



UNLEASHED IN PATAGONIA INTINERARY

DAY ONE

SANTA RITA

After an early morning arrival into Santiago Chile's Benitez International Airport participants will transfer to Santa Rita Winery, just south of the city, in the Maipo valley, the heartland of Chilean wine production. Having been declared "Winery of the Year" for several years in a row by American Wine & Spirits magazine, Santa Rita is a front-runner in Chile's booming wine industry. Originally the private mansion of the founder of Santa Rita, it's 200-year old manor house is now the very private five-star Hotel Casa Real, one of Chile's most luxurious properties. This glorious hotel at the base of the Andean foothills has only 16 rooms, a ratio of about four staff for every guest, and delicious food, wine and ambiance. There is even a private Neo-Gothic chapel dating from 1885 on the grounds, recently restored by the same Italian painters who worked on the restoration of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel in Rome. Our day at Santa Rita can be spent relaxing poolside, walking its lovely grounds or hiking up into the vineyards for a bird's eye view of the magnificent 100-acre estate. Designed in 1882 by a French landscape artist, Santa Rita's park-like property is cared for by 15 full-time gardeners and is simply beautiful. There are large formal gardens of roses, hydrangeas, and hundred year-old trees of the most diverse varieties including chestnut, cedar, almond, orange and lemon. The property has the largest bougainvillea in the Americas and innumerable statues. Midday we will enjoy a wonderful lunch in the fountain-adorned courtyard followed by a winery tour and a visit to Museo Andio, the pre-Columbian art museum located on the grounds of Santa Rita. Late in the day we can enjoy a siesta before our welcoming dinner served in the formal dining room followed by billiards and coffee or pisco sours in the hacienda's antique game room.

DAY TWO

PUERTO MONTT / CHAITEN

We begin with an early morning departure from Santa Rita and catch our flight south to Puerto Montt. On our final leg, we'll board a 20-seater private charter plane and embark on a magnificent flight down the northern Patagonian coast over fjords and mountains to the small fishing village of Chaiten where we will overnight at a typical Patagonian hotel.

DAY THREE

CHAITEN / RIO FULALEUFU / TERMINADOR CAMP

Early this morning we'll board a comfortable Mercedes bus and head towards the Futaleufu River (the "Fu") arriving in enough time for lunch followed by a safety talk, swim test and flip drill under the watchful guise of our guides. Once we've mastered the basics we'll run a series of long rapids. Afterwards, we'll take a short drive back to the Terminador Camp Trailhead. We'll hike the mile into camp while our personal bags will be transported by ox cart. The first of four stunning private camps we'll visit during our week, the Terminador Camp has a mile of private river front and sits on a dramatic bluff over the river which churns with every imaginable shade of azure, white and turquoise. Hidden in the trees are 12 private, two person, hand-hewn wooden cliff dwellings, each with beds and a bird's eye view of the surging flow which creates dozens of waterfalls as it spills over giant, sculpted white granite boulders. There is also an 18-person wooden hot tub with a cypress deck. Dinner will be prepared by a professional chef and served at the bottom of the rapid on a peninsula of granite that juts out into the river and affords a view of the entire mile long avalanche of rock and water as it races down the impressive staircase. The camp also has hot showers, flush toilets and a hand-hewn gazebo shelter and covered dining area in case of rain. A professional Chilean masseuse will accompany us during the week.

DAY FOUR

TERMINADOR CAMP / RIO FUTALEUFU / CAVE CAMP

In the morning participants can choose to horseback ride or hike the four miles around Infierno Canyon or raft right through its Class 5 rapids. Upon entering this wild, sheer-walled Class 5 Infierno Canyon, rafters will go through a series of fantastic rapids including Infierno Rapid, Purgatorio Rapid and Escala de Jacobo Rapid, each one separated by a pool at its base. In the early afternoon we will all enjoy an easy paddle down the very private and exotic, 1,000 acre Cave Camp. Not a cave in the true sense, but a massive overhanging white granite slab that rests on two boulders, the main stone shelter is referred to by the locals as the House of Stone. There is a sand floor, two natural skylights, a giant fireplace in the rear wall and more than 1,600 square feet of interior space. In front of this is a beautiful spring-fed pond called Laguito Azul (Little Blue Lake). Set within a bowl of massive granite towers as high as 300 feet and surrounded by lush vegetation, it resembles a giant Japanese garden. Its brilliant blue water is so pure you can drink it and so clear you can see giant German brown trout and salmon of up to 25 pounds swimming 30 feet down. Kayaks are available and gliding over the transparent water feels almost surreal. A few hundred feet beyond Laguito Azul rages the most spectacular rapid on the river, Zeta, a Class 5-6, Z-shaped flume cut into solid granite. Just downstream, carved into the granite by the river in higher flows, is a heart-shaped, three-foot deep water-filled pothole, which we heat to 105°. With smooth, 45° sloping walls to lean against and fresh water every day, this chemical-free stone hot tub comfortably fits twelve people. Soaking at night with the brilliant stars of the southern hemisphere aglow is an unforgettable experience. The most popular place to sleep at Cave Camp is in one of the 12 hand-hewn, cliff dwellings overlooking Zeta. Each has walls and a door on the trailside for privacy. The sides facing the river,

however, are entirely open and the birds-eye view from your pillow of the tumultuous turquoise water slicing through the rapid's narrow granite slot is unforgettable. In the vicinity is a large cliffside dining area, 18 person wooden hot tub and a second spring-fed swimming pond. This camp also features a series of dramatic hand-hewn log sky bridges, suspended some 30 feet off the ground.

DAY FIVE

CAVE CAMP / TYROLEAN TRAVERSE / TREE HOUSE CAMP

After breakfast a dramatic Tyrolean traverse line will be set across the river. Wearing a climbing harness attached to a pulley, participants pull themselves across a rope stretched between sheer granite walls over the heart of Zeta Rapid. Although not risky or particularly strenuous, hanging and then crossing over the class 6 rapid is extremely exhilarating. Upon reaching the other side, we begin climbing out of the inner canyon. The moderately strenuous 1,500 vertical foot hike takes us past a beautiful 100-foot tributary waterfall and breathtaking views of the river Cave Camp with dramatic peaks rising above it. After two hours we crest the top of the inner canyon and enter a wonderful old growth hardwood forest. Tucked away in the center of this enchanted, moss-draped land of giants is a 10 acre, 50-foot deep lake. Cut out by the glacier, the lake drops straight off the edge like a giant infinity pool. Surrounded by native old growth forest on three sides, with dramatic mountain views on the fourth, this intimate body of water offers wonderful opportunities for swimming and canoeing. A natural wood deck and a hand made 16-person hot tub sits on the edge of the lake. Hidden back in the trees is a hand-hewn log gazebo with a fabulous fireplace in its center and just beyond it 35 feet up in a majestic closely-knit stand of old growth giants are eight wonderful, hexagon shaped tree houses. They are connected like the spokes of a wheel from one central tree and a circular staircase. These amazing architectural gems are each unique and were hand crafted by a Chilean master carpenter. Each was designed to be self-supported and not a single nail was placed into the trees. In the afternoon there is the option of swimming and relaxing in the hot tub or taking a short hike to the breathtaking Tree House Camp Canyon Overlook. Engulfed by snow-capped mountains on all sides, this wonderful spot affords us 360 degree Patagonian views including two gorgeous lakes and seven miles of the turquoise Futaleufu River canyon stretching as far as the eye can see. Condors are frequently seen soaring in the updrafts. We spend the evening suspended above the lower canopy in tree houses.

DAY SIX

TREE HOUSE CAMP / CAVE CAMP / TOWER CAMP

This morning we hike an hour and a half back down to the river ending at a 250-foot zip line (like a kid's giant "fun ride") that will transport us back across the river to cave camp. Holding a loop handle attached to a pulley over our heads, we leap off a 25-foot cliff, shooting 250 feet down an angled rope letting go into the pool below Zeta Rapid. A soak in the nearby 105° natural stone hot tub is the perfect transition from the 60° river. On the cliff just above the hot tub there is a 10 to 42 foot high cliff jump into the aerated blue pool below Zeta Rapid. Lunch that day is served near the stone hot tub on the smooth ledges at Zeta. After lunch we receive a climbing safety briefing and put on our climbing harnesses for the Tower climb. For those people not wishing to make the climb, there are the options of hiking, horseback riding, kayaking on the pond, excellent trout fishing or relaxing in the stone hot tub. The tower climb involves a dynamic three-part rock climb up the backside of the 320-foot granite Torre de los Vientos (Tower of the Winds). No previous climbing experience is necessary, and people from 5 to 78 years old have made the climb. Once on top, we venture out on the dramatic Knife's Edge, crossing its narrow natural bridge, with sheer 300 foot drop offs on either side. From here, the views of are exquisite and among the most impressive found on the river. To descend we do a dramatic, 320 foot, two-stage rappel off the Tower's sheer north wall. For most people switching ropes at the mid-station is as exhilarating as any of the river's class 5 rapids. An optional, less demanding, 100 ft. rappel off the backside of the tower is also available. We'll spend the night at cave camp.

DAY SEVEN

CAVE CAMP / RIO FUTAEUFU / CAMPO MAPU LEUFU

A short float this morning takes us to unrunnable Throne Room Rapid where the boats are pushed through empty (ghost boated). The next couple of hours are spent running a series of long, exciting class 4+ rapids, down to the top of the class 5+Terminador Rapid, the most demanding rapid on the river. After scouting, we push off and enter this long, technical rapid. Immediately below we run the impressive 15-foot waves of the Himalayas. Here the rapids flow together making nearly a mile and a half of nonstop Class 5 action. Anyone interested in not rafting the bigger stuff, can hike around the most exposed sections on a beautiful trail. After the Himalayas there is a series of giant Class 4+ rapids (some nearly a mile long) and two Class 5 rapids: Cojin (the cushion) and Mundaca. After another long stretch of Class 4+ water, we will have lunch and be visited by a local Chilean woman who will demonstrate the fine art of wool spinning and share some of her hand-made woolen goodies with us. She'll lend insight into the daily lives of women living in these remote parts of Patagonia. After take out, we will drive half an hour back to the Campo Mapu Leufu trailhead and then hike one mile into camp. Situated on a secluded bluff, 120 feet over the river with dramatic 360° views, this 300-acre camp has over two miles of private riverfront. Hand-hewn wooden cliff dwellings offer breathtaking views of granite towers rising from the turquoise river. Dramatically perched on the cliff is an 18-person wooden hot tub. Meals are served outdoors at the cliff-side dining area with stunning views of granite spires rising from the turquoise river in one direction and glacier-capped peaks in the other. In the late afternoon there is a choice between kayak lessons on a clear pond, single-track mountain biking, hiking up to two lakes and an old growth forest, or simply relaxing in the hot tub. Anyone interested can also do a bit of canyoneering through the 400-foot deep Rio Blanco slot canyon. Wearing wetsuits and river shoes, participants will hike, climb and swim through this incredible natural labyrinth of white boulders, clear azure pools and waterfalls. For many, this experience is a highlight of the trip. In the evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner celebration with a traditional Chilean Asado of roasted sheep over a fire and other Chilean delicacies.

DAY NINE

CHAITEN / PUERTO MONTT / SANTIAGO

This morning we hike 20 minutes out to the dirt road and the bus. An hour and a half drive takes us to a trailhead where we take a magnificent 3 hour round trip hike through a rain forest wilds, viewing impressive waterfalls, to the base of a spectacular glacier. In the afternoon we board the bus and drive an hour to Chaiten where we board charter plane for the short flight back to Puerto Montt. Upon arriving in Puerto Montt, we board the plane for Santiago and then on to the United States.

DAY TEN

HOME

This morning we arrive in the United States, the turquoise waters of the Fu still swirling in our heads.