Argentina & Uruguay

Iguazú, Iberá & Atlantic Wetlands



Scarlet-headed Blackbird by Clayton Burne

Our exploration of northeastern Argentina and neighbouring Uruguay reveals an exceptional range of habitats, from the lush subtropical Atlantic Forest to vast wetlands and windswept coastal lagoons. This diversity translates into an outstanding variety of birdlife, making the region one of the most rewarding in the southern Neotropics.

We begin in the forests of Misiones Province at the spectacular Cataratas del Iguazú (Iguazú Falls), widely regarded as one of the most impressive waterfall systems on Earth. Beyond the drama of the falls themselves, the surrounding Atlantic Forest is a stronghold of biodiversity. Along forest trails, we search for species such as Surucua and Atlantic Black-throated Trogons, Blue Manakin, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow and Spot-billed Toucanet, with both Toco and Red-breasted Toucans regularly encountered. Deeper within the forest, more elusive species such as Short-tailed Antthrush and Southern Antpipit may reward patient effort. Nearby reserves, including Urugua-í Provincial Park, add a different dimension with bamboo-rich habitat supporting specialties such as Black-fronted Piping Guan, Spotted Bamboowren, Bertoni's Antbird and Speckle-breasted Antpitta.

From these forests we travel south to the vast Esteros del Iberá, one of South America's most important wetland systems. This immense mosaic of marshes, lagoons and flooded grasslands supports a remarkable concentration of birdlife. Boat excursions and time spent exploring the surrounding wetlands provide opportunities for species

such as Black-capped Donacobius, Long-tailed Reed Finch and Plumbeous Ibis, while the grasslands hold some of the region's most sought-after birds, including Strange-tailed Tyrant, Bearded Tachuri, Ochre-breasted Pipit and Black-and-white Monjita. Iberá is also rich in wildlife, with good chances of Marsh Deer, Capybara and Yacare Caiman.

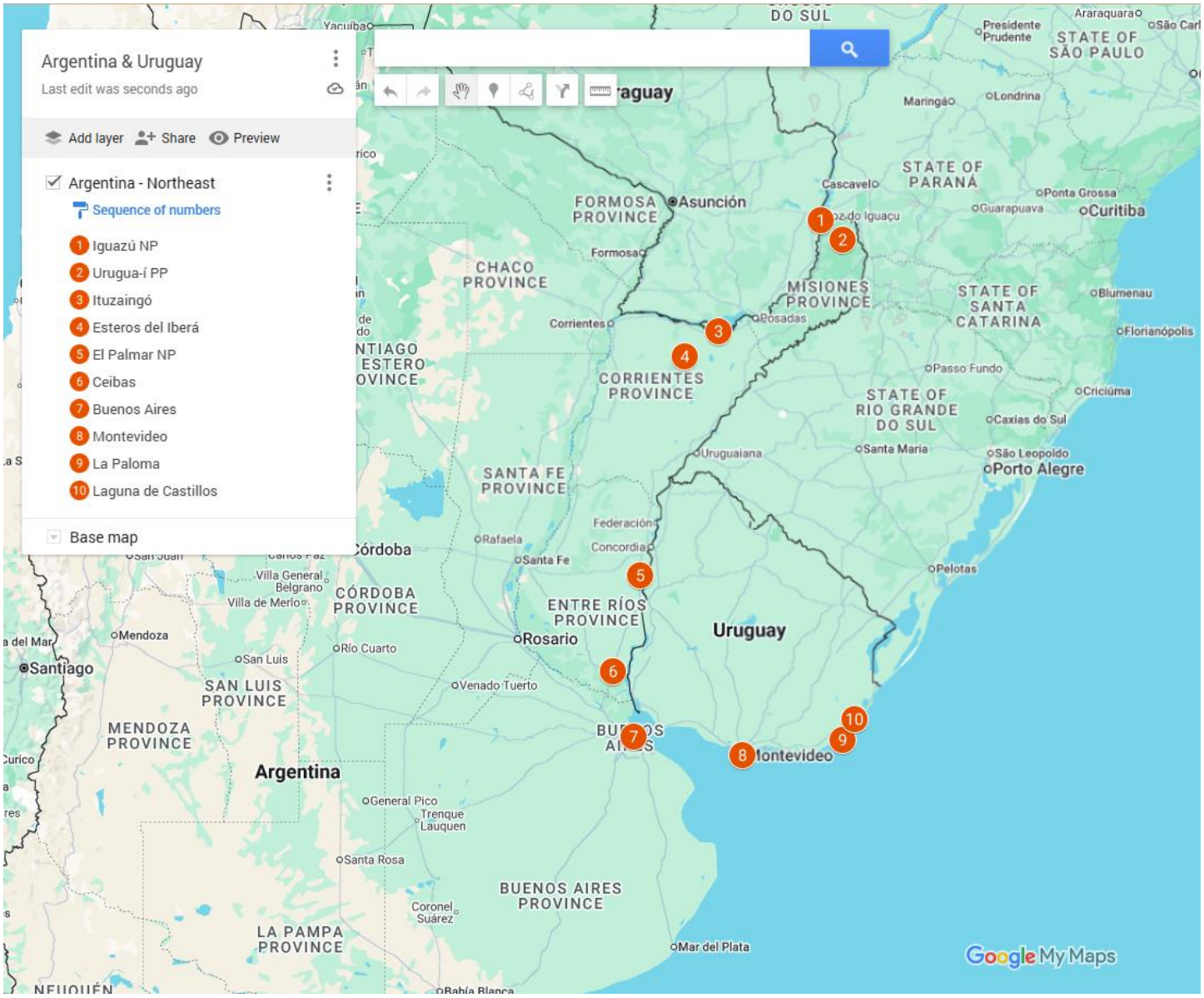
Continuing south, we explore the distinctive savannah and riverine habitats of El Palmar National Park, created to protect the last extensive stands of Yatay Palm. This unique landscape supports a variety of species including Burrowing Owl, White-spotted and Green-barred Woodpeckers, Spix's Spinetail and both Grey and White Monjitas. A key target here is the scarce Glaucous-blue Grosbeak, which occurs in the park's riverine vegetation.

Nearby, the wetlands and thorny woodland around Ceibas provide another highly productive birding area. Here we may encounter species such as Greater Rhea, Savanna Hawk, Brown Cacholote and White-naped Xenopsaris, alongside an impressive array of waterbirds including Maguari Stork, Coscoroba Swan and a variety of ducks. With some luck, we may also find more elusive marsh specialists such as South American Painted-snipe or the highly sought-after reedhaunters.

Our journey concludes across the border in Uruguay, where we explore a series of outstanding coastal wetlands. Lagoons, marshes and grasslands around sites such as Laguna de Rocha, Laguna de Castillos and Bañado del Indio provide excellent birding in a very different setting. Waterfowl are often abundant, with species such as Chilean Flamingo, Black-necked Swan and Rosy-billed Pochard, while marshes hold Wren-like Rushbird, Many-colored Rush Tyrant and Spectacled Tyrant. The surrounding pampas grasslands add Greater Rhea, Long-winged Harrier and the striking Scarlet-headed Blackbird, providing a fitting finale to a tour that showcases some of the richest bird habitats in southern South America.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Puerto Iguazú**
Day 2	**Iguazú National Park**
Day 3	**Day trip to Urugua-í Provincial Park**
Day 4	**Iguazu National Park Ituzaingo**
Days 5 to 7	**Esteros del Iberá**
Day 8	**Ituzaingo to El Palmar National Park**
Day 9	**El Palmar National Park**
Day 10	**El Palmar National Park to Buenos Aires via Ceibas**
Day 11	**Buenos Aires; ferry to Montevideo (Uruguay)**
Day 12	**Montevideo to La Paloma, birding Laguna de Rocha**
Day 13	**Laguna de Castillos & Bañado del Indio**
Day 14	**La Paloma to Montevideo**
Day 15	**Final departure**



Highlights

- Visit Iguazú Falls, one of the New Seven Natural Wonders of the World.
- Experience an exceptional range of easily accessible habitats, from rainforest and savanna to vast wetlands and coastal lagoons.
- Search for iconic South American bird families including rheas, screamers, donacobius, seriemas, ovenbirds and icterids.
- Explore the Iberá Marshes, one of the continent's premier wetland systems.
- Classic Neotropical birding alongside excellent photographic opportunities in varied, scenic landscapes.
- Birding Uruguay, a rarely visited destination offering superb coastal wetlands and pampas species.

Birding sites in detail

Puerto Iguazú. Near our base in Puerto Iguazú, we visit a private garden where hummingbird feeders create a constant blur of movement and colour. At any given moment, several species can be feeding side by side, offering exceptional views at close range.

Regular highlights include Black Jacobin, Planalto Hermit, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Gilded Sapphire and Violet-capped Woodnymph, often joined by Bananaquit and Green-headed Tanager. With so much activity concentrated in one place, this is an ideal introduction to the diversity of the Atlantic Forest.



Swallow-tailed Hummingbird by David Hoddinott

Iguazú National Park. Iguazú National Park protects one of the most important remaining tracts of Interior Atlantic Forest, a rich and highly threatened ecosystem that supports an extraordinary diversity of wildlife. Here, the Iguazú River plunges some 70 metres into a vast, mist-filled gorge, forming a sweeping series of more than 250 waterfalls stretching across nearly two kilometres. The constant roar of water, drifting spray, and lush forest combine to create one of the most dramatic natural settings in South America.



Surucua Trogon by Clayton Burne

A network of walkways allows us to experience the falls from multiple angles, from panoramic views above the cascades to intimate perspectives at water level. We will also take the narrow-gauge train to the famous Devil's Throat, where the sheer volume and force of the water is unforgettable.

Away from the falls, the forest trails reveal a very different spectacle. Mixed flocks move through the canopy, toucans call overhead, and trogons sit quietly at eye level. This is where we focus our efforts, working the trails carefully to build an impressive list of Atlantic Forest specialties.

Key species here include Surucua and Atlantic Black-throated Trogons, Blue Manakin, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow and a colourful array of tanagers and euphonias. Toucans are a regular feature, with both Toco and Green-billed often seen, alongside Spot-billed Toucanet. Other typical species include White-eyed and Ochre-breasted Foliage-gleaners, Southern Antpipit, Spot-backed and Tufted Antshrikes, and Rufous-capped Motmot. With persistence, we will also search for more elusive species such as Solitary Tinamou, the rare Black-billed Scythebill, Buff-bellied Puffbird and Rusty-breasted Nunlet.



Iguazú Falls by Glen Valentine

Urugua-i Provincial Park. Urugua-í offers a different perspective on the Atlantic Forest. Situated at a slightly higher elevation, this reserve protects a mosaic of habitats, including dense bamboo understory that is largely absent around Iguazú. This habitat supports a specialised set of species that we specifically target here.

We spend a full day exploring the reserve, working both riverine forest and bamboo-rich areas. The quieter, less-visited nature of this park often results in excellent birding, with extended views and fewer disturbances.



Black-fronted Piping Guan by Lev Frid

The bamboo stands are particularly productive and hold several key species, including Spotted Bamboowren, Bertoni's Antbird and Ochre-collared Piculet. The surrounding forest adds species such as Surucua Trogon, Blue Manakin and Sibilant Sirystes.

Along the Uruzú River, we will search for more specialised species including Black-fronted Piping Guan, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper and Riverbank Warbler, whilst flocks of Maroon-bellied Parakeet often congregate to drink the afternoon.

One of the major targets here is the rare and localised Greenish Tyrannulet, for which this reserve offers one of the best chances anywhere in its range.

Iguazu to Ituzaingo. Our journey from Iguazú to Ituzaingó takes us through a changing landscape of marshes, grasslands and

lagoons, offering excellent roadside birding throughout the day. We make regular stops at productive areas, taking advantage of seasonal conditions and recent burns that can concentrate species.



Strange-tailed Tyrant by Keith Valentine

One of our main targets along this route is the scarce Ochre-breasted Pipit, which favours short, open grassland and can sometimes be found alongside the more widespread Correndera and Yellowish Pipits. If we are particularly lucky, we may even find a Red-legged Seriema.

If time allows, we will also explore riverine habitat near Posadas, where we have our first opportunity for Golden-winged Cacique, White Woodpecker and the elegant Streamer-tailed Tyrant.

Ituzaingo area. The habitats around Ituzaingó add further diversity, with a mix of grassland, scrub and wetland edges supporting a good variety of species. We spend time working these areas carefully, targeting species that are less likely elsewhere on the tour.

A key species here is the localised Sharp-tailed Grass Tyrant, which can be surprisingly inconspicuous despite its distinctive appearance.



Sharp-tailed Grass Tyrant by Clayton Burne

Esteros del Iberá. The Iberá Marshes are among the largest and most important wetland systems in South America, a vast and largely inaccessible landscape of lagoons, swamps and grasslands that supports an exceptional concentration of wildlife. The sense of space here is striking, with open horizons, abundant water and birdlife in every direction.

We explore a range of habitats, including open lagoons, reedbeds and surrounding grasslands. A boat excursion allows us to access otherwise unreachable areas, offering close views of wetland specialists and excellent photographic opportunities.

This region is a stronghold for the highly sought-after Strange-tailed Tyrant, and we will dedicate the necessary time to locate this unique species. Other highlights from the wetlands include Southern Screamer, Stripe-backed Bittern, Rufous-sided Crake, Black-capped Donacobius and Long-tailed Reed Finch, along with a wide variety of herons and waterfowl.



Black-and-white Monjita by Glen Valentine

The surrounding grasslands add another suite of species, including Bearded Tachuri, Black-and-white Monjita, Ochre-breasted Pipit and Scarlet-headed Blackbird. The diversity of icterids here is particularly impressive, with species such as Yellow-rumped Marshbird, Unicolored Blackbird and Chestnut-capped Blackbird all possible.

In addition to birds, Iberá offers excellent chances to observe mammals and reptiles, including Marsh Deer, Capybara, Central Neotropical River Otter and Yacare Caiman.

El Palmar National Park. El Palmar protects a unique and increasingly rare habitat: the Mesopotamian savannah dominated by Yatay palms. These scattered palms, set against open grassland with patches of woodland and wetland, create a striking and very different landscape from the forests and marshes visited earlier in the tour.



Glaucous-blue Grosbeak by Dušan Brinkhuizen

We explore a variety of habitats within the park, including savannah, gallery forest and small lagoons. This diversity supports a wide range of species, many of which are characteristic of this region.

Typical birds here include Spot-winged Pigeon, Burrowing Owl, Harris's Hawk, White-spotted and Green-barred Woodpeckers, and a selection of colourful passerines such as Blue-and-yellow, Red and Diademed Tanagers.

One of the main targets is the scarce Glaucous-blue Grosbeak, which occurs in small numbers in riverine vegetation. Careful observation is required to separate it from the more common Ultramarine Grosbeak.

Ceibas. The Ceibas area offers a rich mosaic of thorn forest, marshland and open wetlands, resulting in a high diversity of

species and consistently rewarding birding. The combination of dense scrub and extensive water systems makes this one of the more varied birding sites on the tour.



Coscoroba Swans by Glen Valentine

Within the thorny woodland, we search for species such as Scimitar-billed and Narrow-billed Woodcreepers, Brown Cacholote, Lark-like Brushrunner, White-naped Xenopsaris and a variety of spinetails including Chotoy and Spix's.

The surrounding wetlands hold an impressive array of waterbirds, including ducks, herons, ibis and rails. Species such as Coscoroba Swan, Maguari Stork, Rufescent Tiger Heron and Plumbeous Rail are all possible.

Ceibas is also well known for several more localised and sought-after species, and with luck we may encounter South American Painted-snipe, Curve-billed or Straight-billed Reedhaunter, or the elusive Spotted Rail.

Costanera Sur. Located within the heart of Buenos Aires, this 350-hectare reserve offers a surprisingly rich pocket of pampas birding. Despite its urban setting, the reserve feels remarkably wild, with a network of trails winding through grasslands, lagoons, marshes and patches of riverine woodland.

We explore a selection of these habitats on foot, where bird activity is often constant and varied. Waterbirds are particularly prominent, with species such as Coscoroba and Black-necked Swans, along with several coots including White-winged, Red-fronted and Red-gartered, frequently encountered. The surrounding vegetation supports a good mix of passerines, while more conspicuous species such as Monk Parakeet, Picazuro Pigeon and Grey-necked Wood Rail are regular features.



Narrow-billed Woodcreeper by Clayton Burne

Among the highlights are Masked Gnatcatcher, Golden-billed Saltator and Yellow-billed Cardinal, while careful searching

may reveal more elusive species such as Spot-flanked Gallinule, Masked Duck and Plumbeous Rail.

The reserve also supports a several mammals, and during a relaxed walk we may encounter Coypu (Nutria) or Brazilian Guinea Pig.



Spectacled Tyrant by Glen Valentine

Montevideo to La Paloma. Travelling east along Uruguay's Atlantic coast, we pass through a patchwork of farmland, coastal grasslands and wetlands. While seemingly understated at first glance, this region can be surprisingly productive, particularly where seasonal flooding concentrates birds.

As we approach the coast, we begin to explore estuaries, sandy shorelines and coastal lagoons, where one of our key targets is the range-restricted Olrog's Gull. This striking species is closely tied to coastal habitats and, with luck, we may encounter it feeding along tidal flats or resting on sandbanks.

Roadside wetlands often hold a variety of waterfowl, including Black-necked Swan, Rosy-billed Pochard and Brazilian Teal, while fences and open fields support species such as American Kestrel, Chimango Caracara and White-browed Meadowlark.



Olrog's Gull by Keith Valentine

The surrounding grasslands host typical pampas species, including Southern Yellowthroat, Grassland Sparrow and Scarlet-headed Blackbird, while sandy coastal habitats may produce Wren-like Rushbird and Burrowing Owl.

Laguna de Rocha. Laguna de Rocha is one of Uruguay's most important coastal wetlands, where a large brackish lagoon meets the Atlantic Ocean behind a barrier of dunes and sandy scrub. The mix of open water, marsh and grassland creates excellent conditions for a wide range of species.

Large congregations of waterfowl are often present, with Chilean Flamingo, Coscoroba Swan, Southern Screamer and Black-necked Swan among the more conspicuous species.

The surrounding marshes support birds such as Many-colored Rush Tyrant and Spectacled Tyrant, while adjacent grasslands can produce Greater Rhea, Long-winged Harrier and Scarlet-headed Blackbird.

Laguna de Castillos. This extensive freshwater lagoon and its surrounding marshes provide another productive wetland system along the coast. Reedbeds, shallow pools and flooded grasslands create ideal habitat for a wide variety of species.



Greater Rhea by David Hoddinott

Typical sightings include Limpkin, Cocoi Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron and White-faced Ibis, while the open water may hold Brazilian Teal and Rosy-billed Pochard.



Chilean Flamingo by Dušan Brinkhuizen

The marsh edges are particularly good for more secretive species such as Plumbeous Rail and Spot-flanked Gallinule, while raptors including Snail Kite and Long-winged Harrier are frequently seen hunting over the wetlands.

Bañado del Indio. Bañado del Indio is a classic pampas marshland, with expansive flooded grasslands and reedbeds supporting a rich concentration of birdlife. These wetlands can be extremely productive, often holding large numbers of ibis, herons and waterfowl. Common species include White-faced and Bare-faced Ibis, along with a variety of ducks such as Brazilian and Silver Teal. The dense vegetation also supports more specialised birds, including Wren-like Rushbird, Many-colored Rush Tyrant and Spectacled Tyrant.

Raptors are a regular feature here, with Snail Kite and Long-winged Harrier frequently seen quartering low over the marshes. With a mix of open water, marsh and grassland, this final stretch of the tour offers a fittingly diverse conclusion.



Rufous Hornero by Bobby Wilcox

Among the more familiar yet iconic species is the Rufous Hornero, Argentina's national bird. This conspicuous furnariid is frequently seen in open areas, often foraging on the ground or perched on fence posts and low vegetation. Its distinctive oven-shaped mud nest, typically placed on branches, poles or buildings, is one of the most recognisable bird structures in South America. While constructed for breeding, these nests are often reused as roosting shelters outside the breeding season and are sometimes taken over by other species.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Comfortable. Suitable for most birding & wildlife interest levels.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Many species offer good viewing in relatively open conditions, though some skulkers, reedbed species and low-density targets require patience.
Accommodation		Comfortable throughout.
Walking / Trails		Moderate walking, mostly on flat terrain with variable substrate. Includes some forest trails.
Vehicles / Roads		Several drives, including some longer journeys. Roads are mostly sealed between towns, with dirt roads in more remote areas. A ferry crossing is included, but the vessel is enclosed with no open deck for sea birding.
Photography		Good to very good. Some species may be distant, strong light can be challenging at times. Excellent opportunities at hummingbird feeders & in open wetland habitats.
Annoyances		Variable weather conditions. Mosquitoes are present in some areas, particularly wetlands, though typically in low numbers.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 15;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- To ensure your comfort and that of your companions, please limit yourself to one medium-sized suitcase or duffel bag (20 kg / 44 lb) and one carry-on bag, as space in the vehicles is limited.
- Conditions vary across the tour, from cool mornings and evenings to warm and often humid daytime temperatures in the subtropical regions. Rain is possible throughout, particularly in forested areas, where brief showers are common but seldom disruptive.
- In the wetlands and savannah regions, conditions can feel hot and exposed, with limited shade available during much of the day. Along the coast, temperatures may be cooler, though strong onshore winds can make conditions feel significantly colder.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour begins with a welcome dinner in Puerto Iguazú, Argentina, on the evening of Day 1 and concludes in Montevideo, Uruguay, after breakfast on Day 15.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Cataratas del Iguazú International Airport, Puerto Iguazú (IATA: IGR), is typically accessed via Buenos Aires.

Carrasco/General Cesáreo L. Berisso International Airport, Montevideo (IATA: MVD), is well connected to major South and Central American hubs including Buenos Aires, Bogotá, Panama City, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, Lima and São Paulo.

Please note that Buenos Aires is served by two main airports:

1. **Ministro Pistarini International Airport (EZE)** – the primary international gateway
2. **Aeroparque Jorge Newbery (AEP)** – handling most domestic and regional flights

These airports are located in different parts of the city, and the transfer between them typically takes 1 to 1.5 hours, depending on traffic. It is therefore important to confirm the correct airport codes with your travel agent to ensure smooth connections between flights.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.