



Patagonia Safari

Weight limit: 95kg

Nearest airport: Chapelco Airport (CPC) in San Martín de los Andes.

6 days / 6 nights / 5 days riding

Discover the magic of Patagonia on this seven-day horseback riding adventure through Argentina's wild and remote Río Quillén Valley. Ride alongside expert guides and local baqueanos through ancient araucaria forests, across crystalline rivers, and up to volcanic summits with breathtaking views of the Andes. Each night, unwind in cozy bell tents with hearty Argentine meals cooked over an open fire. This journey blends adventure with comfort—think glamping under the stars, lakeside lunches, and the chance to truly disconnect from the modern world. With Criollo horses, comfortable mountain saddles, and fully equipped camps, this is an unforgettable way to experience the raw beauty and spirit of Patagonia on horseback.



The Riding

The riding on this safari is slow-paced but technically demanding, making it ideal for experienced riders who are confident in the saddle over long hours and varied terrain. While there is **no cantering on this trail**—due to the steep slopes, rocky paths, river crossings, and dense forest tracks—the ride is far from easy. Each day brings new challenges, from navigating narrow mountain trails to ascending high-altitude ridgelines with sweeping views of the Andes. Sure-footed Criollo and mestizo horses are well-suited to the terrain, and comfortable mountain saddles ensure a secure ride. This journey rewards riders with unforgettable scenery and a deep connection to the Patagonian wilderness, but it requires solid riding skills, a good level of fitness, and a love for true backcountry adventure. On most days, the riding averages between 3–6 hours per day, depending on terrain and weather conditions.

Guides & Groups sizes

The group size is between 6 and 12 riders. You'll be led by a team of seasoned professionals who bring both technical expertise and deep local knowledge to the journey. Each ride is accompanied by a **main guide** and a **local baqueano**—skilled horsemen native to the region. The baqueanos are invaluable for their intimate understanding of the terrain, weather patterns, and cultural heritage of Patagonia. Together, they ensure a safe, enriching, and authentic experience, guiding riders through the diverse landscapes of the Río Quillén Valley.

Horses & Tack

There are around 40 riding horses, between around 15-16hh predominantly Criollo and mestizo breeds, renowned for their endurance, sure-footedness, and calm temperament. Criollo horses, native to South America, have adapted over centuries to the region's rugged landscapes and variable climates. Their compact and muscular build, coupled with a resilient nature, makes them ideal companions for long-distance trail riding. These horses are accustomed to traversing steep ascents, rocky paths, and river crossings, ensuring a reliable and comfortable ride throughout the expedition.



Accommodation and Dining

You'll spend the first night in a local hotel in San Martin de los Andes before beginning the trail the following day. While on the trail you stay in three different wilderness campsites in spacious, fully equipped bell tents. These glamping-style tents offer proper beds and bedding (all provided) and are complemented by communal dining areas where hearty meals are shared. While the campsites are rustic, they are thoughtfully arranged to ensure a comfortable experience, with hot showers and bathroom facilities.

Dining is a highlight of the journey, featuring traditional Argentine cuisine prepared over open fires. Expect to enjoy dishes like asado (barbecue), freshly baked bread, and locally sourced produce. Meals are hearty and satisfying, reflecting the region's culinary heritage. Beverages, including wine and other alcoholic drinks, are included during your stay, enhancing the communal dining experience under the Patagonian sky.

Please note that while the campsites do not offer Wi-Fi, this disconnection is intentional, allowing you to fully engage with the natural surroundings and your fellow riders. Charging facilities for mobile devices are available at certain campsites, but it's recommended to bring a

power bank to ensure your devices remain charged throughout the journey if that is important to you.

Itinerary

Day 1

Guests arrive in San Martín de los Andes and check into the hotel. In the evening, everyone gathers for a welcome dinner—an opportunity to get to know the rest of the group and hear about the adventure ahead. After dinner, it's time to rest and prepare for the days to come.

Day 2

After breakfast, a transfer takes the group to Río Quillén (a 2.5 hour drive). Upon arrival at the estancia's outpost, known as the "Puesto," guests are welcomed and served lunch. The afternoon begins with meeting the horses and saddle fittings to ensure everyone is comfortable before setting off on their first ride. The journey to Mallín Escondido is a gentle introduction to the terrain. Once at camp, guests enjoy an authentic Argentinian meal cooked over an open fire before turning in for the night. The riding time for the day is approximately three hours.

Day 3

Following breakfast at camp, the group sets out on a scenic ride descending the southern slope of the valley. Riders are treated to panoramic views of the Rucachoroi Ridge as they make their way down to the Quillén River, which they cross to reach the north bank. Lunch is served riverside, with time for a refreshing dip in the water if desired. The journey continues up the north slope of the valley, passing through breathtaking natural scenery. The day ends at Voladero Camp with dinner and well-earned rest. The riding time is about four hours.

Day 4

After breakfast, the group prepares for a longer day in the saddle. The ride begins with a gradual ascent toward Mallín del Picudo, where lunch is enjoyed amid beautiful surroundings. In the afternoon, the route winds through towering araucaria forests before descending the steep slopes of Loma de los Chivos. This descent offers spectacular views of the Lanín Volcano and Quillén Lake. The day's journey concludes at Malalco, the main campsite, where guests are rewarded with a hot shower and a hearty dinner. Riding time totals approximately six hours.

Day 5

This day is designed for rest and rejuvenation. After a relaxed breakfast, the group rides a short distance to the lake dock. From there, a boat transports them across the water to Lumillas Beach, where a lunch is prepared on open fires. The afternoon is spent enjoying the peaceful lakeside setting, with optional fishing for those interested. Later, the group returns by boat and then by horseback to the Malalco camp. The riding time for the day is about two hours.

Day 6

The final full day of riding aims for the highest peak in the area, reaching over 2,320 meters above sea level. The ride begins early, ascending quickly through changing landscapes—from dense reed forests to ancient araucarias, and eventually above the tree line. The destination is a series of lagoons believed by locals to lie within an ancient volcanic crater. After lunch at the lagoons, those who wish can hike the last stretch to the summit, where the view spans seven surrounding volcanoes and a stunning panorama of the Andes. The group then retraces their route back to Malalco. The day's net riding time is around six hours.

Day 7

The journey concludes with a final breakfast at the Malalco glamping site. After packing up, a truck arrives to transfer the group to Chapelco airport for their onward travels, marking the end of an unforgettable Patagonian adventure.

Price includes

1 nights accommodation in hotel and 5 nights in equipped tents (shared bathrooms), all meals from breakfast on day 2 to breakfast on day 7, beverages including wine and alcoholic drinks, 2-6 hrs riding on 5 days, transport of personal belongings between camps, guide and local baqueano, VHF communication while on the trail, transfers from the hotel to the start of ride on day 2 and return from the end of the ride to San Martin de los Andes.

Not included

Flights, airport transfers to / from San Martin de los Andes, dinner in San Martin de los Andes on first night, return transport between San Martin de los Andes and the base if you need to leave earlier, gratuities

Flights & Airport transfers

To reach the starting point of the ride, you'll need to fly into **Chapelco Airport (CPC) in San Martín de los Andes**.

International flights arrive at Ezeiza International Airport (EZE) in Buenos Aires. From there,

you'll need to transfer to Jorge Newbery Airport (AEP) for your domestic flight to San Martín de los Andes. The fastest way to get between the two airports is by taxi, but you can also take a shuttle with [Manuel Tienda León](#), which takes around 1 hour and 10 minutes. Traffic in Buenos Aires can be terrible, so we recommend allowing at least 3 hours for the transfer between airports.



What to bring

We recommend wearing your riding boots when travelling and carrying one set of riding clothing and your helmet in your hand luggage, so should your luggage not make it to the destination you'll still be able to ride.

- Riding helmet (not compulsory and not available to borrow so bring your own if you want to wear one)
- Riding boots designed for riding and walking
- Chaps
- Hat or beret
- Buff/bandana (horses can kick up a lot of dust during the rides).
- Sunscreen
- Warm clothes as it can get chilly
- Swimwear
- At least 2 pairs of riding trousers – jodhpurs/breeches/riding tights
- Long sleeved shirts
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Water bottle
- Mobile phone
- Torch
- Portable/solar charger
- Cycling shorts/padded underwear/seat saver if not used to long days in the saddle

There are no towns nearby, so anything that you consider to be essential, you must bring with you.

Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip.

Country specific information can also be found at National Travel Health Network and Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>.

Travel documents

For entry requirements to Argentina for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/argentina/entry-requirements>

For any other nationalities, please contact your local embassy to check entry requirements. Having the correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.

Currency & Tipping

The local currency in Argentina is the Argentine Peso. US Dollars are also widely accepted. Your holiday is fully inclusive so we recommend not bringing too much local currency.

Tipping your guide is at your discretion.



Riding declaration

"I am confident and in control at trot and canter out in the open and over uneven ground. I'm able to mount and dismount unaided and have a good level of current riding fitness. I do not suffer from any illness or disability that could prejudice my safety or that of others."

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms

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Holidays are confirmed with a 20% non-refundable deposit. The full balance is due 56 days before the start date of your holiday.

If you cancel your booking less than 56 days before the start date of your trail we are entitled to receive full payment, less refunds as follows:

42 days or more before booking date - 50% 30 days or more - 30%

less than 30 days - nil

Insurance

All saddletravel.com customers are required to take out appropriate travel insurance that covers horse riding and holiday cancellation. Proof of insurance details will be required during the booking process.

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