real (R\$). The R\$ is divided into 100 centavos. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100
- Coins: 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 centavos; 1 Real

It is unlikely that you will need Brazilian reals for this adventure; at Iguassu Falls, you will find that shops are willing to take Argentine pesos or U.S. dollars..

## **Shopping**

There is **no** requirement to make a purchase at local markets or shops, 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, and ultimately, you must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked.

### **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.

### **Bargaining**

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

## **U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges**

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the *export* duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the *import* duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- 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.

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/](http://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.

## **Tipping Guidelines**

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. To make it easy for you to budget, we have quoted the amounts in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars.

- **GCCL Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your GCCL Program Director at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$7-\$10 per traveler for each day their Program Director is with them. *Please note that tips for your Program Director can only be in the form of cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Program Director during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$10-\$12 U.S. per traveler, per day. You’ll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. For your convenience, tips for the crew can be paid in U.S. cash or by credit card.
- **Housekeeping Staff at Hotels:** We recommend \$1 per room, per night. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don’t need to tip them separately.)
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides, motorcoach drivers, and Expedition Team on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

## 6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

### In General

**Travel light:** 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 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 climates, consider long-sleeved underwear made from water-wicking synthetics beneath outer layers of wool-synthetic blends and fleece, to stay dry and warm.

**Expedition Gear:** Other than boots, parkas, waterproof pants, and potentially a walking stick or trekking pole, 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.

## **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.

## **Clothing Options**

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.

## 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.

**Please Note:** *The online GCT store managed in partnership with New Headings is a great place to find travel gear. Please visit [www.grandcircleshop.com](http://www.grandcircleshop.com) to browse through a great selection of gear that could be just what you need to enhance your Antarctica expedition.*

## 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
- 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

## 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, available onboard ship)

## 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
- A waterproof protector for your camera. Please do NOT use a plastic bag for this purpose—it can cause litter.

## 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
- Walking stick or trekking pole (you may be able to find a folding or collapsible version for ease of packing)

## 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](http://www.gct.com) for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites ([www.wunderground.com](http://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 in 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:

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

MONTH	BUENOS AIRES, Argentina			ANTARCTIC PENINSULA*		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Avg. # of days with snowfall
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)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	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.

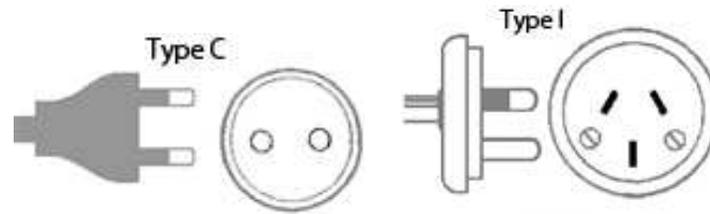
### Regional Electricity

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.

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/adaptor kits can often be found at hardware or online stores but transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave those larger items at home.

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).



Even though you'll only need Type C and Type I plug adapters on this trip, it may be a good idea to invest in an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, this item will ensure that you are prepared for your current trip as well as future vacations.

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 suppressor and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of 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

## **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.

*TIP: Past travelers have recommended checking with your service provider about your international phone plan working on a cruise at sea, since some plans can end up working only on land.*

## **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](http://www.verizon.com), [www.t-mobile.com](http://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](http://www.travelcell.com) and [www.globalcellularrental.com](http://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 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.

***TIP for Antarctica:*** A waterproof camera cover is a great accessory for this trip. But please do *NOT* use a plastic bag for this purpose—it can cause litter if the bag falls off or blows away.

## 9. YOUR SHIP

### **Aboard Ship: the *Corinthian***

The *Corinthian* is built for Antarctic cruising. It 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 56 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.

### **Cabin Assignments**

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Account at [www.gct.com/myaccount](http://www.gct.com/myaccount). However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for many small ships.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

### **Dining**

All meals are taken either in the stately restaurant or al fresco on the umbrella-studded sun deck. Meals will be a mix of regional specialties and familiar American standards, and will feature a variety of entrée options including vegetarian. Complimentary beer, wine and soft drinks are served with lunch and dinner in the *Corinthian's* dining room. 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 may be served at a later hour (around 7:00 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 Access and Email**

Limited WiFi service is available for free in some of the public spaces, but not in individual cabins. If you want to use the WiFi connection you'll need to bring your own device—a laptop, tablet, MP3 player, smart phone, etc.—because the ship does not rent or loan these devices. Instructions on how to connect will be available at Reception or from your Program Director. Please keep in mind that our WiFi access onboard is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume onboard will affect connectivity and speed. You should expect that there will be times when the WiFi is either slow or not available, and that these disruptions can be brief or longer lasting.

## **Public Spaces**

Our ship features a library, a lounge with audiovisual equipment, a dining room, a sun deck, and an exercise room.

## **Medical Services**

There is always a doctor onboard, as well as all of the basic First Aid supplies. All physician's fees will be payable directly to the doctor. All specific medicines are the responsibility of each passenger

## **Laundry Services**

There is laundry service available on board, but no dry cleaning. Prices are per piece of clothing and will be provided to you on board.

## **Shipboard Payments**

Payment for shipboard expenses can be made using major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. All prices are in U.S. dollars and you will not need a PIN to use your credit card onboard. Personal checks and the Discover Card are not accepted onboard. Debit cards, including debit cards with credit card functionality (i.e. those with a Visa, MasterCard, etc. logo) cannot be used for payment onboard ship.

## **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.

## **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.

## 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.

## **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 with responding to changing circumstances on the spot. We appreciate your understanding that we cannot always follow your published itinerary to the letter.

## **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 businesses, 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**

We do our best to have a minimum negative impact on local cultures and the natural environment in every country where we operate trips. 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.

**The #1 rule is: please follow your Program Directors' and Expedition Staffs' instructions faithfully.**

### **Protect the Wildlife**

Taking or harmful interference with Antarctic wildlife is prohibited except in accordance with a permit issued by a national authority.

- Do not feed, touch, or handle birds or seals, or approach or photograph them in ways that cause them to alter their behavior. Special care is needed when animals are breeding or molting.
- Do not damage plants, for example by walking, driving, or landing on extensive moss beds or lichen-covered scree slopes.
- Do not bring non-native plants or animals into the Antarctic.

### **Respect Protected Areas & Scientific Research**

- Know the locations of areas that have been afforded special protection and any restrictions regarding entry and activities that can be carried out in and near them. Observe applicable restrictions. (Your Expedition Staff will tell you which areas are protected and what to do during the trip.)
- Do not damage, remove, or destroy Historic Sites or Monuments or any artifacts associated with them.
- Do not interfere with scientific research, facilities or equipment.

### **Be Safe**

Be prepared for severe and changeable weather and ensure that your equipment and clothing meet Antarctic standards. Remember that the Antarctic environment is inhospitable, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous.

- Keep a safe distance from all wildlife, both on land and at sea.
- Take note of, and act on, the advice and instructions from your leaders; do not stray from your group.
- Do not walk onto glaciers or large snow fields without the proper equipment and experience; there is a real danger of falling into hidden crevasses.
- Do not enter emergency refuges (except in emergencies). If you use equipment or food from a refuge, inform the nearest research station or national authority once the emergency is over.
- Respect any smoking restrictions, particularly around buildings, and take great care to safeguard against the danger of fire. This is a real hazard.

## **Keep Antarctica Pristine**

Antarctica remains relatively pristine, the largest wilderness area on Earth. It has not yet been subjected to large-scale human perturbations. Please keep it that way.

- Do not dispose of litter or garbage on land. Open burning is prohibited.
- Do not disturb or pollute lakes or streams. Any materials discarded at sea must be disposed of properly.
- Do not paint or engrave names or graffiti on rocks or buildings.
- Do not collect or take away biological or geological specimens or man-made artifacts as a souvenir, including rocks, bones, eggs, fossils, and parts or contents of buildings.
- Do not deface or vandalize buildings or emergency refuges, whether occupied, abandoned, or unoccupied.

# **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. If you prefer to stick with bottled water, it 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, when the Greek cartographer Marinus of Tyre coined its name. With the Age of Discovery in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 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 uncertainty 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

### 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 (alibris.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 (Science-fiction). 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.

*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. With 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. The audiobook version read by Simon Prebble is especially good.

*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). 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.

***The Worst Journey in the World*** by Apsley Cherry-Garrard (History/Memoir) The harrowing, sad, and moving story of the ill-fated 1910 Scott expedition to the South Pole by one of the few survivors. Originally written in the 1920s and recently re-released.

***Swimming to Antarctica*** by Lynne Cox (Memoir) The life and daring triumphs of a world champion long-distance swimmer. Her most famous exploits include a mile-long swim in icy waters off Antarctica.

### **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 Alfonsín*** 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-Exupéry (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-Exupéry 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](http://www.grandcircleshop.com)

## **Electric current and plug types**

[www.kropla.com/electric2.htm](http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm)

## **Foreign exchange rates**

[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

## **ATM locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm) for Cirrus ATMs

[www.visa.com/pd/atm](http://www.visa.com/pd/atm) for PLUS ATMs

## **Tourist information**

[www.antarcticconnection.com](http://www.antarcticconnection.com) **Antarctica**

[www.turismo.gov.ar](http://www.turismo.gov.ar) **Argentina tourism**

[www.visit-uruguay.com/](http://www.visit-uruguay.com/) **Uruguay**

## **Travel books**

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

[www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

## **World weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)

[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

## **Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages**

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

## **Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

## **Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe**

[www.cybercafes.com](http://www.cybercafes.com)

## **U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information**

[www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel)

## **Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency that screens luggage in U.S.**

[www.tsa.gov/public](http://www.tsa.gov/public)

## **National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)