



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

## THE LANDS OF CARMENERE & MALBEC: BIRDS & WINES OF CHILE & ARGENTINA

FEBRUARY 24 - MARCH 10, 2025

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We will look for the stunning Burrowing Parakeet at a colony near Colbún Lake, Chile © Fernando Díaz

*The majestic Cordillera of the Andes will be the backdrop for our entire journey, beginning in Chile. We will search the high peaks and deep valleys east of Santiago for the endemic Moustached Turca and the magnificent Andean Condor as it effortlessly soars over the stunning range. We will then continue south through wine country, stopping for a tasting in the Maule Valley, famous for its red wines, the specialty being Carmenera. Our lodgings amidst temperate Nothofagus forests will be our gateway into the Altos de Lircay Reserve, home to the incredible Magellanic Woodpecker and large charismatic tapaculos such as Chestnut-throated Huet-huet. On our return towards the coast, we will visit the Colchagua Valley, another fantastic red wine region.*



*From Valparaíso, we will explore the river estuaries along the Pacific Coast, home to diverse wetlands full of shorebirds and waterfowl. There we will search for reedbed specialists such as the fantastic Many-colored Rush Tyrant and the skulking Stripe-backed Bittern. Along the coastal mountains, we will enjoy a great selection of white wines in the lovely Casablanca Valley. A highlight along the coast will be a pelagic venture into the Humboldt Current, with scores of albatross, petrels and other seabirds. We may even have close encounters with a Black-browed Albatross.*

*Our final day in Chile will take us into the range southeast of Santiago in search of high-altitude specialists including Gray-breasted Seedsnipe and Creamy-rumped Miner. Most sought-after will be the Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, a striking shorebird of the mountainous bogs. Our journey will take us amidst towering snow-capped giants and over the Andes, along the lap of Aconcagua – the “Stone Sentinel” – the highest peak in the Americas. Upon descending into Argentina, we will be greeted by expansive vistas and a new suite of alluring species.*

*In the mountains above Mendoza, we will search for endemics like the White-throated Cacholote, and Patagonian and Steinbach’s canasteros. At lower elevations, in the land of great Malbecs we will visit vineyards in the Luján de Cuyo Valley and east of Mendoza. We will also venture into the arid Monte ecoregion in search of the endemic Sandy Gallito. Farther east, in the woodland scrub of the Bosques Telteca we will search for the stunning Cinnamon Warbling-Finch.*

*Our closing dinner will be celebrated at a vineyard north of Mendoza, where we will share the highlights of our journey together. We will fly back to Santiago on the final morning. Participants may choose to spend the day resting at a hotel near the airport before their connecting flights, which usually leave in the evening.*

*This is an exciting tour that combines a wide diversity of habitats and stunning landscapes, starting from a cosmopolitan city into remote regions. Conditions will be comfortable throughout, with accommodations in good hotels and excellent guesthouses. The food and wine should be excellent at the various wineries we will visit, although there will be a number of picnic lunches as well. We are working with a local sommelier to make sure we visit the most representative wineries in each of the valleys we visit, and to ensure we have an exciting selection of wines during our meals. Travel will be by group bus or sprinter, depending on the size of the group, and on some occasions, we may employ the use of 4x4 vehicles to access challenging terrain. The tour also involves a boat trip for pelagic birding, and an international flight returning from Argentina to Chile. The physical demands range from light to moderate. The tour will take place at the commencement of the austral autumn season, and the weather should vary from warm to cold, and mostly dry.*



During this tour, we will visit a wide diversity of habitats from Chile to Argentina © Rafael Gálvez

**February 24, Day 1: Departure from Home.** Flights from the United States bound for Santiago, Chile (Arturo Merino Benítez Airport; airport code SCL) depart on February 24 and arrive early on the morning of February 25. Those concerned about the travel time to Chile are encouraged to arrive a day early so as to be rested and better able to enjoy our exciting activities. Upon request, the VENT office will be happy to assist with early arrival hotel and airport transfer arrangements.

NIGHT: Aboard aircraft in transit to Santiago



Andean Condor © Albatross Birding and Nature Tours

**February 25, Day 2: Arrival in Santiago.** Most flights from the United States arrive in Santiago between 6:00-10:00 a.m. Upon arrival and after clearing immigration, collect your bags, pass customs, and then proceed outside the baggage claim area where you will be met by our local agents and transferred to our hotel. Santiago is home to 5.1 million people and enjoys a reputation as one of South America's most modern and cosmopolitan cities. The metropolis is constructed on a rich inland plain, the Santiago Basin, bounded by mountains on three sides. Santiago is Chile's largest city, is economically significant, and is the seat of national government. You will have the rest of the afternoon at leisure, with time to rest and recover following the long international flight. Lunch is on your own. This evening, we will meet in the lobby at 6:00 p.m. for a tour welcome and orientation followed by dinner at our hotel.

NIGHT: DoubleTree by Hilton Santiago Kennedy, Santiago

**February 26, Day 3: Highlands above Santiago.** The foothills and stunning highlands just east of Santiago hold many of the country's endemics, such as the Moustached Turca and Crag Chilia. We will have a lovely lunch followed by birding near the mountain village of Farellones and the Valle Nevado ski resort. We will be climbing to altitudes reaching roughly 7,900 ft. asl (2,400 m). We will also get the chance to marvel at Andean Condors and many more high elevation specialists. Dinner will be at our hotel in Santiago.

NIGHT: DoubleTree by Hilton Santiago Kennedy, Santiago

**February 27, Day 4: Curicó and Maule Valley Vineyards, and Colbún Lake.** With our bags packed, we will depart from Santiago this morning after breakfast. Upon leaving the city, we may have a chance to stop at the Batuco Wetlands to try our luck at a variety of marsh birds and waterfowl. Continuing our way south towards temperate forests, we will be crossing through some of the most productive wine regions in Chile, specialized in



We will spend time birding the foothills of Aconcagua – the tallest peak in the Americas © Rafael Gálvez

Carmenere and other red wines, bypassing the famed Colchagua, into the Maule Valley and stopping at Curicó south of that.

We will stop for lunch and a wine tasting in the Curicó Valley. We will have a tour of the Viña Miguel Torres winery and cellars (established in 1979) and have lunch at their restaurant, with food pairing.

Below are the wines we have selected for this occasion, though they may change depending on availability:

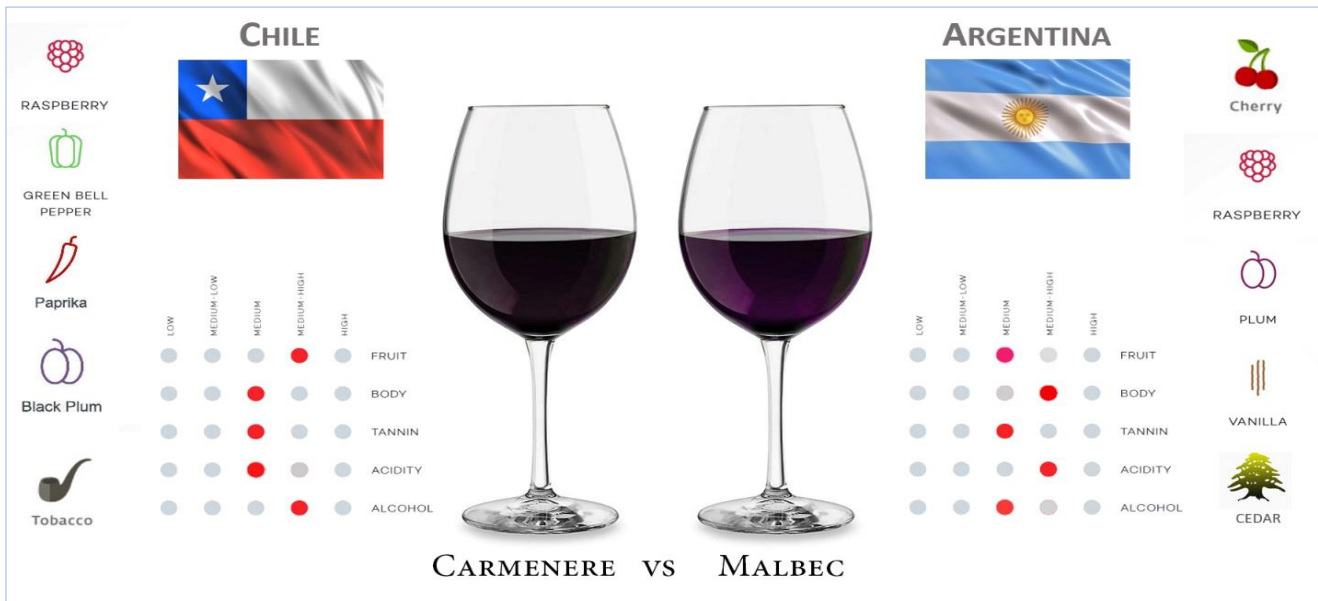
- *Cordillera de los Andes Pinot Noir*. This Miguel Torres Extra Brut sparkling wine has been elaborated using traditional secondary fermentation in the bottle.
- *Vigno Carignan* – For more than 50 years the vineyards of the region have been home to the dry-grown, old vine Carignan, a hidden treasure; a sort of workhorse variety that was used in blends. It offers a sweet nose with some spice; the palate is ripe and sweet with freshness and high tannins.
- *Miguel Torres Reserva Especial Cordillera de los Andes Carmenere*. Origins from the “Parcela La Ladera,” located in the Peumo, with cold nights influence by the Cachapoal River.
- *Miguel Torres Días de Verano Reserva Muscat*. The millenary Muscatel grape has a deep past in the Itata Valley, where the ocean’s soft breeze and the vibrant sun inspired to first Europeans to plant it.

The name *Carmenere* (the Castilian spelling, pronounced *car-men-AIR*) is derived from the French word for carmine, a deep red color. This grape variety was given the name due to the coloration that the leaves attain just before leaf-fall in the autumn. Once upon a time, and still in some cases, Carmenere was used in all the great Bordeaux wines. However, a plague known as *phylloxera* erupted in Europe during the late 1800’s, nearly destroying every wine grape in the continent. By 1900, phylloxera had taken a huge toll. More than 70% of the vines in France were dead. Despite the grape having been widely used in Bordeaux, wine growers did not replant the Carmenere variety.

Prior to this catastrophic blight, cuttings of Carmenere had been brought to Chile sometime around 1850 where they had been confused with Merlot. Incredibly, more than a hundred years later, growers in Chile came to the consensus that a mistaken identification had been made, and in 1994 it was announced that vast plantings once thought as Merlot, were indeed the world’s largest extant plantings of Carmenere.

Today, Carmenere is the most widely produced wine in Chile and is quickly experiencing a growth burst similar to that experienced by Argentina with Malbec. Chances are that you can easily find a selection of Carmeneres in your local market and have even tried some. However, the variety is still widely unknown despite its diversity and enticing complexity in the valleys of Chile. Malbec still remains a more recognized variety.

So how does Carmenere compare to Malbec? They are both dark and dry wines with medium tannin content. Both have significant fruit flavors – darker in Carmenere, heavier in Malbec. Carmenere has a lower acidity, yet a higher alcoholic content, since it is a grape that is picked later in the season. To the senses, when you pick up a glass of Carmenere it appears almost black, while Malbec is deep magenta to purple. On the nose, Carmenere readily offers scents of raspberry and greens, peppers, paprika; Malbec offers redder scents, cherry and raspberry. On the palate, Carmenere tastes of black plum and deeper fruits, with a leather finish of mild tobacco or even chocolate. Malbec in turn may taste of red plums, with layers of vanilla and a smoky cedar finish. These are by no means the only wines we will experience throughout this tour. Both countries produce a wide range of red, white and sparkling wines, and we will have an opportunity to sample many.



Carmenere is the emblematic wine of Chile, while Malbec is that of Argentina. Graphic compiled by Rafael Gálvez

After lunch we will leave the Curicó Valley and continue south and east, into the foothills to the southeast. Only if time allows, we may be stopping at Colbún Lake or nearby riverbeds to the commune of Vilches Alto, where we will settle for the night at a wonderful family-owned hotel embedded in a forest with towering Southern Beech trees. Our dinner will be at Picamaderos, which will include an informal sampling of local wines.

NIGHT: Hotel Picamaderos, Vilches

**February 28, Day 5: Altos de Lircay National Reserve.**

The *Nothofagus* forests of Chile are home to large woodpeckers and large forest tapaculos. We will dedicate the day to exploring Altos de Lircay National Reserve, a national treasure. The reserve is in a pre-Andean zone characterized by dry deciduous forests climbing to Andean Steppe and Puna. There are three major rivers in the reserve, and seven of the ten species of trees in the genus *Nothofagus* occurring in Chile.

*Nothofagus* trees, also known as Southern Beeches, have a southern global distribution, primarily in southern Chile, Patagonia, New Zealand, New Guinea and Tasmania. During the Late Jurassic, roughly 150 million years ago, all these regions were contiguous as part of the supercontinent of Gondwana, before breaking up into separate continents 50 million years later. We will search for the stunning Magellanic Woodpecker and the charismatic Chesnut-throated Huet-huet in these fabulous forests. Other highlights of the park are Chucao Tapaculo, Des Murs's Wiretail and Rufous-legged Owl.

We will have a wonderful picnic lunch at Altos de Lircay and dinner at Picamaderos, with an informal sampling of local wines. Below are some of the wines we may try this evening, though they may change depending on availability:

- *Casa Donoso Reserva Carmenere*
- *Terra Noble Gran Reserva Merlot*
- *Zorro Correteado Carmenere & Carignan*
- *J. Bouchon Canto Sur*

NIGHT: Hotel Picamaderos, Vilches

**March 1, Day 6: Colchagua Valley Vineyard. Towards Santa Cruz.**

During this slower-paced day, we will head back north, birding along the way and visiting a vineyard in the Colchagua Valley. Our first stop may be some birding along the outskirts of Altos de Lircay. We may have the opportunity to visit a colony of stunning Burrowing Parakeets, which are also known as Tricahue Parrots. We will then visit the Viña Viu Manent winery, with an invitation to tour the vineyards and lunch. Afterwards, drive to Santa Cruz and stay at a lovely hotel overlooking vineyards on the outskirts of town.

Dinner will include an informal sampling of local wines, and it will be at Hotel Viñaterra, to the northwest of Colchagua and our final destination for the day. Below are some of the wines we may try this day, though they may change depending on availability:

- *Viu Manent Loma Blanca Carmenere*
- *ViBo Viñedo Centenario*
- *ViBo Punta del Viento*

NIGHT: Hotel Viñaterra, Santa Cruz

**March 2, Day 7: Pacific Coast and Isla Negra.**

During the morning, we will visit one of Chile's most diverse wetlands, the Maipo River Estuary. After traveling 155 miles (250 km) from its birthplace in the Andes mountains, the Maipo River reaches the Pacific Ocean in the form of an estuary bordering the borough of Santo Domingo in the Valparaíso region. More than 130 species of birds have been documented at this site, which has been designated an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International. Scores of shorebirds, waterfowl and seabirds congregate on the mudflats and river mouth; and the reedbeds are home to the stunning Many-colored Rush Tyrant.

If time allows, we may make several stops along the coast between the mouth of the river and Viña del Mar. A number of lagoons including Humedal Cartagena and others near Algarrobo may be quite productive, and sometimes Humboldt Penguins are visible near Peninsula Pajaros Niños.



Many-colored Rush Tyrant © Fernando Díaz

By midday, we will visit the renowned Costa de Los Poetas and Isla Negra, memorialized by Nobel Prize winning Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, who lived there in the 1940s. We will be on the lookout for the endemic Seaside Cinclodes and the stunning Inca Tern along the rocky coast. We will have lunch at Rincon del Poeta, a restaurant in honor of Neruda. This will be an opportunity for us to sample authentic Chilean food, including the tasty *Trucha al Tomatillo* (seatrout in tomato dressing), the classic *Machas a la Parmesana* (Parmesan clams), or the iconic *Caldillo de Congrio Nerudiano* (cusk-eel broth with a poetic twist).

This afternoon, we will visit the Pablo Neruda Museum at Isla Negra, where we will have an opportunity to enter the lavish estate overlooking the wave-battered coast of the Pacific, where Neruda spent his final years. The unorthodox residence bursts with creative exuberance, and must have already looked museum-like when Neruda resided there. Like a labyrinth through time, rooms contain vast collections encapsulating the author's interests, including enormous figureheads from the bows of ships that sailed the oceans, masks from far-flung places, curiously shaped bottles, seashells and so on. The tour is guided via a well-executed audio system, which allows every participant to go from room to room at an individual pace. The place truly is fascinating.

We will then drive back north along the coast towards Valparaiso. We will enjoy a wonderful dinner near Hotel Oceanic in Viña del Mar.

NIGHT: Hotel Oceanic, Viña del Mar

**March 3, Day 8: Humboldt Current Pelagic Trip.** For seabird enthusiasts, this will be a memorable portion of the tour. A pelagic venture into the Humboldt Current is always a treat, with high abundance and richness of species. The Humboldt is an offshore current of colder water that runs along the Pacific from Southern South America along Chile and Peru, and veering westward of Ecuador into the Galapagos Islands. It is the reason why there are penguins as far north as the Galapagos.





Buller's Albatross © Fernando Díaz

We plan on spending about six hours aboard a comfortable boat specialized for these pelagic trips, venturing out to 10 or 15 miles into the coastal current, following the congregating marine life. Close encounters with an albatross are often one of the trip highlights. However, the possibilities in terms of pelagic bird species are huge and unpredictable with Buller's, Salvin's, Chatham, Black-browed, Royal and Wandering albatrosses all documented in the area. The list is too long to include here, but several petrels and shearwaters are also possible, along with the more common Peruvian Booby and various cormorant species.

We will have lunch in Valparaíso, at a casual dockside restaurant, after which we will begin our return back to Santiago where we will settle for the remainder of the day. Dinner will be at Hotel La Quinta.

NIGHT: Double Tree by Hilton Santiago Kennedy or Hotel Renaissance

### **March 4, Day 9: El Yeso Valley.**

This day, we will head up into El Yeso Valley, southeast of Santiago. We will cover a large swath of scenic territory as we follow the Camino Al Volcan into the valley. The highway coils along the Maipo River, below the El Yeso Reservoir, which was formed by damming the Yeso River, part of the Maipo Basin. It is a major source of drinking water for the Santiago region.

As we wind our way up the valley, we will make several stops to appreciate the changing diversity of species as we gain altitude. At higher elevations we will find numerous specialists, such as a Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, multiple ground-tyrants, Creamy-rumped Miner, White-sided Hillstar, among many others. Our main target for the day will be the must-see Diademed Sandpiper-Plover.

We will have a lovely picnic lunch at a scenic stop. Along our trajectory, elevation will gradually change from roughly 1,600 ft. (488 m) in Santiago to 8,000 ft. (2,438 m). This day, we will enjoy an informal sampling of wines that may include:

- *Casa Bauzá Presumido Carmenere*

- *Flaherty Red Blend*
- *Primus Cabernet Sauvignon*
- *Starry Night Syrah*



Diademed Sandpiper-Plover © Fernando Díaz

We will then return back to Santiago, making brief stops along the way for any birds we may have missed earlier in the day. This evening, we will enjoy our final dinner in Chile before continuing to Argentina.

NIGHT: Double Tree by Hilton Santiago Kennedy or Hotel Renaissance

**March 5, Day 10: Crossing The Andes into Argentina.**

The remarkable landscapes of Andean high peaks are probably the images that come to mind when you think of Chile. Today’s journey will take us amidst towering snow-capped giants and over the Andes Cordillera, into Argentina. We will drive along the lap of one of the most awe-inspiring mountains, Aconcagua – the “Stone Sentinel” – the highest peak in the Americas at 22,837 ft. (6,960 m). We should have an opportunity to stop at Aconcagua Park and walk the loop at Laguna de Horcones for about an hour, into the gorge with fantastic views of the white-mantled giant. The birding here will be lovely, and is typically one of the highlights of the tour.

Our border crossing from Chile to Argentina will be made through Paso San Martín, a well-traversed checkpoint at roughly 9,190 ft. (2,800 m). The highway will take us up to roughly 12,800 ft. (3,900 m) at the highest point, before descending into Uspallata at roughly 6,200 ft. (1,890 m). The descent into Argentina will be a clear contrast of habitats and species, long divided by the massive mountain range. We will finally settle in Uspallata for a relaxed first afternoon in Argentina. Dinner will be in Uspallata.

NIGHT: Gran Hotel Uspallata, Uspallata

### **March 6, Day 11: Potrerillos and Luján de Cuyo.**

During the morning, we will do some birding near our hotel in Uspallata, followed by a relaxed descent towards Potrerillos, where we will search for endemics like the White-throated Cacholote, and Patagonian and Steinbach's Canasteros. Reaching lower elevations near Mendoza and the land of great Malbecs, we will visit a vineyard in the Luján de Cuyo Valley.



Enjoying the wines and fantastic meal at Casa Vigil – El Enemigo © Rafael Gálvez

Mendoza is Argentina's largest viticultural area, with Malbec being the most important grape variety in the region. Luján de Cuyo is an important wine-making sector that produces bold, intensely flavored red wines. In addition to the emblematic Malbec, the region also produces Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Torrontés.

Luján de Cuyo is a valley positioned on the rain shadow of the Andes, with a hot and desert-like climate moderated by an altitude averaging 3300 ft. (1000 m) above sea level. The Mendoza River and its pure Andean meltwater provide a vital source of irrigation to region. The altitude exposes the vineyards to more persistent sunlight, compared to regions at lower elevations, balanced by a significant drop in evening temperatures due to the alpine air. As a result, the grapes experience an extended growing season.

We will have lunch at the Bodega Casa Vigil - El Enemigo, and then have a tour of their wineries and cellars. Below are the wines we have selected for this occasion, though they may change depending on availability:

- *El Enemigo Semillón*. A light wine, collaboration between the Catena and Vigil wineries. A product of Mendoza. 100% Semillón, clay soils.
- *El Enemigo Single Vineyard Bonarda El Barranco*. Fruity, dry, medium body and tannins. From Junín, sandy soils and riparian stones.
- *El Enemigo Malbec*. From grapes grown at 4,822 ft., Gualtallary, Tupungato. Limestone soil.
- *El Enemigo Cabernet Franc*. From grapes grown at 4,822 ft., Gualtallary, Tupungato. Deep, calcareous, rocky soil.
- *Gran Enemigo Gultallary*. From grapes grown at 4,822 ft., Gualtallary, Tupungato. Deep, calcareous, rocky soil. 85 % Cabernet Franc, 15% Malbec.
- *Gran Enemigo Single Vineyard Agrelo*. Mendoza.

- *El Enemigo Chardonnay*. Mendoza.

After enjoying our experience at the winery, we will continue to the town of Luján de Cuyo and settle at our hotel, where we will have dinner and stay for the night.

NIGHT: Hotel Villamansa or Esplendor by Wyndham Mendoza



Red-tailed Comet © Fernando Díaz

### **March 7, Day 12: Bosques Telteca Nature Reserve.**

We will start early this morning visiting a set of reclaimed water compounds surrounded by marshy plots and mud flats where we will search for a variety of ducks, including Rose-billed Pochard and White-cheeked Pintail, grebes including White-tufted and Silvery, and three species of coots. It is possible we may encounter large flocks of (White-backed) Black-necked Stilts, shorebirds, and even Chilean Flamingos. During 2023, we found South American Painted-Snipes there, and spent quite some time enjoying their stunning plumage at close range.

After adding several new birds along the marsh, we will leave towards the northeastern-most destination of our trajectory. We will spend the afternoon exploring Bosques Telteca Natural Reserve, which is composed of a scrubby woodland on interior sand dunes, known as Monte habitat.

At Bosques Telteca, wonderful species like Cinnamon Warbling-Finch can be found, along with a suite of birds characteristic of the habitat. This will also be an interesting opportunity to encounter traces of the region's native peoples, past and present. The word *telteca* means “mature fruit” of the *Algarrobo* trees (genus *Prosopis*), named by the native Haurpes people in their language.

Throughout this day and the following morning, a number of bird species will be sought, east of Mendoza into the arid Monte ecoregion. Species such as the endemic Sandy Gallito are a possibility. We'll be on the lookout for the Many-colored Chuco Finch, while Brown Cacholote should be common.

Dinner will be back at Villa Mansa, in Luján de Cuyo.

NIGHT: Hotel Villamansa or Esplendor by Wyndham Mendoza

**March 8, Day 13: Luján de Cuyo and Medoza Valley Vineyard.**

This morning, we will venture east of Mendoza into the arid and scrub habitat. We will then visit the Embalse Carrizal, a dam that is used to regulate the flow of the Tunuyán River, which comes from glacial sources in the Andes, and to irrigate the otherwise arid region.

This will be a very productive morning of birding, represented by a number of species we are not likely to find elsewhere. New encounters may include Picazuro Pigeon, Great Pampas Finch, Blue and Yellow Tanager, Lark-like Brushrunner, Ringed Warbling Finch, and many more.

After some morning birding, we will visit the Bodega Catena Zapata for lunch and for a wine-tasting tour.

Below are the wines we have selected for this occasion, though they may change depending on availability:

- *Saint Felicien Nature*. A special blend of 80% Chardonnay and 20% Pinot Noir selected for sparkling wine.
- *D.V. Catena Pinot Noir*. The result of a blend of two Pinot Noir varieties, from Adrianna at 1480 m., and from Domingo at 1150 m., Tupungato.
- *D.V. Catena Vineyard Designated Malbec*. From Nicasia, at 1,180 m., with excellent drainage conditions, sandy and slight limestone. Limited production.
- *D.V. Catena Vineyard Designated Cabernet Sauvignon*. From the Pirámide Vineyard, at 950 m. Sandy, limestone and clay.

We will then return to Luján de Cuyo, where we will have our final dinner near our hotel.

NIGHT: Hotel Villamansa or Esplendor by Wyndham Mendoza



Freshly picked grapes © Maja Petric

**March 9, Day 14: Flight back to Santiago.**

Depending on our flight schedule and if time allows, we may visit Mendoza's central Parque General San Martín, with all its beautiful gardens and watered lawns. This is a great location for catch up with Red-tailed Comet, Red-crested Cardinal, Cattle Tyrant and Saffron Finch. Eventually, we will make our way to the airport to take a flight from the city of Mendoza, back to Santiago, where participants will be able to spend the day resting at day-use hotel rooms near the airport, for connecting flights that usually leave in the evening.

NIGHT: Hotel Villamansa or Esplendor by Wyndham Mendoza

**March 10, Day 15: Arrivals home.** International flights that departed Santiago the previous evening will arrive in the USA this morning.



We have a lot of fun birding and enjoying wines at nearly every stop during this tour.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 12 participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one in order to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

**TOUR LEADER(S):** Rafael Gálvez and Eduardo Navarro.



**Rafael Gálvez** was born in Lima, Peru, and has been birding and illustrating birds since childhood, a dual passion that blossomed when his family moved to Florida. Always with a sketchpad in hand, he has traveled throughout the U.S., Latin America, and Eurasia in pursuit of birds and leading tours for VENT. He served as a board member of the BirdLife International affiliate in the Republic of Georgia and Audubon chapters in Florida, developing educational and conservation programs. In the Caucasus, he produced retrospective books and catalogs on the works of regional painters. He worked in the development and branding of Georgian wines during an era of viticultural renaissance after the fall of the Soviet Union. He currently lives in north-central Florida where he is busy completing the artwork for a series of field guides to birds and their habitats. His works have been published in a field guide to

*Raptors and Owls of Georgia (Caucasus)*, *Birds of the Kolkheti Region*, and *Audubon's Schoolyard Ecology*. After working with raptor research along the Black Sea, he returned to Florida to spearhead a new phase for the Florida Keys Hawkwatch migration monitoring project. You can find some of his filed sketches at GalvezBirds.com.



**Eduardo Navarro, or Lalo**, was born in Santiago, but grew up in Punta Arenas, in Chilean Patagonia. Surrounded by wilderness, it was simply impossible for these landscapes not to awaken a curiosity for exploration in him. He studied veterinary sciences in Santiago, where he created the first student group that brought together people with a passion for nature, remaining active until this day. At university he participated in conservations in Bolivia, the altiplano, and Chilean Patagonia, awakening in him an interest in traveling and getting to know other cultures. Around the same time, I started rock climbing, so it was natural, that once I finished my studies, I simply took my backpack and started travel and climbing around the world. Starting with Australia and New Zealand, then discovering the markets and beaches of Southeast Asia, he walked through rice plantations in China, hiked between

the world's highest peaks in the Himalayas in India and Nepal, and visited cities and parks in Europe. Always with binoculars around his neck, searching for new birds. Lalo lived in Australia for a year and a half, and helped with migratory bird surveys around Sydney. Four years ago, he joined Albatross Birding, leading tours from Chile northern border to the windy Tierra del Fuego in Patagonia.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the tour is **\$11,375** per person in double occupancy from Santiago, Chile which includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to lunch on Day 13, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Santiago, Chile and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages other than the wines supplied during meals and wine tastings, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$1,250**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. A second deposit of **\$3,000** is due 210 days prior to departure July 29, 2024. If you prefer to pay your deposits using a credit card, the deposits must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days September 27, 2024 prior to the tour departure date.

**MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT:** This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may **NOT** be available. **For this reason, travel insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Through Ripcord, “emergency evacuation” can be purchased as a stand-alone benefit or as part of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. If you choose not to purchase insurance through Ripcord, you are required to obtain it through another provider.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:**

**Cancellation by Participant:**

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants’ protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

<u>If participant cancels:</u>	<u>Participant’s refund will be:</u>
210 days or more before departure date	Your deposit(s) minus \$500*
209 to 151 days before departure date	No refund of the deposits, but any payments on the balance will be refunded
150 days or less before departure date	No refund available

\*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

**Cancellation by VENT:**

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or



regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend their **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.\*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: [ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird](http://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird); or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip cost in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19):**

In line with the decision made by the federal government (including the CDC), Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a **Coronavirus FAQ** page on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link: [https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid\\_19\\_faq/](https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/).

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.\* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

\*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

**BAGGAGE:** We request that you limit your luggage to one medium or large bag (duffels or roller bags are best) and one carry-on bag, if possible. Soft-sided luggage is recommended. The main tour includes an international flight (Argentina to Chile) for which we will travel aboard LATAM. LATAM is strict about luggage limits and employs a more restricted weight limit on domestic flights than on international flights. For checked luggage, the limit is currently one bag at 23 kilograms (50 lbs.) per person; for carry-on luggage the weight is limited to 5 kilograms (about 11 lbs.) per person. The overweight charge for checked luggage amounts to a little more than a dollar per kilogram. In truth, weight allowances are not always strictly enforced; however, we recommend that travelers adhere to the stated limits. Please do not bring large carry-on bags. At present, smaller roll-ons up to about 18" in height are permitted, while anything over that size will probably have to be checked. In general, packing lighter is better. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

**CLIMATE & WEATHER:** This trip will take place during the austral autumn season, a time when weather conditions can vary substantially. Given the broad range of altitudinal and habitat settings, we are likely to encounter a diversity of weather. Chile: In Santiago, high temperatures may reach into the mid-80s (°F), and as low as the upper 40s. At the southernmost end of our tour near Vilches, highs and lows can average 5 degrees lower than Santiago, and conditions can be windier and cooler particularly in the mornings. At higher altitudes, such as Farellones, Chile, highs may not surpass the lower 60s, with lows into the mid-40s. Overall conditions should be relatively dry, with the rainy season technically commencing on March 11. We can expect minimal amount of rain, since this time of year averages about an inch or rain and less than 10% rain chance. However, it is best to be prepared for some amount of precipitation. Argentina: As we cross the Andes into Argentina, we may make stops at high altitude locations that are typified by pleasant weather at this time of year. Temperatures at Parque Aconcagua may range from the upper 40s into the upper 60s, depending on cloud cover and the wind effect, which can be strong and unpredictable. In the Mendoza area, temperatures may range widely, from highs in the mid-90s to lows in the upper 40s, influenced by alpine winds and climate. In locations such as Bosques Telteca, the climate is arid and desert-like, with potential for a wide range in temperatures and sun exposure, depending on cloud cover; highs may reach into the upper 90s.

**CLOTHING:** This program is a casual birding and wine tasting tour. We suggest you bring primarily field-type clothing and be prepared to dress in layers as daily temperatures may range from cold in the mornings and at higher altitudes, to hot at lower elevations and in drier habitats. Casual attire will be appropriate for all occasions, including during our visits to wineries. The following items are recommended:

- **Pants:** A couple pairs of pants are essential. Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable. Lined thermal pants are great against cool winds sometimes encountered higher altitudes.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight, durable and dull colored materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular.
- **T-shirts (long- and short-sleeved)** – Simple cotton shirts for wearing under warmer outerwear.
- **Jackets** – A warm, water and wind-proof jacket is essential!
- **Rain Pants** – Can provide double duty for both rain protection and an extra layer in lieu of long underwear on cold or windy days.
- **Warm gloves** – Are recommended. Although the days may warm quickly at this time of year, mornings and overcast days at upper altitudes may be cool enough to warrant the use of gloves, particularly if considering the wind chill effect.
- **Warm Socks** – Thin cotton or polypropylene socks are a good choice, in combination with a few pairs of wool socks. It is important to have clean, dry socks when in the field.
- **Hats, scarfs and neck gaiters** – A hat for protection from the sun is essential while a warm pull-down hat, scarf, or neck gaiter will come in handy when exposed in windy conditions.
- **Warm Sweaters** – Offers excellent insulation against cold temperatures.
- **Smart-Casual Attire** – Some people may prefer blouses or sport coats for evening meals or visits to the wineries, although this is not necessary.

**FOOTWEAR:** For footwear, we recommend a good trail-walking shoe or sturdy hiking boot (waterproof or GoreTex) when in the field. Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled from muddy conditions. A good walking shoe (such as an athletic shoe) may be preferred for down times or when traveling between destinations. Rubber boots are not necessary.

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Laundry service is available at some of the hotels for a fee.

**EQUIPMENT:** One of the most important aspects of having an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during this tour through Chile and Argentina:

- **Backpack** – good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all land excursions
- **Notebooks and pens**
- **Travel alarm clock**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions** – at least SPF 30
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Water bottle** – essential
- **Cameras, lenses, memory cards, and extra batteries**
- **Collapsible walking stick** – a highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking
- **Folding stool** – a recommended item for those who have trouble standing for more than 10 or 15 minutes at a time that can come in handy. The typical folding stool is small, lightweight and portable, consisting of three aluminum legs connected by a central bolt, with a sturdy but pliable material seat.
- **Tissue packs**

### **BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPES:**

**Binoculars** – We strongly recommend good binoculars of at least 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 magnification. We recommend that you do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like “minis” because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very

frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7x35 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.

**Spotting Scopes** – Your tour leader(s) will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip. If you wish to do digital scoping, as this is an excellent tour to do so, please feel free to bring your own.

### **CONDITIONS:**

Activities during this tour include visits to three wineries, with guided interpretation, wine tasting and paired meals. A special selection of wines will be offered during nearly every lunch and dinner. There will also be a visit to Pablo Neruda's house, where we will experience an audio-guided tour of the estate. The tour also includes a pelagic boat trip, and a flight from Mendoza to Santiago.

While birding will receive heavy emphasis throughout this tour, this program gives much attention to the wines of Chile and Argentina. During the three days when we tour wineries, we will first visit a birding hotspot in the morning, and then arrive to the wineries for lunch, and will remain there for the afternoon. That being said, wineries are often good places for birding as well. As the name of the tour indicates, the wines and culture of these regions are central to the overall experience, and we will aim to learn about the winemaking processes and taste a variety of grapes and wines.

This tour is for you if you love birds and wines, and have a general interest in some aspects of Chile and Argentina's history and culture. There will not be any slide presentations regarding any topics during the tour. Instead, we plan on including cultural information as part of an interactive approach during our daily group activities, and during travel.

The tour also encompasses other aspects of natural history including scenery, mammal viewing, and doses of botany. Much of the birding will be done in close proximity to our vehicle. Up to five walks may be more than a mile long, and will not exceed 1.5 miles. All other birding will be along shorter distances. The tour includes some lengthy drives including from Santiago to Argentina. All drives will include birding stops. There is simply no way to avoid this but the rewards are, as you will see, well worth it!

The scope of the tour and planned range of activities, necessitates travel by multiple means including small bus or coaster; an international flight from Argentina to Chile, and a boat trip for the pelagic venture into the Humboldt Current using a seasoned touring vessel. Accommodations and food are good throughout. The wines will be excellent, of top selection.

Walking conditions are generally easy as our activities in most of the areas we visit are along flat roads and trails. There are some gradual climbs in Altos de Lircay National Park. Our pelagic trip of roughly six hours is on a boat appropriate for the open ocean with a bathroom. We emphasize that no one will be subjected to physical demands that exceed their capabilities. All walking will be done at a slow pace. Meals will be good to excellent, and we will be able to sample a wide range of traditional dishes and international choices, depending on the location.

Participants with an interest in enjoying more of Santiago (our arrival and departure location) or visiting other parts of the region, should come early or stay after the tour ends. Santiago is a European-flavored blend of colonial and modern architecture, reflected in its many churches, museums, theatres, and parks. Some of the city's famous major landmarks you can visit on your own are the beautiful horse-racing track Club Hípico, the Pre-Columbian Art Museum, and the summit of San Cristobal Hill, where an enormous statue of the Virgin Mary overlooks the city.

### **DOCUMENTS:**

#### ***PASSPORTS***

A passport is required for entry into Chile and Argentina, and must be valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from the United States is required. U.S. citizens traveling on regular passports do not need a tourist visa for a stay of up to three months. A tourist card is issued at the international port-of-entry.

### **VISAS**

Visas are not required for U.S. and Canadian citizens for entry into Chile and Argentina. Note that the “reciprocity” fees that formerly applied to all U.S. and Canadian citizens entering Chile and/or Argentina have been eliminated. Rules and regulations pertaining to non-U.S. citizens may vary; please check with the consulates or embassies of Chile and Argentina.

Please check the expiration date on your passport. You will also want to make sure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport for stamps.

If you need a passport, you should get it well in advance of the tour departure date. Allow at least six weeks to obtain a passport. For additional fees, a passport can be issued on an expedited basis, although this is not always guaranteed. In the United States this can be done at the nearest passport office, many post offices, or the county clerk’s office. You may also visit <http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html> for information on how to get or renew a passport.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport. Keep the photocopies in a safe place, so if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so **do not pack it in your checked luggage**.

**CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS:** Your tour includes most necessary expenses. You will want to bring enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as taxi rides, gifts, laundry, special gratuities, meals on your own, and personal items. It is best to carry small denominations of cash as many places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. While U.S. dollars may be accepted in more populous areas of either country, it is always convenient to have a supply of local currency for such items. It is best to acquire local currency before leaving home, or at the airport or a bank upon arrival in Santiago. Should you extend your vacation in Chile beyond what is offered in the program, you’ll want to obtain local currency. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information regarding banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas. The official currency of Chile is the Chilean Peso (CLP), while in Argentina it is the Argentine Peso (ARS), two completely separate currencies. You can check the latest currency conversion rates by visiting “XE-The World’s Favorite Currency Site” at: <http://www.xe.com/>.

**ELECTRICITY:** The electrical current in Chile and Argentina is 220V (110-120V in the U.S.). In Chile, most electrical outlets are of the European standard socket “Type “C” Europlug.” These outlets are ungrounded with openings for two round pins. A less common outlet features openings for three flat blades, with two of the blades angled. Both types are in use in most of the hotels we will stay in. A few hotels may provide plug-in adapters that can accommodate standard American-type plug-ins with two flat pins of similar size (but not with one flat blade larger than the other). In Argentina, the “Type “C” Europlug” is also widely in use, but you may also find the “Type I” with three flat pins positioned in a triangular pattern.

Many appliances now are dual-designed to operate on European electrical voltages, but you definitely should bring adapters and an all-purpose transformer if there is any doubt whether your appliances are suitable for higher voltage.

**INTERNET/WI-FI:** Internet and Wi-Fi service is available at most of the hotels.

**LANGUAGE:** Castilian – or Spanish – is the language primarily spoken in both Chile and Argentina, although they are spoken with markedly different dialectical variations and colloquialisms, particularly noticeable in the two different accents.

**HEALTH:** VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

**Typhoid** – Typhoid fever is a bacterial disease spread by contaminated food and water. Because it is present in Chile and Argentina, the CDC recommends vaccination as a standard precaution for most travelers. In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers’ Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel).

Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html) (click on Travel Health). Those who are not fit for light to moderate physical activity, including those with physical disabilities that affect mobility and balance or other conditions associated with poor health, are advised not to join the trip.

**Sun Exposure** – The sun’s ultraviolet rays are significantly dangerous in this portion of the southern hemisphere due to the long daylight hours. The sun’s ultraviolet rays are damaging to the eyes and skin with prolonged exposure. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. Severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

**Biting Insects** – Biting insects are not a serious problem on this tour in most places we visit and there are no chiggers at all; however, we may encounter some mosquitoes in wetlands around Santiago or some of the forests in the south. To protect yourself, we recommend wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants, and applying insect repellent when necessary. Lotions are preferable to sprays from the standpoint of being less obtrusive to others and also because lotions tend to come in smaller bottles, and therefore easier to pack. Cutter and OFF! are leading brands.

**Insect Repellents** – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions,

time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.

- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

**SUGGESTED READING:** A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

### ***Birds:***

Jaramillo, Alvaro. *Birds of Chile*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. This is the most important field guide for the Chilean portion of this trip. It is the best all-around field guide to the birds of Chile, featuring excellent plates, text, and interesting taxonomic notes. It is also lightweight and easily portable. While Chile and Argentina have a few bird species in common, this guide alone will not suffice as a reference for the entirety of the tour.

Martinez Piña, Daniel. Gonzalez Cifuentes, Gonzalo. *Field Guide to the Birds of Chile*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021. An excellent new guide to Chile, with well executed illustrations, flight spreads and up to date maps. Considering this and the Jaramillo guide are slender, they make a great lightweight pairing, and are a great combination for tackling any identification issues in Chile.

Pearman, Mark. Areta, Juan Ignacio. *Birds of Argentina and the South-west Atlantic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020. After more than a decade in the works, this all-new guide to the birds of Argentina is finally out, with great illustrations featured in no other guide, range maps, and information about regional habitats, a selection of illustrated nests and sonograms. It is by far the best guide on the Argentinian avifauna printed to date. At 480 pages, it is twice the thickness of the Chilean guide. After all, Argentina boasts a total of 1,075 bird species, while Chile barely surpasses 500.

**Other Birding References:**

Erize, Francisco., Jorge R. Rodriguez Mata, and Maurice Rumboll. *Birds of South America. Non-Passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers*. Princeton Illustrated Checklist. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006. Small and portable, but of limited usefulness because it does not include any non-passerine birds, and its broad coverage of birds extends far beyond Chile.

Ridgely, R. S., and G. Tudor. *Field Guide to the Songbirds of South America*. Mildred-Wyatt World Series in Ornithology. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009. Features excellent plates and maps but covers only passerines (no raptors, waterbirds, waders, etc.), so is of limited usefulness.

**Other Natural History References:**

Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Tropical America: A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding and Diversity*. Shelburn, Vermont: Chapters Publishing Ltd., 1994. This wonderful resource was written by VENT leader Steve Hilty. Even though the book's focus is primarily on the tropical forest ecosystem, it conveys information that applies to any South American destination. Highly recommended.

Kricher, John C. *A Neotropical Companion: An Introduction to the Animals, Plants, and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999. The focus is primarily tropical, but travelers may find it of use even on this trip.

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

**RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, "VENT") act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on May 3, 2024, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the



tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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4/30/2024 – RG  
5/3/2024 – SG