# Argentina

## Northeast: Iguazú & Ibera (Relaxed)



**Green-headed Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

*Our relaxed tour of northeastern Argentina focusses predominantly on the province of Misiones. Here we will visit one of the most spectacular natural wonders of the world, the gargantuan Cataratas del Iguazú (Iguazú Falls)! The beautiful Atlantic forests in the area still hold specials like Black-fronted Piping Guan, Araucaria Tit-Spinetail and various attractive parrots, toucans, manakins and tanagers. We then move across to the extensive Esteros del Iberá for some remarkable wetland birding at one of the largest marshland ecosystems in the country. Seedeaters are among the most special and well represented families here and headline species include the recently described Iberá Seedeater and others such as Marsh, Chestnut and Dark-throated while additional specials such as Strange-tailed Tyrant, Ochre-breasted Pipit and Black-and-white Monjita are highly localised denizens of this wetland. Our tour concludes with visits to El Palmar National Park and Ceibas where we will be on the careful lookout for the scarce Glaucous-blue Grosbeak, South American Painted-snipe and Ash-colored Cuckoo.*

# *Itinerary & Map*

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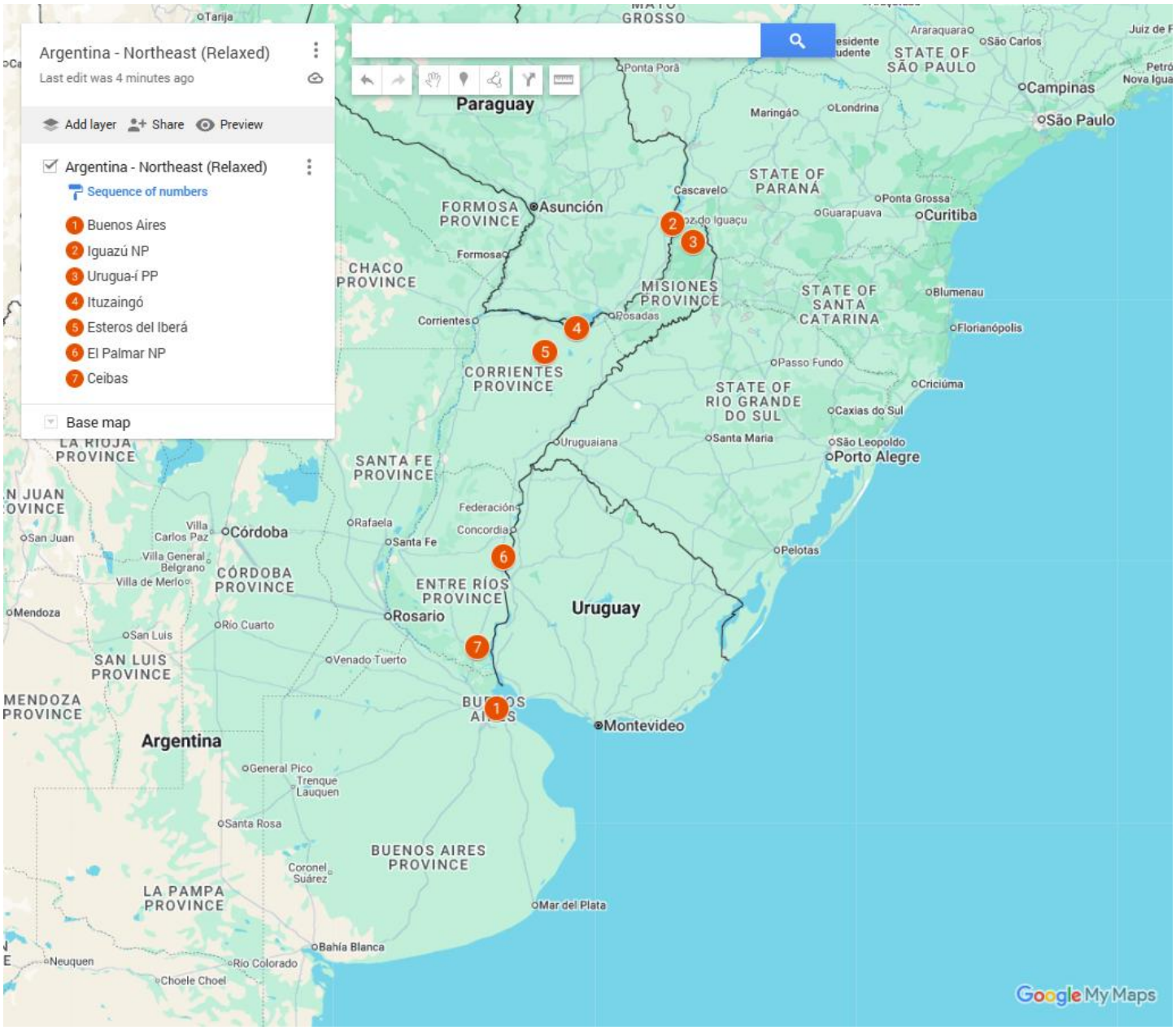
| **Day 1** | **Arrival in Buenos Aires** |
| **Day 2** | **Costanera Sur, flight to Puerto Iguazú** |
| **Days 3 & 4** | **Iguazú National Park** |
| **Day 5** | **Day trip to Urugua-í Provincial Park** |
| **Day 6** | **Puerto Iguazú to Ituzaingo** |
| **Days 7 to 9** | **Esteros del Iberá** |
| **Day 10** | **Ituzaingo to El Palmar National Park** |
| **Day 11** | **El Palmar National Park** |
| **Day 12** | **El Palmar National Park to Buenos Aires via Ceibas** |
| **Day 13** | **Final departure** |



## *Birding sites in detail*



Surucua Trogon by Clayton Burne

**Puerto Iguazú.** Near our base in Puerto Iguazú we will take time to visit a private house where hummingbird feeders normally attract at least seven species of these flying jewels at any given moment! Black Jacobin, Planalto Hermit, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Gilded Sapphire and Violet-capped Woodnymph being among the most desired but also often joined by Bananaquit and Green-headed Tanager.

**Iguazú National Park.** Iguazú National Park protects the vast majority of one of the most important natural forests south of the Amazon: the Interior Atlantic Forest, hosting dozens of unique, often rare, orchids, small primates, bats and birds - many of which are also endemic. Within the park, the Iguazú River plummets 70 meters into a stunning canyon below, in a curtain of cascades spanning more than 250 individual waterfalls and an impressive 2 kilometres! We have itme to enjoy both the falls and the forest within the park to their fullest, by strolling a good selection of the park's myriad of trails and walkways, and by paying a visit to several spectacularly perched lookouts along the way.

The walkways have been built at several different levels, allowing visitors a chance to see the falls from both above and below. A narrow-gauge train also allows visitors to access several different areas, most notably the most spectacular fall of them all – the Devil's Throat, which we will certainly pay a visit to at some point. Along the forest trails on the other hand, a myriad of colourful birds living in Iguazú will be the primary focus of our attention. These including the often confiding Surucua and Atlantic Black-throated Trogons, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Blue Manakin, five species of euphonia, Black-goggled and Green-headed Tanagers, White-eyed and Ochre-breasted Foliage Gleaners, Green-billed and Toco Toucans, Spot-billed Toucanets, Southern Antpipit, Spot-backed and Tufted Antshrikes, Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Short-tailed Antthrush and Rufous-capped Motmot - all of which are all possible.



Black-fronted Piping Guan by Lev Frid

**Urugua-i Provincial Park.** This provincial reserve was created to protect an area of roughly 60 000 hectares of the Misiones Hilly Forest and sits around 600 meters above sea level. This makes it unique for the area, as most of the province's forests are found at lower altitudes. In addition, this particular ecosystem has a very dense understory of bamboo, which proves highly attractive for a good number of species that we

won't be able to see around Iguazú. We will, therefore, spend some time here, exploring the reserve's different habitats.



**Iguazú Falls by Glen Valentine**

The riverine forest along the Urugua-í River is excellent for birding, with such species as the sought-after Black-fronted Piping Guan, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper and Riverbank Warbler. The bamboo stocks host Spotted Bamboowren, Dusky-tailed and Bertoni's Antbirds, Surucua Trogon, Squirrel Cuckoo, White-eyed and Maroon-bellied Parakeets, Ochre-collared Piculet, Sibilant Syristes, Blue Manakin, Black-tailed Tityra, Chestnut-headed, Swallow and Guira Tanagers, Chestnut-vented Conebill, Red-crowned Ant Tanager and Blackish-blue Seedeater. Green-chinned Euphonia is also possible as is Black Hawk-Eagle.

**Puerto Iguazú to Ituzaingo.** Roadside birding en route will be rewarding as we cross a good series of marshes, as well as grasslands and lagoons. We will check suitable habitat (short grazed or recently burnt fields) along the way for Ochre-breasted Pipit which is sometimes found amongst the commoner Correndera and Yellowish Pipits.

Should time permit, we will make a stop near some riverine habitat just outside of Posadas where we will have our first chance for the uncommon Glaucous-blue Grosbeak. The habitat also harbours other quality species such as Dark-billed Cuckoo, Golden-winged Cacique, White Woodpecker and Streamer-tailed Tyrant.



**Bertoni's Antbird by Keith Valentine**

**Esteros del Iberá.** The Iberá Marshes are amongst the most extensive wetlands in Argentina, with some areas here virtually inaccessible due to a lack of good roads, thereby creating a naturally protected sanctuary for wildlife. The region is also home to a wide array of waterfowl, with its swamps, open water lagoons and



**Strange-tailed Tyrant by Keith Valentine**

woodlands being a birder's paradise! The Ibera marshes remain one of South America's last strongholds for Strange-tailed Tyrant, a species we will dedicate as much time as is necessary to find.

We have time to explore the myriad of wetlands and grasslands looking for some of Argentina's most sought-after species. On one morning, we will take a boat tour of the lagoons to search for Stripe-backed Bittern, Rufous-sided Crake, Black-capped Donacobius, Long-tailed Reed Finch, Yellow-headed Caracara and up to eight species of heron, to name just a few possibilities! We have good opportunities to view mammals including the rare Marsh Deer, Capybara and Southern River Otter, as well as a few reptiles such as Spectacled Caiman and Yellow Anaconda.

The local grasslands can also produce some special birds, with good chances for Strange-tailed Tyrant, Black-and-white Monjita, Ochre-breasted Pipit, Bearded Tachuri, Lesser Grass Finch and widespread Scarlet-headed Blackbird. In fact, there are many *icterids* to be seen during our time in Ibera, with such delights as Brown-and-yellow and Yellow-rumped Marshbirds as well as Unicoloured, Yellow-winged and Chestnut-capped Blackbirds. Seedeaters will also feature high on our list of target families, with a host of possibilities including the recently described, endemic Ibera Seedeater, rare Marsh, Tawny-bellied, Dark-throated, Rufous-rumped, Rusty-collared, Double-collared, Pearly-bellied and Chestnut Seedeaters all up for grabs. Aside



**Ibera Seedeater by Glen Valentine**



**Glaucous-blue Grosbeak by Keith Valentine**

from the targeted species, we can look forward to finding a number of other species with a somewhat wider distribution such as Spotted Nothura, Red-winged Tinamou, Grey-necked Wood Rail, Limpkin, Jabiru, Least Bittern, Long-winged Harrier, Plumbeous Ibis, Upland Sandpiper, Campo Flicker, Firewood-gatherer, Crested Doradito, Black-backed Water-Tyrant, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Yellow-browed Tyrant, Crested and Green-backed Becards, Purplish Jay, Orange-headed and Hooded Tanagers and Yellow-billed Cardinal.

We will also spend some time birding quality habitat on the outskirts of Ituzaingo which hold a good variety of species including the rather uncommon Sharp-tailed Grass Tyrant. Another of the area's most special species only appears after dark and is undoubtedly one of the strangest nightjars on the planet – the little known, aberrant Sickle-winged Nightjar. This is a particularly good area to search for this odd-looking species, the male of which completely lacks secondaries giving it an extremely distinctive wing shape in flight.

**El Palmar National Park.** This is a small but very diverse reserve that was created primarily to protect this relict habitat, Mesopotamia Savannah. This shelters the last pure stocks of Yatay, a palm that used to cover a vast area in the lowlands of the country's northeast. Besides the savannah, there are some small lagoons and a nice gallery forest on the coast of the Uruguay River. Here we can expect to see birds such as Spot-winged Pigeon, Harris's Hawk, Burrowing Owl, White-spotted and Green-barred Woodpeckers, Spix's (Chicli) Spinetail, both Grey and White Monjitas, Tawny-headed Swallow, Blue-and-yellow, Red and Diademed Tanagers and Green-winged Saltator.

Arguably the area's most special species is the scarce Glaucous-blue Grosbeak which occurs in small numbers in the reserve's riverine vegetation and during the day we will make a concerted effort to find this special species. Ultramarine Grosbeak is however the common species in the area and so care must be taken when separating the two species.



**Scarlet-headed Blackbird by Clayton Burne**

**Ceibas.** Located across the Paraná River in the Province of Entre Ríos, this park's abundance of birds makes it particularly enjoyable. Its dense thorny forests and marshlands are home to an incredible number of species including Greater Rhea, Red-winged Tinamou, Savanna Hawk, Ash-coloured Cuckoo, Checkered and



**South American Painted-snipe by Keith Valentine**

White Woodpeckers, Scimitar-billed and Narrow-billed Woodcreepers, Brown Cacholote, Lark-like Brushrunner, White-naped Xenopsaris, Short-billed Canastero, Rufous-capped Antshrike, Stripe-crowned, Chotoy and Spix's Spinetails, Little Thornbird and Tufted Tit-Spinetail.

Time will also be spent birding the extensive wetlands, ponds, channels, and pans which hold a plethora of water birds. Common species include a variety of waterfowl, herons and egrets such as White-faced, Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Coscoroba Swan, Brazilian, Silver and Ringed Teals, Rosy-billed Pochard, Maguari Stork, Bare-faced Ibis, Rufescent Tiger Heron, Plumbeous Rail, and Southern Screamer while adjacent waterside vegetation and thickets often hold Black-capped Warbling Finch, Sooty Tyrannulet, Spectacled Tyrant, Masked Gnatcatcher, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, Freckle-breasted Thornbird, Golden-billed Saltator and Red-crested and Yellow-billed Cardinals. We also have a chance of locating a few rarer species and Ceibas is well known as a good site to find uncommon and highly desirable birds like South American Painted-snipe, Curve-billed and Straight-billed Reedhaunter and Spotted Rail.

## *Tour Grading & Key*

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| **Overall Ease** | ■ ■ ■ | Comfortable. Suitable for most birding / wildlife interest levels. |
| **Birding Ease** | ■ ■ ■ | Moderate. Most species provide decent visuals in open conditions. Some forest birding which is more difficult to obtain quality visuals. |
| **Accommodation** | ■ ■ ■ | Comfortable. |
| **Walking / Trails** | ■ ■ ■ | Average walking, mostly on flat ground with variable substrate. Some internal forest trails. |
| **Vehicles / Roads** | ■ ■ ■ | Several drives, one long. Mostly sealed roads between towns, changing to dirt in remoter areas. |
| **Photography** | ■ ■ ■ | Good to good+. Some species distant, bright light can be challenging. Hummingbird feeders at some sites. |
| **Annoyances** | ■ ■ ■ | Temperatures vary from hot & humid to cool. Some rain to be expected. |

# *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 13;
- 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.**

Our Relaxed series of tours are designed to focus on having an enjoyable holiday with a bird and wildlife focus. Where possible; we have reduced or removed long drives, single night stays and poor/rustic accommodation. We have also sought to reduce or remove difficult hikes, narrow/muddy trails and otherwise oppressive environmental conditions. Early starts and night birding are mostly optional, and we will not spend much time searching for difficult and/or skulking species. These tours are not suitable for hardcore birders and listers, or dedicated photographers.

- 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.

# *Arrival and Departure Details*

Day 1 of the tour is set aside as an arrival day into Buenos Aires, and you may thus arrive at any time you wish. The tour will conclude in Buenos Aires after breakfast on day 13.

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.

Ministro Pistarini International Airport, Buenos Aires (IATA: EZE) is the main port of entry for international flights into Argentina and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines.

It is important to note that there are two major airports in Buenos Aires;

1) Ministro Pistarini International Airport (IATA: EZE) and;
2) Buenos Aires – Aeroparque, also known as Jorge Newberry (IATA: AEP) which handles domestic flights.

Both the international and domestic airports cater for internal flights within Argentina. These airports are separate, and the drive between them usually takes between 1 and 1½ hours. It is, therefore, essential that you confirm the IATA airport codes with your travel agent to be sure which airport your flights arrive at and depart from.

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.**