



*Cosmopolitan Adventure Tours*

*Creating Tours since 1965*

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## *Esteros del Ibera*

Argentina's North East Major Unsung Attraction

Escorted by Rea Franjetic

May 18-31, 2012 in one of the most vital wildlife marshlands in the world.  
Add a one week extension to Uruguay

*A tour with a purpose*

Our stay will benefit conservation projects and includes a visit to a rural school with much need of help.



**Iberá is an American Serengeti**— the variety of species and the sheer numbers of birds, mammals, and reptiles is awesome. For these reasons, it has attracted the attention of international conservationists such as former Esprit clothing magnate Douglas Tompkins, who has purchased several estancias to help preserve their natural wealth.

**Iberá** is a wonderland of biodiversity. Scattered open-water lagoons lie within an endless horizon of marshland grasses, aquatic plants, and embalsados (“floating islands”), which some ecologists have likened to tropical peat bogs. Even relatively large trees like the ceibo and laurel flourish here. Black caimans bask in the sun while busy capybaras feed around them. Other mammals include the beautiful orange-colored marsh deer, howler monkeys, the rare maned wolf, coypu, otters and several species of bat.

- 350 different species of birds represented here.
- Ideal for photographic safaris, walks, canoeing, horseback riding in a most wide-ranging natural setting of jungles, riversides and lagoons
- Visit the *Jesuit Missions*, the UNESCO has declared this place a World Cultural and Historical Heritage Site. Miraculously, a large part of the original place has still been conserved and meticulously restored.

- **Lodging:**

*Rincon del Socorro* is a small, refined eco-orientated estancia which uses the former homestead to host visitors. It is an ideal place to enjoy the nature, to relax and see a very different part of Argentina. Meals are predominantly prepared with organic fruit and vegetables, most from the kitchen garden. Meat is all free-range.

*Estancia Santa Cecilia* Built in 1906 in English Tudor-style the Estancia has pretty gardens and it feels as though you have stepped back in time. The estancia is an ideal place to relax, enjoy some horse rides, visit the Yerba mate plantations and a small chapel which keeps two original Jesuit relics.

*Tacuapi Lodge* is absolutely fabulous, something out of Gilligan's Island.

**Iguazu Falls:** A wonder which can be visited again and again, always changing with the season.

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*Members of the Intl. Ecotourism Society since 1998*

*2011 Best of Larkspur Award in the Travel Agencies category by the US Commerce Association (USCA).*

## Day by Day Itinerary

May 18, 2012      Leave the US for Buenos Aires

May 19      Buenos Aires

We will be met at the airport for our transfer to our boutique hotel located in trendy Soho, right in the middle of all the lovely restaurants and shops.

*Hotel Nuss*, one night including breakfast.

*Optional Tango show in the evening.*



May 20      Buenos Aires – Corrientes

An early morning start to catch our short flight to Corrientes where our estancia with its wildlife paradise awaits.

*Estancia el Socorro*. Three nights Full Board.

The hours will fly while we marvel at the birds, like the nearly extinct Yellow Cardinal which love to visit the garden. By boat we will enjoy the water fowl nestled among native trees at the edge of the lagoon and in the 'esteros' – small water channels full of life and color. And carpinchos, freshwater otters, alligators, marsh deer and with a little patience and good luck, one just might

see the illusive Maned wolf, howler monkey or the sprocket deer. The crown jewel of the esteros, the jaguar, hasn't been seen in the area since the 1930's but biologists are hoping that it can make a comeback one day. Other activities include horseback riding, swimming and enjoying top quality meals.

All this accompanied by bird expert Domingo, historian Santiago and horseman Arturo.

May 23      Corrientes - Posadas

Crafts and the history of Mate and its cultivation



We will drive to **Colonia Pellegrini**, the main town in the area to shop for some local crafts and visit Las Marias, the main producer of Yerba Mate, the most consumed drink in Argentina.

*The countryside at Las Marias is an attraction in itself. You will find hills of red earth covered with yerba mate and tea plantations, extensive forest reserves where native growth abounds, and great expanses that have been reforested with pine and eucalyptus.*

*Over a century of work and care has been devoted to the gardens and parks on the premises, and a careful balance among landscaping, native growth and planting of exotic species has been maintained. Subtropical plants abound in and around lakes and ponds, creating a land of lush exuberance that stretches along the red-earth banks of the Iberá river.*



*As for architecture, visitors can see the old main farmhouse, characteristic of the neo-colonial style. Another interesting stop is the chapel, uniquely and remarkably designed by Catalan followers of the great Gaudí, who were friends of the founder of Las Marias.*

**Estancia Santa Cecilia**, Three nights Full Board.

*A traditional family-run estancia overlooking the Parana River. Surrounded by fields and trees, the pool is ideally situated to relax in after a day's riding. Guests are invited to assist the gauchos with the day to day jobs on the estancia as well as gentle riding across the estancia.*

May 24 Posadas (excursion into Paraguay)

A full day visit to discover Jesús and Trinidad Ruins in Paraguay.

The Misiones of Jesus and Trinidad are known as the best preserved ones in Latin America. They tell the rich stories the Jesuits left behind in Paraguay. Lunch included.

*The Jesuits extensively colonized this beautiful region for two centuries, still inhabited by the Guarani Indians and their descendants today. The Jesuits were expelled by the Spaniards at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> being too powerful in the region. They practically built a parallel empire and were thought to be a potential threat to the Spanish crown. It is fascinating to visit the ruins of their churches, towns and ranches, remembering the epic days as depicted in the movie "The Mission". Nowadays, these ruins have been declared World Heritage Site*



May 25

Posadas

Today we will enjoy our lovely Estancia.

Here you can swim in the pool, play ping pong, enjoy a picnic in the best traditional style, and hike with local guides. In Santa Cecilia there are horses to suit all tastes, and are always available. Take a ride with the gauchos and experience the sensation of participating in a troop. Play Golf nearby, Polo in an estancia 15 minutes away, go birding or fishing.

May 26

Posadas -

### Misiones

On our way to Misiones we will visit *the Jesuit Ruins of San Ignacio* and Casa *Quiroga*.

*Quiroga's permanent Casa de Piedra is one of those simple but lovely houses that artists seem to inhabit, and holds various memorabilia, including butterfly specimens, an enormous snakeskin and the writer's rusted motorcycle. A replica of his initial wooden house, built for the 1996 biographical film 'Historias de Amor, de Locura y de Muerte' (Stories of Love, Madness and Death), stands nearby.*

*Horacio Quiroga was a poet and novelist who also dabbled in other activities, including snapping early photographs of the rediscovered ruins and farming cotton (unsuccessfully) in the Chaco. He lived in San Ignacio from 1910 to 1917, when his first wife committed suicide (as did Quiroga himself, terminally ill, 20 years later). Quiroga's regionally-based stories transcend time and place without abandoning their setting. Some of his short fiction is available in English translation in *The Exiles and Other Stories*.*

Lunch included

*Tacuapi Lodge*, Two nights, full board



*At the heart of the protected area called "Green Corridor", completely disguised with the surroundings is Tacuapi Lodge, an Eco-Lodge which provides the visitor a complete natural experience.*

*This Rainforest is one of the most diverse in the world. The amount of species inhabiting this ecosystem surprises most of the experienced visitors. Home to 450 species of birds and 80 mammals that includes the 'yaguarete' - the greatest feline of the American continent.*

May 27      Misiones

A full day of diverse activities

Enjoy a day observing monkey herds, toucans, gigantic trees and discovering the amazing biodiversity of the Paranaense Rainforest with specialized guides.

May 28      Misiones - Iguazu

Visit to a local school.

*Please bring school supplies to donate to our designated charity for this trip.  
Even the simplest thing is worth a lot to these children.*

*Posada Puerto Bemberg, Two nights Full Board.*

Secluded and quiet Posada Puerto Bemberg offers an authentic - yet luxurious - taste of rural life. The Posada is full of rustic charm and character, decorated in earth tones that mimic the red earth and green trees outside, and surrounded by lush gardens that attract masses of butterflies.

After waking to the calls of birds and monkeys, you won't want to miss taking a cruise down the Paraná River and swimming at the base of one of the area's many waterfalls or trekking through the unspoiled jungle. When you're ready to wind down lounge by the pool and then sample local delicacies by candlelight.

*Also great to know that the money you spend here goes towards an amazing conservation project for one of the world's most endangered forests.*

May 29      Iguazu

Much to do in this Posada. With a library of over 2,500 books, a living room with a piano where you can enjoy Guarani music concerts, a chapel built in 1930, swimming pool, a veranda with wonderful views. But besides relaxing we can hike through the



rainforest, take jungle walks, and bird watch with our local guides.



May 30 Iguazu -  
Buenos Aires

This morning we will drive to the Unesco heritage site of Iguazu, also named as part of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

A marvel you can revisit a million times and still be impressed!

After visiting the Argentine side of the falls we will embark on a short boat ride which will take us right under the falls.

Return to Buenos Aires late in the afternoon and overnight.

*Loi Suites Recoleta*, One night including breakfast.

May 31 Buenos Aires - departure for home or extension to Uruguay

In the morning we will have a delightful introduction to the history of Buenos Aires with our special guide who will take us to some important squares and areas to tell us the stories that make them so unique.

Free afternoon till departure for the airport.

*After check out at noon we can leave our luggage at the hotel and use their spa before leaving.*

*Join us for a week in laidback and little known Uruguay*



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