



# **RIDE WORLD WIDE**

## **Argentina to Chile**

### **Rides Across the Andes 2016-2017**

**(Estancia Huechahue to Puente Basas)**

**This trip is only suitable for experienced riders who are fit enough to canter for extended periods and spend long hours in the saddle. There are 5 to 8 hours riding a day.**

These rides start at Estancia Huechahue, a working estancia in the Northern Patagonian Lake District of Argentina and follow a route across the Andes ending on the Chilean side of the border at Puente Basas, close to Pucon in the Chilean Lake District. They are organised jointly by Jane Williams who owns Estancia Huechahue and Loth & Pamela Kruteler, experienced Chilean guides who run rides on the Chilean side of the border.

**Dates** Rides are for 9 nights (10 days) and are arranged for private groups and from one set date during the season. Please see the set departures at the end of this information sheet and contact us to check availability.



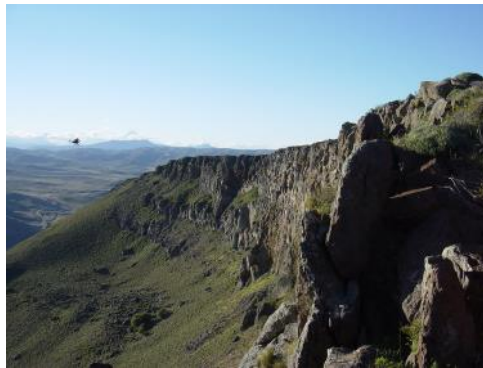
**Riding** The rides start with two days / nights at Estancia Huechahue. Whilst there you will have a chance to try the horses used for the first part of the route to the border and to get used to the Argentine tack and style of riding on morning, afternoon or full day rides of up to 5 or 6 hours. On the third day, you set off on the route to the Chilean border moving camp each night. Days 3 to 6 are spent riding on the Argentine side of the Andes, with about 6 hours in the saddle each day although the first day particularly may be longer with up to 7 or 8 hours riding to cover the distance to the first campsite. In total you cover a distance of around 140 kms on this section of the ride. Jane Williams, your Anglo-Argentine host at Estancia Huechahue usually leads this part of the ride, accompanied by at least one back up rider / gaucho. Camping equipment is transported by back-up vehicle (pack horses are used one day) and helpers travel with the vehicle to look after the horses and help set up camps. On Day 7 you arrive at the Chilean border and, after clearing customs and immigration, will meet your Chilean guides Loth & Pamela Kruteler and the horses used for the second part of the trip from the border to Puente Basas in Chile. Again there are usually about 6 hours riding a day on this part. Loth & Pamela are assisted in camps, and /or as back up riders, by Chilean huasos (gauchos). Rides are limited to a maximum of 12, with a weight limit of 90kgs / 14st 2lbs - although please contact us if you are close to this to make sure suitable horses are available (some heavier experienced riders may also be taken by prior arrangement).

**The Horses** For the first part of the ride, you will use horses from Huehachue which are mainly home or locally bred Criollo (the local Argentine breed) and Anglo-Normand crosses of between about 15hh and 17hh. You swap horses at the Chilean border and for the second part of the trip use horses belonging to Loth & Pamela. These are generally smaller, averaging 14-15hh and are mainly Criollo, Chilean Horse and Chilean Horse crosses (similar to a stocky Arab!). All the horses are strong and sensible, yet also athletic, responsive and forward going so great fun to ride. They are ridden in the local (Argentine / Chilean) style using traditional Argentine or Chilean tack. Saddles are similar to a MacClellan style army saddle (like a western but without the big pommel) most with comfortable sheepskin covers on top. The horses are used to neck reining, going best when ridden with a relaxed and loose contact with the mouth. Saddle-bags are provided.

**Pace** The pace on these trips will vary depending on the going and terrain but the rides are geared towards experienced, fit riders and are quite challenging overall. There are plenty of opportunities for long, fast canters and some days where hours are long and the pace is fast over varied, sometimes (quite) tricky terrain, and up and down hills which on the Chilean side are steep and generally wooded.



**Riding Experience** The long hours, varied going and the distances there are to cover each day mean these rides are suitable for reasonably experienced, fit riders who are comfortable, relaxed and secure in the saddle at a walk, trot and fast canter over varied terrain and on river crossings. The horses are well schooled, responsive and sensible but days can be long, so saddle-fitness and confidence over varied going is important. If you don't ride regularly at home, you should accustom yourself to the hours in the saddle with some regular and intensive training before you go.



**Terrain** Northern Patagonia is a beautiful, remote area where barren rolling hills meet picturesque lakes and thick forests. The area on and around Estancia Huechahue is one of open grassland plains with the flat 'table topped' hills typical of Patagonia. Rocky canyons and clear streams also meander through valleys, and towering rock formations hide gorges, crevices and caves that have traditionally been used by the local Indians as burial caves. As you head to the Chilean border you ride across open grassy water meadows, by clear blue lakes with sandy shores and through bamboo thickets, your views all the while dominated by the perfectly shaped 13,000 ft snow-capped volcano Lanin. The border post itself is close to a forest of the world's only indigenous Monkey Puzzle trees and then, on the steeper Chilean side of the Andes, the landscape changes. Here the route is more rugged and enclosed, the vegetation thicker, with characteristic Southern Beech forests cut by clear streams and lakes. The route on the Chilean side is steep with narrow earth tracks winding their way up and down through generally dense woodland.



**Accommodation** The first two nights, and the last of the trip are spent at Estancia Huechahue which is modern and comfortable. The eight twin guest rooms are in three lodges in the garden of the main house, each with private tiled bathroom and some with verandas overlooking the estancia's lush grounds with a stream and an al fresco hot tub. The evening meal is either in the dining room of the main house or in the 'quincho' (garden house), a purpose built dining room in the garden complete with huge traditional asado (barbecue) area and bar. On the route across the border, you will usually camp, although on one or two nights on the Chilean side rustic cabin accommodation may be used. Camps are comfortable and are set up ahead of riders, with camping equipment transported by back-up vehicle - although pack-horses are used one night where there is no vehicular access. Large dome tents and thermo-rest mattresses (air beds) are supplied on the nights a vehicle meets the group (- on the night pack horses are used, saddle pads, rugs and sheepskin saddle covers are used to make comfortable 'gaucho style' beds!) There are no showers in camps - the clear mountain rivers and lakes are used for washing and loos are simple but functional, and are either chemical loos or an interpretation of the flush loo in custom-made 'privies'. Meals when camping are cooked by the gauchos over an open fire and are usually eaten sitting on chairs around the fire. The penultimate night of the trip is spent at Puente Basas, Loth & Pamela's family farm, where camp is set up.



**Meals** Estancia Huechahue is virtually self-sufficient and the emphasis there is on fresh, home-grown produce with bread baked daily, fresh milk and home-made cheeses as well as home grown fruit and vegetables according to the season. Cooked breakfasts are always on offer at Huechahue. Lunch and dinner, traditionally large meals in Argentina, often include home-reared beef, or perhaps venison or lamb with a salad or vegetables. Argentines usually eat late in the evening and dinner at the estancia is never before 9pm and sometimes not until 11pm. Camping breakfasts are generous - usually cereal, coffee, tea, toast or bread and homemade jam, and eggs on offer sometimes with bacon, salmon, or perhaps chorizo. Lunches are either a traditional 'asado' (barbeque) of beef (both Argentine and Chilean beef are excellent), chicken or lamb, hot empanadas (a delicious Latin version of the Cornish pasty), or a cold picnic carried in saddle bags, perhaps with a selection of ham or other cold meats, tomatoes, salads, cheeses and fruit. Dinner when camping is often a barbecue or perhaps a pasta dish or hot stew with fresh or home preserved fruit for pudding. Both lunch and dinner are accompanied by local wine. Vegetarians will be catered for as far as possible but please give us prior notice of any special dietary requirements.



**Weather** These rides are run during the area's summer months late November to February, when the weather is best. Days are generally mild to hot with temperatures averaging 20 to 30 degrees C and nights quite cool (5 to 10 C - sometimes colder). Estancia Huechahue is in the rain shadow of the Andes so it rarely rains there in summer, but the weather in the mountains is unpredictable and on the Chilean side it can rain a lot so you need to go well prepared!

**What to bring** We will send you a list of things we suggest you bring when you make your booking (you will need a good quality 4 season sleeping bag).

**Itinerary** The following is an example itinerary for the 'Across the Andes Ride'. Please note it is only an outline of the itinerary planned. Day-by-day arrangements and routes may be varied by your guides at their absolute discretion depending on the weather or other local conditions require.

**Day 1** - You will be met at Bariloche airport and driven to Estancia Huechahue (approx. 2 ½ hours.) Depending on arrival time there may be a late lunch and an afternoon ride. A chance to familiarise yourself with the horses, tack etc. Dinner and the night at Estancia Huechahue. (D)

**Day 2** - A full day's ride on Estancia Huechahue with an "asado" lunch. Follow the Huechahue stream through its basalt canyons, riding fast across the water-meadows sending the plovers and ibis screeching, before returning over the top of Chenque Hill, where the Andes rise up behind you and the vastness of Patagonia stretches out before you. Dinner and the night at Estancia Huechahue. (B,L,D)



**Days 3 to 6** - Set out from Huechahue on the route to the Chilean border. The next 4 days will be spent crossing from the open spaces of Argentine Patagonia over the Andes to the thickly forested, steep slopes of Chilean Patagonia. From Huechahue you ride in a westerly direction towards the Andes, with the route taking you across water meadows and rivers, through an Indian reservation, over ridges from where you feel you can see the Atlantic and through magnificent rocky gorges. The first of these 4 days is probably the longest with plenty of long, fast canters up and down hills, to cover the miles to the first campsite but on the whole of this section there will be plenty of chances to gallop across water-meadows and race along soft sandy tracks. The nights are spent in simple camps set up by trout-filled rivers under the spectacular stars of the Southern hemisphere. (B,L,D)

**Day 7** - A short but fast ride towards the base of Lanin Volcano where you say goodbye to your Argentine mount before a brief drive to the border. After completing customs on the Argentine side, cross to the Chilean border post where you bid farewell to your Argentine host and meet your Chilean guides Loth and Pamela. They then drive you a short way to a welcome lunch and to your new horses. A little road work leads you between towering peaks and deep blue lakes to a track twisting its way downhill through the dense forest. Arrive at a small farm, your base for the night, in time for 'onces', the traditional Chilean tea. Time to rest and enjoy the scenery, a sharp contrast to the vast open Argentine plains. Dinner and the night at the farm. (B,L,D)

**Day 8** - Continue riding down through magnificent Southern Beech forests with spectacular views across the Chilean cordillera. Your hosts will be the gentle Chilean huasos rather than the flamboyant Argentine gauchos, the tack and horses likewise are different, though full of vim and vigour. The suitability of these compact Chilean horses to their task is vividly demonstrated as you negotiate the steep western slopes of the Andes, with terrain very different to that of the previous days. Reach the final campsite at picturesque Puente Basas, where Loth and Pamela's families have been farming for generations (B,L,D)

**Day 9** - Breakfast before transferring back to Huechahue by road (about 3 hours). After a late lunch there will be a ride on the estancia before hot showers, dinner and night at Huechahue. (B,L,D)

**Day 10** - Breakfast and a farewell ride at Huechahue before transferring to Bariloche airport. (B)



## Ride Across the Andes - Set departures

31st January to 9th February 2017

Other departures on request for private groups

### Rates depend on group size

12 riders - US\$4365 per person

10 riders - US\$5240 per person

8 riders - US\$6550 per person

(NB - The set date departure will be confirmed for a minimum of 8 riders. Please do not book flights until the ride has been confirmed).

**Please note** that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are quoted in US\$. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the US\$/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay. These rates **supersede** rates quoted in our brochure.

This rate **INCLUDES** all riding, 9 nights twin accommodation, all meals (lunch on the first day to breakfast on the last), local drinks, guides, equipment and also transfers from / to Bariloche airport at set times on the first and last days.

The rate **EXCLUDES** international flights to Buenos Aires or internal flights from there to Bariloche airport, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, tips and any extra nights accommodation, laundry, transfers etc.

**Single accommodation** - Please also note that the rates quoted above assume twin accommodation and if you are booking alone and are NOT prepared to share a twin room / tent with another guest of the same sex then a single supplement of USD 875 will be charged. Please note that these supplements are **not** compulsory for single bookings - they are only charged if you are not prepared to share if requested and if you wish to guarantee a single room / tent.

**Flights and travel information** To get to Estancia Huechahue you will need to fly to Buenos Aires and then to Bariloche with LAN or Aerolineas Argentinas and we will arrange a set transfer from there to the estancia.

British Airways currently have daily flight departures to Buenos Aires, usually leaving London Heathrow at about 21:00 arriving Buenos Aires at about 08:30 the next day. Iberia and the Argentinean airline, Aerolineas Argentinas also have daily flights from London via Madrid to Buenos Aires. Other options are via the continent (eg Air France or Lufthansa) or via the USA.

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Fares start at about £950 per person economy return London to Bariloche although this varies depending on the date required, availability and how long in advance you book. Please call us for more flight information or if you would like a fare quote. We would be happy to book flights for you (our ATOL number for flight sales is 6213).

Collection and return to Bariloche is included in the ride cost - but only one transfer will be arranged so if your flight arrives into Bariloche very late then you may need to pay for a private transfer. Transfers outside set times from / to Bariloche (town or airport) are approximately US\$255 to US\$325 per vehicle each way (NB this varies with exchange rates and also whether or not you require an English speaking driver - please contact us for a quote)

Another travel alternative worth consideration is the surprisingly comfortable overnight bus. The Via Bariloche service leaving Buenos Aires (Retiro bus station) at around 16.00 to Junin de los Andes, passes the gate of Estancia Huechahue where they will drop you on request. With fully reclining beds, meals (including wine/beer/soft drinks), and the opportunity to see the country as you pass through it, this is a good travel option. It is sometimes more reliable than the internal flights (which have been affected by volcanic ash in the past) and the current rate is approximately USD150 each way).

**General visa and health information** (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

**Visas** If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Argentina or Chile for less than 3 months, you do not need to arrange a visa in advance although visa requirements are always subject to change and you should always check up to date requirements before you travel.

**Health** No jabs are required as a condition of entry to Argentina or Chile from the UK and Europe. The Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London recommends that you ensure you are up to date with Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A. If you are not up to date with these you should visit your GP or a travel clinic about 4 weeks before departure.

(Draft 03/04/16)

