

SOUTH AMERICA STUDY TOUR 2013

DRAFT ITINERARY

August 5 departure

DATE	ACTIVITY	OVERNIGHT
DAY 1 Mon, Aug 5 (Meals on plane then dinner)	Overnight flight to Santiago, the capital of Chile. Met by our Chilean guide (Erika Schmitt) and transported to our hotel in the pleasant residential-commercial district of Providencia. Rest/freshen up from the flight before a panoramic tour of the city. This intriguing city of 5 million people has one of the world's most dazzling locations. Sights visited include the Palacio de la Moneda, the Plaza de Armas and the incongruously named, Avenida del Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins (la Alameda). In the evening, we have a welcome to Chile cocktail party and dinner, which offers the first opportunity to try the Chilean national drink, the 'Pisco Sour'. Flights depart Monday morning from east coast Australia to Auckland. For example, from Syd – LA800 at 9.25am. Then LA800 departs Auckland 4.10pm – Arrives Santiago 11.40am (same day)	Santiago
DAY 2 Tues, Aug 6 (B,L,D)	Transfer to the airport for our short flight to Temuco, a major agricultural city in the magnificent Lakes District and the centre of Chile's grain industry. This is a region of lush farmland, dense forest, snow-capped volcanoes and of course, deep crystal clear lakes. With reliable rainfall and rich volcanic soils, this region of Chile boasts some of the highest average wheat yields in the world. Accompanied by an advisor from SOFO (the local Ag & Pastoral Society), we visit some major farms in the area to talk with the owners about their agricultural practices and product marketing. Continue to Villarica for overnight and free evening. Villarica is majestically nestled on the shores of Lake Villarica, with the snow covered peak of Volcano Villarica as a dramatic backdrop. LA231: Departs Santiago 10.20am – Arrives Temuco 11.45am	Villarica
DAY 3 Wed, Aug 7 (B,L)	Visits to grain and other farms in this productive and diverse agricultural region. Mid-afternoon back to Villarica for some free time this afternoon and evening to enjoy this beautiful setting.	Villarica
DAY 4 Thurs, Aug 8 (B,L,D)	Early start and continue south through the beautiful Osorno region. There will be spectacular views (weather permitting) of Volcano Osorno and other snow clad peaks soaring to 3500 metres. The region is considered the jewel of Chile's southern lakes district. This area is also the heart of the pasturage zone, concentrating over half the cattle in the country, with many dairies and beef operations. We visit the farm of the Neumann family, descendants of the original Germans, where they produce milk and beef with the local dual-purpose breed – the Overo Colorado. Marcelo and Maria Elena, and their children, will welcome us to their home for morning tea. Continue on to Puerto Montt for a spectacular flight to Punta Arenas, on the Straits of Magellan in Patagonian Chile. This was long-considered the world's southernmost city (with a recent surge in population, Ushuaia, a bit further to the south, now carries that tag). Punta Arenas is roughly 1420 km from the coast of Antarctica. LA285: Departs Puerto Montt 2.40pm – Arrives Punta Arenas 4.55pm	Punta Arenas
DAY 5 Fri, Aug 9 (B,L,D)	This morning we board our Chilean coach and enjoy a scenic journey to "Skyring Station" where English-speaking Gerald and Andy Friedli welcome us to their isolated home overlooking an inlet of the Pacific Ocean. There will be time to take a look at their stock and talk about grazing at the far end of the world before a typical Patagonian barbeque in the back garden, with most of the ingredients being produce of the farm. We then head north across the cold, dry 'pampas' to the ferry terminal of Puerto Natales. Puerto Natales is the gateway to Chile's most stunning national park, Torres del Paine. The town is a spectacular settlement sited on the Seno Ultima Esperanza channel – or Last Hope Sound – says it all really.	Puerto Natales
DAY 6 Sat, Aug 10 (B,L,D)	We start early on a long, but spectacular trip into the Andes and the famous Torres del Paine National Park with a picnic lunch on the way. Torres del Paine is a massif crowned with wierd twisted granite peaks rising out of the surrounding pampa. It is one of the planet's most visually stunning national parks standing guard against the elements at the foot of the world. Then continue out across the pampas to the lake-side resort centre of El Calafate, the gateway to the Argentine glaciers, where we say good-bye to our Chilean guide.	El Calafate

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DAY 7 Sun, Aug 11 (B,L)	We are in the arid rain-shadow region of the Argentine Patagonia – sheep country – and in the remote but bustling town of El Calafate. This is an environment ranging from enormous, majestic glaciers through to thick sub-Antarctic woodlands and savage unclimbed crags. El Calafate is sited on the shores of Lago Argentino, one of the world's largest and most beautiful lakes. El Calafate is also the access town for Glacier Perito Moreno, undoubtedly one of the world's natural wonders and one of the very few advancing glaciers on Earth. Early this morning we board our charter coach and visit this glacier as it wages a titanic battle with Lago Argentino. On our spectacular boat cruise to the face of the glacier we will witness huge chunks of ice detonate off the face with the report of a cannon, and plunge into the water below. After our glacier encounter we visit a nearby and very large sheep operation – Estancia Altavista. This estancia (ranch) is 75,000 hectares running 28,000 sheep. We talk to the manager about sheep farming at the southern end of the world and inspect some of the sheep and yards etc before enjoying a fantastic asado (BBQ) late lunch at the estancia. Return to El Calafate for overnight.	El Calafate
DAY 8 Mon, Aug 12 (B,D)	This morning we fly to Buenos Aires to connect with a flight to Cordoba, a colonial city on the western side of the Argentinian pampas. AR1871/2528: Departs El Calafate 10.00am – Arrives Cordoba 3.30pm (via Buenos Aires)	Cordoba
DAY 9 Tues, Aug 13 (B,L,D)	This morning we board our charter bus and travel east into one of the world's most fertile and productive areas of broadacre farming and cattle production – the Argentinean Pampas. Travelling with us will be two farm specialist guides/agronomists who are linked with the Argentina Minimum Till Association (APPRESID). Over the next few days our guides will introduce us to the farms and farmers of the pampas. Today we have farm visits through the heart of the Pampas.	Marcus Juarez
DAY 10 Wed Aug 14 (B,L,D)	We continue east today with a farm visit in the morning near Pergamino including a fantastic gaucho (asado) lunch on the farm. Visit the local farmers Co-op before continuing to Pergamino for overnight..	Pergamino
DAY 11 Thurs Aug 15 (B,L,D)	Continue through rich farming country in Buenos Aires province, where we will visit large grain farms. In the afternoon we will say goodbye to our AAPRESID friends and continue on to Buenos Aires for overnight. Free time this evening. We are in easy access to BA's best restaurants (read here some of the world's best red meat outlets) as well as numerous tango show etc options.	Buenos Aires
DAY 12 Fri, Aug 16 (B)	This morning we have a guided city tour of the major sights of BA to get our bearings and then we have a free afternoon and evening.	Buenos Aires
DAY 13 Sat, Aug 17 (B,L)	We travel to Buenos Aires airport this morning to catch our flight to the magnificent Iguazu Falls, where the borders of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet. We are met at the airport by our charter coach and local guide and cross to the Brazilian side of the Iguazu River. We then enter the Iguazu National Park and take a jungle tour and exhilarating jetboat ride to the most impressive part of Iguazu Falls – Gargantua del Diablo (translated as the 'Devil's Throat'). After our boat ride we check into our magnificent colonial hotel. This is the only hotel within the National Park and is spectacularly located on the edge of the falls. Options later today include an unforgettable (and easy) stroll along the boardwalk, from the front of our hotel, to many vantage points including Gargantua del Diablo. Time permitting, there is also the option of a helicopter flight over the falls. Free evening to explore the falls and enjoy this magnificent hotel. LA4022: Departs Buenos Aires 8.45am – Arrives Iguazu 10.35am	Iguazu Falls
DAY 14 Sun, Aug 18 (B,L,D)	Time this morning to take in more of the majesty of the falls before checking-out of our hotel, boarding our coach and visiting the giant Itaipu Dam – one of the seven wonders of the modern world. This enormous hydro scheme is a joint project between the governments of Paraguay and Brazil. Eight kilometres wide and requiring enough concrete to build five Hoover Dams, the Itaipu Dam spans the Parana River at the Brazil/Paraguay border. During its construction, workers shifted the course of the world's seventh largest river by removing 50 million tonnes of earth and rock to dig a 2 kilometre bypass. The main dam is as high as a 65-storey building and enough iron and steel was used at Itaipu to build 300 Eiffel Towers. Around 160 tonnes of water per second pour onto each turbine generating more than 70 per cent of Paraguay's electricity needs and 30 per cent of southern Brazil's. Continue through to Cascavel for overnight.	Cascavel

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DAY 15 Mon, Aug 19 (B,L,D)	We visit the Codetec Research Station on the outskirts of Cascavel. Codetec is a Brazilian research and plant breeding company servicing a multitude of ag cooperatives and thousands of individual farmers throughout the country. Continue on to Maringa, a major centre in the fertile Parana River valley. Agriculture is again the major economic activity for this region. Farming has diversified beyond coffee, and today corn, wheat, cotton, horticulture, beans, peanuts, rice, sugarcane, soybean, and fruit plantations thrive due to the rich 'terra roxa' (crimson soil). The region is also a good overall representation of Brazilian agriculture. It is well diversified and largely self-sufficient in food. Livestock production is also very important with rapid growth in the poultry, pork, and milk industries reflecting changes in consumer tastes. Taking in the entire nation, farm production in Brazil is 60% field crop and 40% livestock and agricultural and food products account for about 35% of the country's exports.	Maringa
DAY 16 Tues, Aug 20 (B,L,D)	Early morning flight to Rondonopolis and visit to the Fundacao Mato Grosso, an agricultural research centre involved in plant breeding for Mato Grosso state and other areas of Brazil. Mato Grosso in Brazil's western interior, is the booming frontier agricultural region of Brazil and in less than a decade has become one of the world's leading producers of cotton, soybean (over 5.5 million planted hectares), corn, sugarcane, biofuels and cattle (25 million head). Mato Grosso is a state with a flat landscape, alternating plateaus and plain areas. It has three different ecosystems: Cerrado, Pantanal and the Amazon Rainforest. The vegetation of the open pasture covers 40 per cent of the state. farm visits this afternoon. T4 5516: Departs Maringa 9.45am – Arrives Rondonopolis 10.15am	Rondonopolis
DAY 17 Wed, Aug 21 (B,L,D)	Today we travel northwest through spectacular farming country. We visit the huge Grupo Bom Futuro farming operation near Campo Verde Farm. Later in the afternoon we travel through to Pousada Penhasco perched spectacularly on the top of the escarpment with views going forever across this unique landscape.	Pousada Penhasco
Day 18 Thurs, Aug 22 (B,L)	Visit some more farms in this highly productive region, then continue on this morning to Cuiaba, the capital of Mato Grosso state. From Cuiaba, we catch a flight to Rio de Janeiro for an early evening arrival. Transfer to our beachside hotel. G3 1067: Departs Cuiaba 4.40pm – Arrives Rio 8.16pm	Rio de Janeiro
DAY 19 Fri, Aug 23 (B,L,D)	While in Rio we will see the major sights of this fantastic city including Corcovado (Christ the Redeemer) the Lagoon, Copacabana and Ipanema Beach and the Sugarloaf cable car. We will also have the opportunity to do something most tourists don't – an amazing guided tour of some of the favelas (hillside shanty towns) of Rio. This tour is not intrusive or patronising. It has the full backing of the local communities to help raise awareness of their unique living, social and political conditions. Dinner at Marius restaurant on Copacabana Beach and then free time with many options such as a spectacular Samba show.	Rio de Janeiro
DAY 20 Sat, Aug 24 (B,L)	Depart Rio by coach to Brazil's largest city, Sao Paulo. Visit farms producing sugarcane and other crops through this rich agricultural region. Late afternoon arrival at our airport hotel.	Sao Paulo
DAY 21 Sun, Aug 25 (B,D)	An early start this morning to cross the continent to Cusco in Peru, via Sao Paulo and Lima. We are met and transferred to our hotel before we enjoy a guided tour of this amazing city. Cusco is a colonial city built over the foundations of Incan palaces. We will visit the San Blas neighbourhood – cradle of artists – and the Twelve Angles stone; the Korikancha (or Temple of the Sun), where we see more amazing stonework; and the Cathedral, with its delicate carved wood and impressive altars. We will finish with a visit to the Inca Museum, also known as the Admiral's House, erected from Incan foundations, which nowadays hosts a complete collection of Incan ceramics, textiles and precious metals. Dinner and folkloric show at Tunupa restaurant this evening. LA5222/LA2035: Departs Sao Paulo 8.15am – Arrives Cuzco 2.25pm (via Lima)	Cusco
DAY 22 Mon, Aug 26 (B,L)	This morning we have a spectacular bus and train journey through farming valleys and imposing mountains to Aguas Callientes station. From here we are transported by bus to the top of the mountain and our unforgettable introduction to the citadel of Machu-Picchu, one of the most renowned examples of Inca architecture, surrounded by lush cloud forest. Lost in history, it was not discovered until 1911 by the American explorer Hiram Bingham. After a guided visit of the ruins, we will have a self-service lunch at the local mountain-top restaurant before our return to Cusco.	Cusco
DAY 23 Tues, Aug 27 (B,D)	This morning we transfer to the airport for a flight to Santiago via Lima. Late afternoon arrival and rest up before our farewell dinner LA2115/637: Departs Cuzco 9.45am – Arrives Santiago 5.25pm (via Lima).	Santiago
DAY 24 Wed, Aug 28 (B)	Some free time in the morning before heading to the airport for flights back to Australia. LA801: Departs Santiago 11.25pm – Arrives Sydney 7.45am (2 days later)	On plane