

## LA PATAGONIA

Located at the southern end of South America, Patagonia is a territory shared by the countries of Chile and Argentina. The region of Patagonia encompasses the southern section of the Andes mountain range to the southwest towards the Pacific ocean (Chilean side) and from the east of the Andes to the valleys it follows south through Rio Colorado towards the Atlantic Ocean (Argentinian side). It covers an area of around 777,000 sq. km.

### POPULATION

This region is very sparsely populated having approximately 1.5 people per sq. km.

Many regions of Patagonia have very low population density. The total population of Patagonia is about 2 million, which is in Argentina and Chile combined, with the large majority living in Argentina.

### ARGENTINIAN PATAGONIA

The Patagonian region of Argentina is subdivided into: Northern Patagonia, called Comahue region, including the provinces of Río Negro and Neuquén; and Southern Patagonia, which includes the provinces of Chubut, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and South Atlantic Islands.

Argentine Patagonia has two clearly differentiated types of relief:

To the east is the plateau area, known as the Patagonian plateau. The action of the plateau does not end at the land but raises the Patagonian coast, forming numerous coastal features such as capes, points, coves, caves, islands, bays and different beaches.

To the west is the area of the mountains, whose typical vegetation is the Andean-Patagonian forest. The Andean sub-region coincides with the Patagonian Andes.

In order to preserve the natural conditions, numerous National Parks were created, such as Lanín, Nahuel Huapi and Los Glaciares, which were declared Natural World Heritage by UNESCO in 1981.

### CHILEAN PATAGONIA

In Chile, the area of Patagonia does not exist as a political entity, it is only an imaginary boundary. Chilean Patagonia starts from the Gulf of Corcovado to Cape Horn, covering the entire national territory from the Pacific Ocean to the border with Argentina.

Chilean Patagonia differs radically from its Argentine opposite, both in physical and climatic terms. Chile is dominated by the Andean mountain range, archipelagos and glacial lakes.

The area is traditionally called the Southern Zone of Chile; it is a region of glaciation, which is covered by two large ice masses, the Northern Ice Field and the Southern Ice Field.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

- Air, Water, and Noise Pollution
- Deforestation
- Solid Waste
- Industrial overfishing
- Petroleum