

Overseas Adventure Travel

Invites you to join Distant Dimensions (Dorothy Drummond) on a trip to the

Chilean Fjords & Patagonian Wilderness

September 11-26, 2009

15- Day Cruise Tour; Featuring a 5-night cruise
on the 125-passenger *M/S Skorprios III*

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Chilean Fjords & Patagonian Wilderness

15-Day Cruise Tour – 2009

Santiago * Puerto Varas * Puerto Natales * Torres del Paine

Featuring a 5-night cruise aboard the Skorpios III cruise ship

**With Optional Pre-Trip Extension: Chile: Santiago & the
Colchagua countryside**

**With Optional Post-Trip Extension: Buenos Aires & Iguassu
Falls, Argentina**

Overview of Your CruiseTour

In a country of great natural beauty, Chile's deep southern wilderness—Patagonia—offers a coastal landscape of spectacular visual and emotional power. Carved by centuries of geological movement, the Patagonian wild offers more fjords than all of Scandinavia, jutting mountains, steep cliffs, narrow waterways, and majestic glaciers.

The centerpiece of your adventure is a five-night cruise on M/N *Skorpios III*, a fully equipped, modern ship with the amenities of a hotel. Your cruise takes you through the Southern Ice Field of Chilean Patagonia, home of the largest glaciers in the hemisphere. You'll pass among ancient glaciers and stately icebergs that will astound you with their size and subtle variety of hues. The play of light and shadow on ice, water, and rock here is like no other place on Earth. Your cruise will pause for close-up excursions on smaller boats as well as hikes on land.

Your tour begins with three nights in Santiago, nestled in the Andes, where you'll be introduced to the region's rich colonial heritage. You'll also discover Chile's beautiful Lake District in Puerto Montt and Puerto Varas. Your stay in Patagonia starts in Puerto Natales and includes a full-day tour in Torres del Paine National Park, with its dramatic granite peaks and vivid blue lakes. After your cruise, you'll have time to enjoy lovely Punta Arenas and the vineyard region of the fertile Maipo Valley in Santiago. All along the way, you'll enjoy our varied and exclusive Discovery Series activities, such as dinner at a local Chilean ranch and lunch at a Patagonian *estancia*.



What's Included in Your Trip Cost

- **International air transportation** as stated in your final air itinerary (included with your final documents package), and all related private, roundtrip airport/hotel transfers (if you have purchased flights through Grande Circle).
- **3 internal flights**
- **Accommodations** as specified on your final hotel list (included with your final documents package)
- **29 meals**—13 breakfasts, 8 lunches, and 8 dinners
- **6 sightseeing tours:**
 - Santiago
 - Puerto Montt
 - Osorno Volcano & Petrohue Falls
 - Torres del Paine National Park
 - Maipo Canyon
- **Exclusive Discovery Series Events:**
 - **Live the life of a *huaso*, a Chilean cowboy**, during a farm visit and rodeo demonstration
 - **Savor fine Chilean wine** during a visit to a winery near Santiago
 - **Gain insight into Chile's political past** during a discussion with a local expert
- Exclusive services of a resident Overseas Adventure Travel Trip Leader
- Private motorcoach land travel
- Automatic common carrier accident insurance with coverage of \$250,000
- **5% Frequent Traveler Credit applicable towards the next Grand Circle Travel or Overseas Adventure Travel program** on which you depart in one year. After the first year, your credit is adjusted to 3%. Frequent Traveler Credits expire after two years.
- Baggage handling for 1 standard piece of luggage per person (70 lbs.), including tips

Not Included

- Meals not specified in this itinerary
- Optional sightseeing tours
- Tips to your Trip Leader, motorcoach drivers, and local guides—for guidelines, see below
- Items of a personal nature, including laundry, wines, liquors, mineral waters, etc.
- Any domestic or foreign departure taxes, airline taxes, or government fees and taxes (shown separately on your invoice)
- Passport and visa charges

Tipping Guidelines

For those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. All tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (this is usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (do not use personal or traveler's check for tips). Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion.

Oat Trip Leader: It is customary to express a personal "thank you" to your OAT Trip Leader at the end of your trip, especially if he or she has provided you with individual service. As a guideline, many travelers give \$7-\$10 per person per day.



Please Note: This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved, or cobbled routes. For your comfort and safety, we recommend this program only to individuals in good physical condition.

Your Itinerary

An important word about your vacation

This is the itinerary we strive to follow, but due to local circumstances (such as moveable holidays, museum/site closing days, and weather conditions) it is important for you to understand that we may not always be able to follow this plan in this exact order. The sequence of places visited, the days on which included features occur and Optional Tours are offered may vary.

In addition, the described Optional Tours require a minimum participation level. Overseas Adventure Travel may choose to cancel any tour that does not reach that level. If any tour that you pre-purchased is cancelled, you will receive a full refund in the form that you paid.

If you have planned an activity on your own during the leisure time of your itinerary, and unforeseen circumstances result in a change that may conflict with those plans, we will make our best efforts to accommodate you for any missed included features. Please understand that this may not always be possible. You may be in the position of having to choose between participating in a group activity and carrying on with your “on own” plans. We appreciate your understanding that any changes made to your program are in the interests of ensuring you the best possible trip.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Fly overnight from the U.S. today. (Check your individual flight itinerary for departure and arrival times.)

Day 2 Santiago, Chile ● **Welcome Dinner**

All Day

You'll touch down in the Chilean capital this morning, where an Overseas Adventure Travel representative will meet you and assist with the transfer to your hotel.

After lunch (which is on your own), take part in a guided orientation walk, giving you the lay of the land in your Santiago neighborhood. Most of this afternoon is yours to spend as you please. Begin exploring Santiago on your own, or just unwind from your long flight. Late this afternoon, meet your travel companions and Trip Leader for a Welcome Drink and Briefing, during which you'll learn some more details of what's to come in South America and have the opportunity to purchase the optional tour.

Afterwards, we'll spend more time getting to know each other as we feast on Chilean cuisine during a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

Included Meal: Dinner

Day 3 **Santiago**

- **Santiago City Tour**
- **At leisure**

Morning:

Home to a third of Chile's 12 million people, Santiago rests at the confluence of the Mapocho and Maipo rivers, surrounded on all sides by Andean peaks. To be sure, it's a breathtaking setting for a capital that has witnessed a remarkable history—from settlement by conquistadors in 1541 to the Marxist, military and, finally, democratic governments of the twentieth century.

On this morning's included tour, we'll enjoy a closer look at the Chilean capital. We'll begin the day as thousands of *Santiaguinos* do, with a ride on the city subway. Then we'll set off on our included tour, passing by several historic monuments and buildings, including the Palacio de la Moneda, the current seat of the government, and the city's most important plaza, the Plaza de Armas, which has been the heart of Santiago since its origin in 1541. Ringing the plaza are many important buildings that are considered national monuments. Here we can see the Correo Central (main post office), Iglesia Catedral (Cathedral Church), the Municipalidad de Santiago (City Hall), and the National Historic Museum. Nearby, we'll find the Mercado Central (Central Market), an elegant wrought-iron structure inaugurated in 1872 as the site of a National Exhibition. Now it is the city's central market, filled with colorful stalls and seafood eateries (called *marisquerias*). We'll enjoy lunch here, eating just as locals do.

Afternoon & Evening

Next, we'll ride through the residential districts of Vitacura and Los Condes, where we'll see beautiful homes and parks. On the way back to the hotel, we pass through Providencia, a district of great tradition and strong commercial and social activity. We'll also stop at one of Santiago's leading lapis lazuli shops, where we learn about this semi-precious stone that is found only in Chile and Afghanistan. We'll also learn about the importance of copper to the Chilean economy and find out how artisans engrave the beautiful plates that are so symbolic of the country.

The rest of your afternoon and evening are at leisure, and dinner is on your own.

Included Meal: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 4 **Santiago**

- **Optional Valparaiso excursion**
- **Discussion about Chilean politics**

Morning & Afternoon:

This morning we can head west from Santiago on an optional, full-day exploration of the Pacific Coast. We begin with the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Valparaiso, one of Chile's most historic and picturesque ports. In an Exclusive Discovery Series event, we'll travel via two typical modes of transportation like the locals in Valparaiso: navigating its zigzag roads in a colectivo state what this and riding an ascensor, or funicular, from the flat shoreline known as El Plan up to the colorful neighborhoods that cap the hillside. We'll also enjoy lunch at a local home. The cost of this optional tour is approximately \$95 per person.

Or you can spend the day exploring Santiago on your own.

Evening:

An Exclusive Discovery Series discussion this evening provides us with a helpful background to the city's exciting and turbulent modern history. This discussion concentrates on Chile's most controversial leaders—Salvador Allende and Augusto Pinochet—as well as the country's current economic situation.

Dinner is on your own tonight.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 5 **Santiago/Puerto Varas**

- **Fly to Puerto Montt**
- **Visit Puerto Mott, gateway to the Lakes District**
- **Rodeo Demonstration**

Morning & Afternoon:

After breakfast, we transfer to the Santiago airport for our flight to Puerto Montt, where we arrive early this morning. German émigrés founded the town, envisioning a seaport hub that would bring them and the region unprecedented prosperity. It took 60 years and the arrival of the railroad, but their vision would become reality. Puerto Montt displays a distinctly European character, in this case German, which we can plainly see in the pitched roofs, carved balcony woodwork and weather-beaten shingles of its residences.

This seaside resort town is our entrée to the Andean foothills and Chile's famed Lake District. The Mapuche Indians call this area the meeting ground between man and God, and with its mirror-like lakes, cascading waterfalls, and gently fuming volcanoes perpetually capped with snow, it's certainly one of the loveliest regions of Chile.

Upon arrival in Puerto Montt, we'll head downtown to explore the city's Angelmo fish market, on the shores of Reloncavi Sound. We'll stroll through the bustling market stalls and observe the vast array of freshly-caught seafood—including salmon, sea urchin, giant mussels, and barnacles—for sale here.

We'll continue on to our hotel in Puerto Varas, a neat, busy little town whose architecture reflects the influence of the German expatriates who settled here more than a century and a half ago. After an orientation walk with our Trip Leader, you'll have the remainder of the day to explore Puerto Varas at leisure.

Evening:

This evening, we'll get a taste of everyday, family-centered Chilean life as a guest at a Chilean horse-breeding ranch. You'll see how a farm family lives and works, and you'll see a rodeo demonstration, as well. Then sit down together and share a homemade meal.

Our travelers often say that these meals are among the most memorable aspects of their trips, largely because they provide a unique opportunity for personal interaction with local people and offer a rare glimpse into local customs and culture.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6 **Puerto Varas**

- **Explore Osorno Volcano & Petrohue Falls**

All day

Today we'll head to Vicente Perez Rosales National Park for a spirited hike around the Osorno Volcano area. We'll follow trails through a *coihue* forest, keeping our eyes peeled for a glimpse of native fauna. We'll also spend time in nearby Petrohue Falls, where we'll admire the crystalline waters and delight in scenic views of Osorno's perpetually snow-capped summit and verdant, forested slopes.

Afterwards, we'll gather in local home for a tasty meal of barbecued trout. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure.

This evening, your Trip Leader will offer fascination introduction to Patagonia, giving you insight into the discoveries ahead. Dinner tonight is on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 7 **Puerto Varas/Puerto Natales**

- **Fly to Punto Arenas**
- **Overland to Puerto Natales**

Morning:

After an early breakfast, we transfer to the airport for our flight to Punta Arenas, arriving in the late morning. A charming and historic port on the Strait of Magellan, Punta Arenas was established in the mid-1800s. The town boasts lovely old mansions, two fine Salesian churches, and charming tree-lined streets.

We then transfer by motorcoach to Puerto Natales. Founded in 1911, Puerto Natales was colonized by Chileans coming from the island of Chiloé, who contributed to the development of cattle raising along with the German and English colonists. Together they turned Patagonia into one of the main stockbreeding producers and exporting areas in the world until the end of the 1970s. The splendid territory surrounding the city is still dominated by sheep ranches (*estancias*).

Afternoon:

We'll stop for lunch—a typical *cordero asado*, or lamb barbecue—at one of the many *estancias* in the region whose livelihood is based on raising sheep. After we dine, the ranch owner will show us around the *estancia*, including a stop at his sheep-shearing shed. Afterwards, we continue driving throughout the *pampa*, keeping our eyes peeled for rheas, Patagonia's answer to the ostrich; guanacos, cousins of the llama; and scores of birds, including the crested cara-cara, that can be found here.

Evening:

The evening is yours to relax after your journey, and dinner is on your own. Perhaps you'll venture out for dinner and an evening stroll in this picturesque city. Your Trip Leader will be happy to assist you in choosing from the area's many restaurants.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 8 **Puerto Natales/Torres del Paine**

● **Explore Torres del Paine National Park**

All Day:

After breakfast we depart for Torres del Paine, whose national park was declared a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1978 and is renowned as one of the most remote, beautiful, and unspoiled places in the world. The landscape is rich and diverse in dramatic geological formations, which combine in several distinct ecosystems, from the wind-bent grasses of the plains to the sheer, frozen cliffs of the Andes.

The park comprises about 935 square miles and is part of the Paine Massif, granite mountains that emerge suddenly from the plains of the Patagonian steppes and capped by crumbly sedimentary rock that used to lie on the valley floor. This granite intrusion—one of the most recognizable mountain profiles in the world—was formed about 12 million years ago, making the Paine Massif quite young geologically. Sedimentary rock and magma collided violently and were thrust high into the air. After the ice age, when the ice fields covering the base of the massif began to melt, water and wind carved the rock into huge towers of varying shapes, at heights up to 9,000 feet. Some of these are covered in permanent ice. At our level, the crushed rock and sediment colors the lakes in the park from a milky gray to yellows and greens and the dramatic blue caused by blue algae.

The glaciers of the park are in quick retreat—up to 56 feet a year for the last 90 years, creating a remarkable study of soil creation and plant development from bare rock to thick forest. The flora of the park ranges from grassland to southern beech forests. Many parts of the park were too remote for the cattle and sheep ranchers, and so they exist today in a pristine state. More than 40 mammals make their home in the park, including the guanaco, puma, and Patagonian gray fox. Some of the world’s rarest bird species—the Andean condor, the crested caracara, and the black vulture among them—are found here as well.

We enjoy a full-day tour of this extraordinary national park, including a hike through one of its beautiful areas. Around midday, we’ll break for an included boxed lunch. We return to our hotel this evening and enjoy dinner together.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9 **Torres del Paine/Puerto Natales/Patagonian Fjords and Southern Ice Field**

- **Return to visit Torres del Paine National Park**
- **Begin Patagonian Fjords and Southern Ice Field Cruise**

All Day:

We return to Torres del Paine National Park after breakfast for a morning of more discoveries.

In the late afternoon, we transfer by motorcoach to the pier in Puerto Natales, where we embark on our ship, *Skorpions III*, our home for the next five nights.

Tonight, we gather together with our ship’s Captain and crew, our Trip Leader, and our fellow travelers for a welcome dinner.

The *Skorpions III* is a 230-foot, fully equipped sea-going vessel built in 1995, with 47 cabins and a capacity of 125 passengers. It uses the most advanced telecommunications technology and satellite navigation available and also has a modern water-treatment plant. Each cabin comes with a private bathroom with shower, a fridge-bar, television,

and a security box. The decks, salons, and dining rooms are spacious and attractively decorated, providing welcoming locations for relaxing with your traveling companions. There is a game room and a reading room, as well. The cuisine is selected from the best local meats, seafood, and fresh vegetables, and a large variety of Chilean wines have been selected for our voyage.

Over the next five nights, we’ll explore the channels and fjords that border the Southern Ice Field of Chilean Patagonia, the third-largest reserve of fresh water on the planet and the home of the largest and most spectacular glaciers in the southern hemisphere.

Our maritime cruising begins this evening, as our ship departs from Puerto Natales and navigates northward through the Patagonian Channels, Kirke Narrows, Channel Morla

Vicuña, and Seno Union.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 10 **Patagonian Fjords and Southern Ice Field**

- **Antrim Fjord**

All Day:

This morning, we navigate northward through the breathtaking Sarmiento Channel, Pitt Channel, and Concepcion Channel, arriving this evening at Antrim Fjord and the beautiful Eyre Inlet, where we anchor for the night. After tea this afternoon, we can disembark onto a smaller boat for a cruise up the Antrim Fjord, enjoying a close-up look at the area's unique vegetation.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11 **Patagonian Fjords and Southern Ice Field**

- **Pio XI glacier**
- **Puerto Eden**

All Day:

After breakfast, our ship maneuvers in front of the awesome Pio XI Glacier. With a surface area of 487 square miles, it is the largest glacier in South America and part of the largest national park in Chile, Bernardo O'Higgins National Park. We'll disembark to a smaller boat to cruise along the edge of the glacier.

We set out again at midday to navigate the Eyre Bay, Grappler Channel, and (Paso del Indio) Indian Passage. We arrive in the late afternoon at Puerto Eden, cradle of the ancient native tribes of the region, and disembark the ship into boats that will take you to the village located on Wellington Island. The first inhabitants here were the Kaweskar (or Alacalufes) natives who navigated through these latitudes in fragile canoes. Though these tribes are on the verge of extinction, some members continue to live here. As a tribute to these survivors this cruising route is called the "Kaweskar Explorers Route." You'll notice that the village has no streets—only footbridges.

This geographical area was formed by the movement of plates of the Earth's crust during the last period of the Ice Age (60,000 to 70,000 years ago). The movement was so intense that Patagonia's present channels and fjords were ripped from solid rock, becoming visible as the glaciers slowly retreated and melted. The distinctive geography and the rich marine and terrestrial life of the region attracted human settlement.

Anthropologists have determined that four primary groups settled the region: the Selk'nam (or Onas), terrestrial hunters who inhabited the prairies of the Tierra de Fuego; the Yamanas (or Yamanes), canoe nomads who lived around Beagle Channel; the Aonikenk (or Tehuelches), nomads and terrestrial hunters who inhabited the Andes Mountain Range up to Bariloche; and the Kaweskar (or Alacalufes). It is this group that lived in your navigational route—canoe nomads who traveled through the channels and islands between the Gulf of Sorrow and the Strait of Magellan living off seals, wolves,

fish, and shellfish. They inhabited an area of great climatic severity, with snow and ice storms, hurricane-force winds, and freezing water.

At dusk, we set out from Puerto Eden, sailing through both the Indian Passage and the Abyss Passage (*Paso del Abismo*).

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12 **Patagonian Fjords and Southern Ice Field**

- **Amalia Glacier**
- **Villarrica**

All Day:

This morning we'll get up close to Amalia Glacier, an icy behemoth that dwarfs our ship. Later, re-entering Chilean Patagonia via the Calvo Inlet, we'll anchor off the coast of the Villarrica Fishing Village. Surrounded by hulking glaciers, we'll experience a highlight of the trip: if the unpredictable weather of Patagonia permits, we'll board the small motor boats once again and make for the mass of ice. Together, our group will step onto a millennium-old glacier and share a toast of whiskey to celebrate our Southern Ice Field adventure.

Though the movement of ice in the region appears to be “glacial” to our eyes, this dynamic environment is actually in constant flux, all the more so in recent years due to the effects of global warming. A 2003 study led by researchers at the U.S. Jet Propulsion Laboratory found that the Patagonia glaciers of Chile and Argentina are melting so rapidly that they are making a significant contribution to the rise of the sea level. They determined that ice has been lost at a rate equal to a .04-millimeter rise in ocean water each year between 1975 and 2000. The team combined data from the ground study of 63 of the largest Patagonia ice fields and data from a 2000 space shuttle mission. In addition to a general increase in melting, the team found accelerated ice loss—about .1 millimeter per year—between 1995 and 2000.

Included Meal: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13 **Patagonian Fjords and Southern Ice Field**

- **Calvo Fjord**

All Day:

Today we visit the Calvo Fjord and admire four glaciers of different sizes, shapes, and colors. The play of light, reflection, and shadow against the glacial ice, which is of varying density and moisture content, creates a profound palette of subtle hues. Then we participate in an excursion aboard the Captain Constantino (our icebreaker motor boat, designed by the ship's captain). The ship will get closer to the Calvo Glacier as long as the ice and weather conditions permit.

Researchers believe that a number of factors have combined to change the environment here: a rise in air temperature, a decrease in precipitation, and the unique nature of the Patagonia ice fields, which are dominated by “calving” glaciers, like the Calvo Glacier, which you see today. Calving glaciers spawn icebergs directly into the ocean and have different dynamics than the glaciers that end on land and melt at their front ends. Calving glaciers, researchers said, are more sensitive to climate change once they are pushed out of their delicate equilibrium, making this region the fastest area of glacial retreat on Earth.

This evening, as the ship steams toward Puerto Natales, we’ll enjoy a formal dinner hosted by our Captain.

Included Meal: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14 **Puerto Natales/Santiago**

- **Arrive Puerto Natales**
- **Overland to Punta Arenas**
 - **Fly to Santiago**

All day:

After breakfast, we disembark our ship and transfer to Punta Arenas, where an orientation tour will familiarize us with the town. Lunch is on our own. Later this afternoon, we fly to Santiago (our flight time is approximately 4 hours), arriving this evening. Dinner is on your own tonight.

Included Meal: Breakfast

Day 15 **Santiago/Depart**

- **El Canelo School visit**
- **Maipo Canyon**
 - **Depart for the U.S.**

All Day:

This morning we’ll visit a local school (when in session), which is sponsored in part by donations from the Grand Circle Foundation. During our visit we’ll learn about Chile’s educational system, and have a chance to visit with the students. Then we’ll visit one last adventure outpost, Maipo Valley, within easy driving distance of Santiago. Here we’ll visit a local winery, where we’ll chat with the vineyard’s owners and sample one of

Chile's finest exports. This afternoon we'll transfer to the airport for our overnight flight home--or fly to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to begin your post-trip extension.

Included Meal: Breakfast

Day 16 **Arrive in U.S.**

You arrive in the U.S. this morning, and continue on connecting flights as needed to return home.