



RIDE WORLD WIDE ARGENTINA, ANDESLUNA 2023-2024

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides take place in Rio Negro province in the heart of Patagonia. They are run by husband and wife team Dominik Marty and Tammy Robaina, from their simple homestead and small working cattle farm, ‘El Sapucaí’ which is in the foothills of the Andes, close to the Chubut River and about a 4 hour drive from the well-known town of San Carlos de Bariloche. Tammy, who is Argentine born and raised, first moved to Bariloche 30 years ago to be close to the mountains where she originally worked as a ski instructor. Dominik, who is Swiss by birth, came to Patagonia over 20 years ago to explore by horse and fell in love with the country and its rural way of life. Both are skilled mountain people, knowledgeable and devoted to their horses but also passionate about the area, its history and inhabitants.



Together with their baqueanos (as the gauchos of this region are called) they are experts in the local environment and are a kind, welcoming team with whom to explore the diversity of the area - from the river valleys in the foothills of the Alto Chubut mountains to the traditional “veranadas” (summer grazing pastures), elevated plains, blue glacial lakes and rocky peaks high above. Andesluna offers authentic, good value riding, generous local hospitality and above all time to re-charge, refresh and get back to a simpler way of living.

DATES

7 night “progressive” Alto Chubut Rides explore the Alto Chubut mountains south of Bariloche. These are run from set dates between November and March. Shorter stays based at the El Sapucaí homestead with daily riding, are possible on request between October and April. Set dates are listed below and tailor-made trips for 2 or more can be organised on request. Please contact Ride World Wide to check availability and discuss your plans.

HORSES

You will be riding Tammy's local Creole horses, many of which are homebred for working cattle and all of which are tough, strong and well-adapted to mountain life. They average about 15hh, are sensible, very sure footed, responsive and forward going, so great fun to ride. They are ridden in the local style, responding well to riders' weight, are used to neck reining and go well with relaxed contact with the mouth.

TACK

Traditional Argentine saddles, with thick sheepskin covers, are used. These saddles have evolved to give baqueanos maximum stability and comfort, encouraging a riding position of feet forward, heels down, pushing into the back of the saddle so weight is balanced behind and in front of the centre of gravity, rather than concentrated in a column over one spot, and are remarkably comfortable and secure over rough terrain and long distances (particularly with their thick sheepskin covers!). Saddlebags are provided for personal belongings and pack horses transport luggage between camps.



RIDING

Hours in the saddle vary, but on 'progressive' rides there is normally between about 5 and 7 hours riding each day, with breaks to rest and for lunch. When based at El Sapucaí, riding hours can be tailored to suit. Stays at El Sapucaí and Alto Chubut rides are run for a minimum of 2 and maximum of 8 guests. A lead guide and at least one 'banquero' or assistant on hand to prepare horses each day and to help with the packhorses when moving from place to place. Rides are normally lead by Dominik, an experienced mountain guide who speaks Spanish, English and German and knows the area intimately. On some routes, riders will be asked to get off and lead their horse over rough ground or down (or occasionally up) a steep stretch. You will be asked to wear a hard hat when you ride.

WEIGHT LIMIT

The rider weight limit is 90kg / 14 stone - please contact us if you are close to this to check suitable horses are available. Occasionally, for riding from El Sapucaí, heavier riders can be taken by prior arrangement (usually at a small supplement of USD 20 per day) but please contact us before booking to discuss.

PACE

The riding pace always varies with the going and weather conditions, but generally it is slow to moderate. Due to the terrain, much is at a walk - but the horses walk out well, with plenty of energy, and with some quite steep mountain tracks, rocky riverbeds and narrow paths winding through thick forest to negotiate, it is always interesting. Occasional canters are possible along valley floors and elsewhere where the going allows and the pace can be varied to some extent to suit the abilities of the group.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

All rides are aimed at reasonably experienced, confident riders although when staying at El Sapucaí, riding is very flexible and can be adapted to suit those with less experience if required. To join a 'progressive' ride you must be comfortable and secure in the saddle at a walk, trot and canter and feel relaxed on a well-schooled, but responsive horse. The horses are sensible, but they are quick to respond so suit confident, relaxed riders. You should also be used to riding outside, in an open environment, over varying and sometimes challenging terrain - your horse may need to negotiate obstacles, scramble over rocks and deal with occasional interesting river crossings which require riders to be quiet and confident in the saddle. There may be places where you need to dismount to walk over rough ground, both uphill and down so you need to be comfortable handling a horse from the ground and of getting on and off without help. As with all our rides, it is also important to be fit - both riding fit and with a good level of general fitness and even if you are in good physical shape, if you do not ride regularly at home we recommend concentrated training in the months before you go to get used to the hours in the saddle.

TERRAIN

The Andes in this area are locally referred to as the "Cordillera", originating from the Spanish "cuerda" meaning "cord" or "rope". They are not as high as further north and the surrounding area is diverse with native forests of lenga and ñire (southern beech trees), grassy steppe, crystal clear rivers running down from the mountains, rocky mountain passes and snow-covered volcanic peaks. The valleys existed before the Andes were even formed, and the lakes are of glacial origin dating from the last ice age. Riding routes are interesting and varied combining river crossings with steep climbs, forest, flat bottomed river valleys and rolling 'pampa' in the foothills where you might spot guanaco, red deer, or even an armadillo. Nomadic Tehuelche people lived off the land here for hundreds of years and small settlements along the river valley are still occupied by their descendants.

SAFETY

Rides are lead by an experienced English speaking guide accompanied by at least one local assistant. At least one of the support team will be ECOMED trained for rescues in wilderness areas; a medical kit for both horses and riders, a satellite phone, as well as mobiles, are carried for emergencies.



ACCOMMODATION

The base for these rides is "El Sapucaí", a small farmstead owned by Tammy and Dominik. It is rustic but cosy with three bedrooms in the house, two yurts, and a simple shared bathroom with flush loo and hot shower. There's no electricity (or mobile signal) - candlelight only! For the progressive rides the first and last nights are spent at a comfortable hotel or guesthouse in Bariloche. Two nights are spent at El Sapucaí and other nights are in simple mountain refuges, or villagers houses, or camping. Mountain refuges do not usually have bathroom facilities, and villagers houses tend to have one shared bathroom/loo - which may be outside / separate from the house. Camps use simple 'dome' tents with inflatable mattresses provided (you need your own sleeping bag - or one can be hired with advance notice). Each 3 man tent is usually shared by 2 people and camp is set up for you by the team on arrival. There are no showers or loos in camps - mountain rivers and lakes are used for washing; loos are open air. Meals are cooked by the baqueanos over an open fire. Single rooms are possible in hotels (eg first & last nights of progressive rides) for an extra charge but are not usually possible once away from Bariloche / on the rides.



MEALS

Rides include all meals, which are generally cooked using a traditional wood burning stove that gives food a special flavour. Breakfast is usually bread or toast, butter and jam with scrambled eggs often on the menu and there may also be fruit, yogurt and cereal. Lunch is generally a picnic, carried in your saddle bag - a tupper-ware box with a pasta salad, or rice dish, or sandwiches, muesli bars and fruit. Cake and biscuits are often served for tea, to keep you going after riding, until supper which tends to begin with a simple finger starter, pate and crackers or cheese, then a main course of barbecued meat or fish. Depending on the season, you may be served locally caught rainbow trout, 'brook trout' (fontinalis), or sea trout and there will be chances to enjoy the staple of Patagonian cuisine, the traditional barbecue "Asado al palo" or "Asado al Asador" - delicious lamb or "chivito" (young goat) cooked over glowing embers. The main dish is usually accompanied by salad, potatoes and, of course, excellent Argentine red wine. Vegetables and fruits are fresh, varied and locally produced. Water from the many springs is crystal clear, safe to drink and tastes delicious. Vegetarian, gluten free or other special diets can be catered for but please give prior notice of any dietary requirements - and note there is usually an additional charge of USD 20 per day for a non-standard menu.



WEATHER

Weather systems coming in from the Pacific inevitably hit the Andes and weather patterns are extremely variable. The lower steppe area has marked alpine characteristics of low night-time temperatures and wide temperature variations, with generally dry, windy summers (November to February) and rainy winters (April to September). The chance of rain increases as you climb higher into the Andes. Between October and end March, one can normally expect daytime temperatures within the 15°C to 25°C range and even a little hotter in mid-summer. In spring and autumn, daytime temperatures fluctuate between about 5°C and 20°C. As you are in the mountains you need to be prepared for sudden climate changes at any time - it is possible to have 0°C and a snowstorm one day followed by temperatures edging 30°C the next.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.



EXAMPLE ITINERARIES

Below are example itineraries for the 7 night Alto Chubut Ride and for a 3 night stay at El Sapucaí - although **note** these are only examples of what is planned and day-by-day arrangements may be varied by your guides at their discretion if the weather or other local conditions require.

Alto Chubut Ride - Example itinerary

Day 1 - Own arrangements to arrive Bariloche airport in Argentina. Meet your guide and driven with the group to a small hotel or guesthouse in Bariloche. A full briefing and dinner at a traditional steak restaurant. Night in Bariloche. (D)

Day 2 - An early breakfast before setting off on the drive towards the Pichileufu River area, about 35 kms south from Bariloche. To arrive at Pichileufu you will cross one of the most important ranches in the region "El Condor", which breeds sheep and cattle – you are likely to see large herds of both. Meet the horses, saddle up and set off riding passing between rocky mountains and across the Patagonian steppe. Stop for a picnic lunch by a small outpost before continuing on to camp, set up in the wilderness and free from sounds of the city. Dinner around the camp fire, night in tents. (about 5-6 hours riding). (B,L,D)



Day 3 - After breakfast around the campfire mount up to set off riding, first through gentle hills and large valleys, then climbing a path that is mainly used by local countrymen to move cattle. Arrive at the pass "Paso sin Nombre", about 1,700 meters above sea level where there are some beautiful rock formations and views open onto a large valley enclosed by mountains, the "Alto Chubut". Continue riding until you get to an idyllic spot surrounded by native southern beech forest (lenga). The night is spent at a simple mountain refuge close to an isolated shepherds hut. Dinner and night at the refuge. (6 - 8 hours riding). (B, L,D)

Day 4 - Leave behind the forests and clear streams to descend to the Patagonian Steppe. This area is semi-desert, with native tussock grass "Coiron", berberis bushes "calafate" and some small stunted beech trees (northofagus Antarctica). First passing some solitary lagoons, you rejoin the Chubut River which yesterday was still just a trickle but has now grown to become a respectable mountain stream. The landscape is wild, impressive, with almost no human presence. Camp is set up in this wonderful environment on the shores of the Chubut. Dinner and night in camp (5 - 6 hours riding). (B,L,D)



Day 5 - Breakfast in camp before mounting up to head off again, following the Chubut River valley. There are now more signs of human habitation including deserted corrals, derelict farms and an abandoned gold mine. Further on you might visit the remote homestead of the Miranda family, sheep and cattle farmers who still live a pioneering existence. In the late afternoon finally arrive at El Sapucaí, a small farmstead belonging to your hosts on the shores of the Chubut River. A delicious dinner, perhaps venison or beef from the farm and the night at El Sapucaí. (NB No electricity but a shower with hot water!) (5 - 6 hours riding). (B,L,D)



Day 6 - Breakfast in the cozy farmhouse and set off riding again in the Alto Chubut area, climbing high into the hills with beautiful views of the surrounding mountains. The ride takes you through meadows and forests and across some rocky terrain where you will appreciate the footwork of your nimble criollo horse. After a long climb, reach the lunch spot which, weather permitting, may be on the shores of a small lake encircled by peaks. After a leisurely picnic ride back to El Sapucaí by a different route through southern beech forest and along narrow trails. Dinner & night at El Sapucaí (6 - 8 hours riding). (B,L,D)



Day 7 - The last day riding. Set off following an old track to Escuale Vieja. The views today are typical of Patagonia and help you appreciate the immensity of the area. A picnic lunch by the river and continue to the road head. Here you say farewell to the horses and baqueanos and transfer by private minibus, about 2 hours to Bariloche. Hot showers and a welcome dinner at a local restaurant, before the night at the hotel or guesthouse in Bariloche. (about 5 hours riding). (B, L, D)

Day 8 - Breakfast and transfer to Bariloche airport for onward travel. (B)



El Sapucaí Homestay

Day 1 - Own arrangements to arrive Bariloche in Argentina. You will be met at your hotel and driven south, initially following the well-known Route 40 that links the north and south of Argentina. Then, head through some of the northern Patagonia lake region into the immensity of the steppe and along smaller gravel roads until you finally arrive at “El Sapucaí”, your hosts’ simple farmhouse. Before dinner there should be time for a stroll towards the banks of the Chubut River to meet the horses. Dinner and night El Sapucaí with accommodation in the farmstead or yurts. (D)



Day 2 - Breakfast in the cozy kitchen whilst horses are brought to the corral. Your guide and the banqueros help you saddle up and, once settled, set off riding to a lovely viewpoint in the foothills where there will be a stop for a picnic lunch and perhaps a siesta, taking time to enjoy the immensity of the steppe and to slowly adjust to this new environment. Depending on the mood of the group, you might stay a while or may choose to ride on exploring a little further afield, before returning to El Sapucaí by a different route. Time to relax in a hammock and read or to explore on foot for the rest of the afternoon. Then hot showers, drinks and a delicious dinner of local produce cooked over the fire or on a woodboring stove. Night El Sapucaí. (2 - 4 hours riding) (B,L,D)

Day 3 - A good breakfast to set you up for a more demanding day. Then mount up and head off upstream, riding into the Alto Chubut valley. After about 2 ½ hours, reach an old gold, silver and lead mine where you stop for lunch, perhaps meeting members of the Miranda family, long time inhabitants of the valley and always full of interesting stories and entertaining anecdotes. Or you may take a different route, riding to a remote lake high in the hills before returning to El Sapucaí for dinner and the night. (5 - 6 hours riding) (B,L,D)

Day 4 - Breakfast and the last day’s riding is a chance to explore down river. Leaving the higher mountains behind, ride towards the Patagonia steppe, following the river valley, passing small farms and villages. At about midday arrive at the tar road and after a leisurely picnic, say goodbye to the horses and meet the car that will transfer you to Bariloche for your onward journey. (B,L)



DATES & RATES 2023-2024

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are quoted in USD. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the USD/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay. (Rates valid to April 2024)

El Sapucaí Homestay (4 days / 3 nights, 3 days riding)

Dates on request, September to May

USD 1170 per person

Extra days with riding USD 225 per person

(single supplement, if available, in Yurt USD 105; in Cabin USD 75)

Alto Chubut Ride (8 days / 7 nights, 6 days riding)

13th to 20th November 2023

21st to 28th February 2024

11th to 18th December 2023

4th to 11th March 2024

22nd to 29th January 2024

18th to 25th March 2024

USD 2460 per person (min 2; max 8 riders)

Supplement for single room (available in hotels on 2 nights only) - approx. USD 70 per night

Rates INCLUDE all riding, guiding, back up services and equipment, 3 or 7 nights shared accommodation, meals (dinner first day to lunch last), tea, coffee, wine with dinner, group transfers within itinerary and from and back to Bariloche at set times on first & last day.

Rates **EXCLUDE** flights / travel to and out of Bariloche and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), extra drinks (premium wines, spirits, cokes etc), supplement for non-standard menu, hire of sleeping bag if required, any visa fees, staff tips and any extra nights' accommodation before /after riding itinerary (eg in Bariloche).

Single Supplement Rates are per person and assume accommodation on a shared basis. Single rooms are NOT generally an option (some accommodation is in rooms that are dormitory style). Single rooms may be booked for hotel nights in Bariloche for a supplement of around USD 70 per night.

Please ask for autumn 2024 dates;

Cattle drives & horse round-ups also sometimes available for private groups on request



FLIGHTS AND TRAVEL INFORMATION

The start / end point for these rides is San Carlos de Bariloche in Argentina. The first and last nights of the Alto Chubut Ride are spent in Bariloche so you can arrive any time on day 1; depart any time on day 8. For stays at El Sapucaí you will need to arrive Bariloche the day before 'day 1' / depart the day after 'day 4' of your program. From Buenos Aires there are 4 or 5 flights a day to Bariloche with Aerolineas Argentinas or LATAM (NB most depart from the Domestic Jorge Newbury city airport which is across town from the International Ezeiza airport). Another option is to take an overnight bus from Buenos Aires to Bariloche. These are convenient, safe and comfortable with flat-bed seats and there is an extensive bus network; the journey takes about 18 hours.

British Airways have direct International flights between London and Buenos Aires.

Iberia, LATAM and Aerolineas Argentinas, all fly to Buenos Aires and Santiago via Madrid and you can also fly via Europe (eg Air France or Lufthansa) or via the USA.

Flight costs from the UK will start from about £950 economy return although airfares vary depending on availability and how far in advance you book.

Please contact us for more flight information.

GENERAL VISA & 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 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 inoculations are required as a condition of entry to Argentina from the UK and Europe. The Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London recommends that you ensure you are up to date Tetanus and Hepatitis A. Hepatitis B, Rabies and Typhoid may also be recommended in some circumstances. If you are not up to date with these you should visit your GP or a travel clinic about 4 weeks before departure.

(DRAFT 21/10/2023)

