

CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

SOUTH AMERICA



Machu Picchu, Peru

BEST TIME TO GO/WEATHER

Conditions vary greatly across South America as the northern swathe of the continent through the Amazon region has an equatorial tropical climate which is hot and humid year-round, while the southern extremities are part of the colder sub-Antarctic region where temperatures can drop dramatically (even in summer) and windy conditions bring added chills.

Areas below the equator fall into the Southern Hemisphere, meaning that September heralds the start of spring, with summer from December to the end of February, and autumn from March until June when winter sets in.

The best time to visit the likes of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires is from November to March when temperatures hover between 24 and 28 degrees Celsius. However, sailing further southwards can come as a shock as the mercury falls significantly. The best time to visit Ushuaia is during its summer from December to March, but even then conditions can still be cold with temperatures averaging at around nine degrees Celsius. Antarctica's season spans November to March with temperatures occasionally rising above zero degrees Celsius on the peninsula. However, each month brings different natural attributes. November coincides with penguin mating season; December and January have long daylight hours, penguin chicks and seal pups; February is when ships can sail further along the peninsula as the pack ice retreats and is regarded as one of the best months to spot whales. This is also the case for March, which heralds the end of the season.



Galapagos Islands

10 REASONS TO CRUISE HERE

Latin passion – South America sizzles to a pulsating beat that is its USP; a colourful cornucopia of some of the greatest natural sights on earth complemented by a roll-call of exotic wildlife, lush jungle, vibrant world-beating cities and the evocative echoes of ancient cultures.

Cultural Melting Pot – from centuries-old civilisations and indigenous tribes to the colonial legacy of Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors, descendants of African slaves, Argentina's Italian roots and the Welsh settlers of Patagonia.

Spirit of Samba – the intoxicating rhythm of Brazil courses through the veins of Rio de Janeiro's samba schools, exploding into a riot of noise and colour that fills the streets during its world-famous carnival every February.

Amazon adventures – piranha fishing, jungle treks and dead-of-night caiman-hunting expeditions await on transits along this mighty river through the world's largest rainforest to the sprawling Amazonian city of Manaus, 900 miles inland.

Cowboy country – rugged, nomadic gaucho horsemen famously roam the Pampas grasslands of Argentina and Uruguay, while tourists admire their skills on ranch visits and tuck into hearty gaucho fare at Latin American steakhouses.

End of the world – sailing around the southernmost tip of South America at Cape Horn – or even landing there – is a seafaring adventure dictated by fierce winds and strong swells resulting from the tumultuous meeting of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

Natural spectacles – from the towering grandeur of the Andes Mountains and the Iguazu Falls (the world's largest) to the pristine wonders of the Galapagos Islands and dramatic expanse of the Chilean fjords.

Bucket list draws – don't miss the Incan majesty of Machu Picchu or mysterious statues of Easter Island, the colonial treasures of Cartagena and surreal landscape of the Atacama Desert.

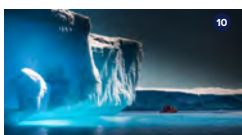
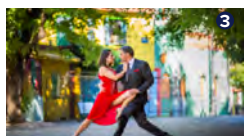
A taste of Blighty – from the English feel of the Falkland Islands, complete with pubs, corner shops and traditional red telephone boxes, to the Welsh heritage of Argentine port city Puerto Madryn, founded by settlers from the country in 1865.

Frozen wonderland – the so-called White Continent sits at the top of most travellers' wish lists thanks to its unparalleled landscape of soaring icebergs, stark cliffs and majestic glaciers which draw adventurers into its irresistible icy embrace.

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10 KEY ATTRACTIONS



1. Rio de Janeiro – the beguiling beauty of this Latin hotspot seduces all who visit, with the famous golden sands of Copacabana Beach the perfect foil to the distinctive backdrop of Sugar Loaf Mountain and Christ the Redeemer's outstretched arms atop Corcovado Mountain.

2. Amazon Rainforest – flocks of colourful macaws and bright-billed toucans are dazzling inhabitants of this vast tropical wilderness where stops at riverside villages open a window on to local life of the many indigenous tribes.

3. Buenos Aires – the sensual rhythm of tango underpins the Argentine capital's allure, where stately streets and grand buildings around Plaza de Mayo reflect faded European grandeur amid bohemian neighbourhoods and the all-pervading memories of former First Lady Eva Peron.

4. Montevideo – Uruguay's cosmopolitan capital brims with a vibrant mix of Latin flair and European flavour, from the colonial overtones of its historic old town to sultry tango bars and the punchy vibe of its swish oceanfront reminiscent of Miami Beach.

5. Valparaíso – a bohemian jumble of narrow streets and colourful houses marks out this hilly Chilean port town, long a magnet for the creative set which gives it an irrepressibly arty vibe enhanced by Chilean poet Pablo Neruda who built a house here.

6. Lima – Peru's capital and one of South America's largest metropolises, the so-called City of the Kings, is where Spanish colonial churches rub shoulders with the breath-taking Incan riches of the city's Gold Museum and eye-catching local crafts at the Indian Market.

7. Ushuaia – with a dramatic backdrop of mountain peaks, this Argentine port proudly promotes itself as the town at the end of the world, its extreme southerly location making it the last stop before the South Pole and departure point for Antarctica sailings.

8. Patagonia – this vast sparsely-populated wilderness of stark granite cliffs, plunging waterfalls, ice-blue glaciers and deep mysterious gorges stretches across the borders of Argentina and Chile from the southern Andes Mountains, encompassing the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines.

9. Falkland Islands – a microcosm of Britishness in the South Atlantic, the capital Stanley is reminiscent of an old-fashioned British village, while the wild, windswept terrain resembles the Yorkshire Moors, albeit with penguin colonies thousands strong and offshore waters brimming with whales and seals.

10. Antarctic Peninsula – positioned some 600 miles from Ushuaia and a two-day sailing across Drake Passage (notorious for its tempestuous conditions), this is where most cruise ships sail to, tempted by the promise of spectacular icy terrain like nowhere else on earth.



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Iguazu Falls, Argentina

10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

Itinerary is king – this is such a vast region, it is nigh impossible to find a cruise that covers its entirety, plus Antarctica cruises tend to operate separately. Some voyages circumnavigate South America, though most tend to concentrate on the east or west coasts, and may often include Cape Horn.

Get set for adventure – be prepared to don your hiking boots and all-weather gear to get the best out of the rugged terrain and wilderness areas, and be aware that some ports will be tender-only, making disembarkation more difficult for less able-bodied passengers.

Venture further afield – with so much to see away from the coast, add cruise tours to gems such as the Iguazu Falls and Machu Picchu or add rail trips across the Andes, Galapagos sailings or boutique cruises along the Peruvian stretch of the Amazon River.

Take your time – it's worth staying longer to explore this region. Some sailings last just seven nights, but voyages of two or three weeks visit both coasts, while circumnavigations take around 35 days and include Central America and the Panama Canal.

Add a city stay – many sailings start or finish in Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro, two buzzing hubs that are perfect add-ons, while other contenders could be Chile's capital Santiago, Valparaiso and Lima. Some sailings also start from US cities including Fort Lauderdale or Los Angeles.

Know your seasons – as much of South America is in the Southern Hemisphere, the summer falls during the Northern Hemisphere winter, with the cruise season running from November to May.

Port predicament – be aware that unpredictable weather and sea conditions, even during the region's summer months, may mean that some planned port stops may have to be cancelled. This is particularly true for Cape Horn and the Falkland Islands.

Stay safe – South America has an unenviable reputation for high crime, particularly in cities along the continent's east coast, such as Rio de Janeiro, so travellers need to be on their guard and plan trips ashore carefully.

Motion of the ocean – conditions around Cape Horn can be rough, while the Drake Passage, separating South America from Antarctica, has an infamous reputation for stormy conditions, dubbed the Drake Shake or, for those lucky enough to experience a smooth crossing, the Drake Lake.

Size matters – smaller ships can access South America's more intimate coastal communities, while those taking less than 500 passengers are permitted to land passengers in Antarctica (though can only allow 100 guests ashore at a time). Larger vessels can sail to the White Continent, but cannot stop or land passengers.