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# PORT EXPLORER



## USHUAIA ARGENTINA

**W**aite Hockin Stirling was a British missionary in the mid 1800s. Under the auspices of the Anglican Church's Patagonia Missionary Society of England, Reverend Stirling established a mission outpost among the indigenous Yaganes people. On the bank of the Beagle Channel, on the southern extreme of Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, Reverend Stirling came ashore. The Yaganes called the area Ushuaia.

The first permanent missionary assigned to Ushuaia was Thomas Bridges. His young son Lucas would grow up among the Indians and learn their language and customs. It was an adventure he would never forget. With great respect and admiration for the primitive Yaganes, Lucas would later write (a year before his passing at the age of 75) the definitive book on the indigenous people of Tierra del Fuego and the clash of cultures that all started in Ushuaia in the mid 1800s. The book, published in 1948, is titled "Uttermost Part of the Earth". In Ushuaia the Bridges family is remembered with high esteem to this day.

Ushuaia, a town of approximately 60,000, looks out over the Beagle Channel. The 150 mile long body of water is named after the British ship HMS Beagle that sailed through here twice (the second time with Charles Darwin aboard) during missions of discovery in the 1800s. It was not the British Navy, however, but rather the penal system of a recently independent Argentina that led to the growth and development of Ushuaia. In an effort to stake their claim to this region of Tierra del Fuego the government of Argentina authorized the construction of a large military-run prison along with the supporting infrastructure. All work done by the prisoners themselves, of course.

From its humble beginnings Ushuaia is now the largest community in, and the gateway to, Argentina's amazing Isla Grande de Tierra Del Fuego.

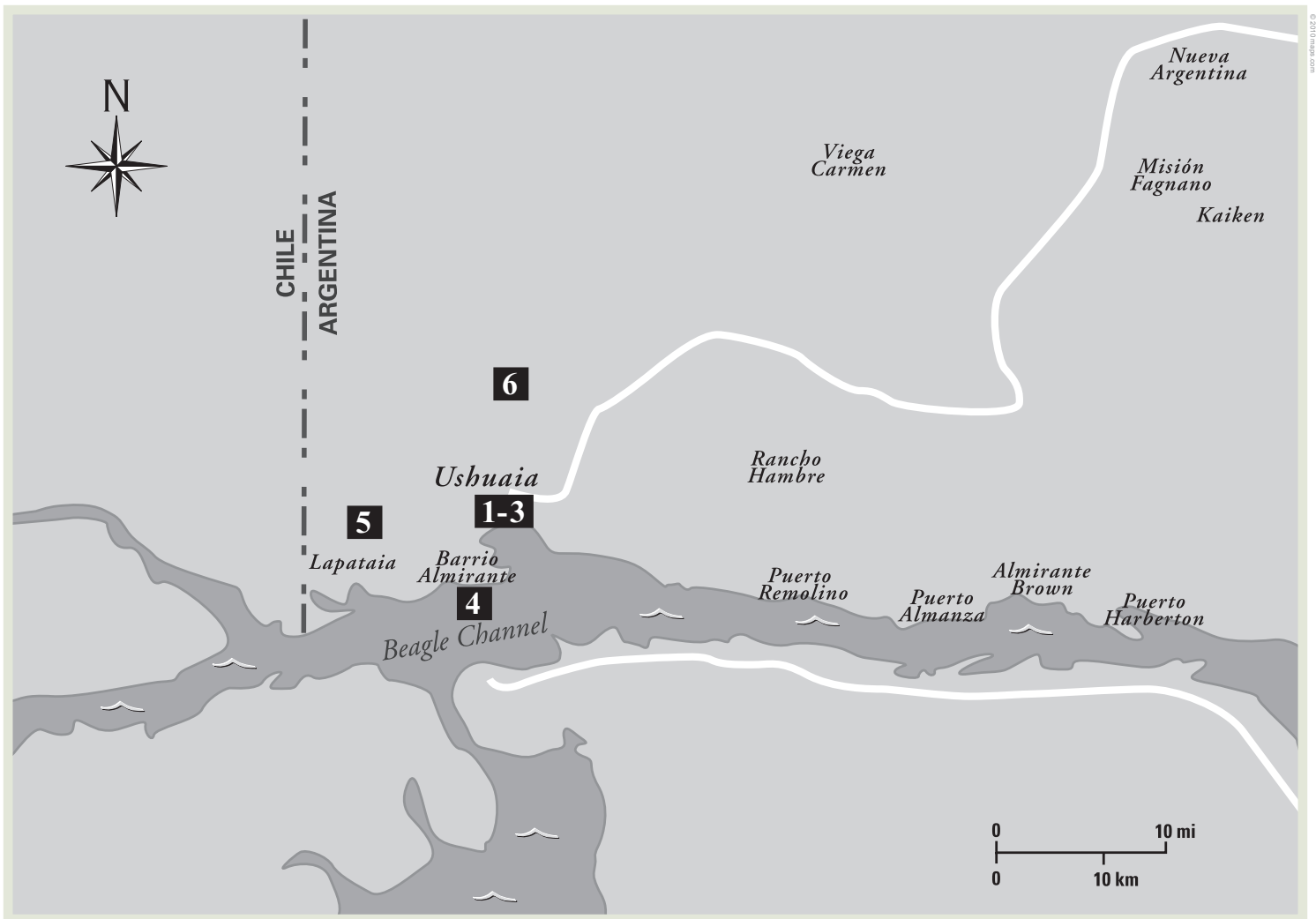


### HISTORY

In 1520, under the flag of Spain's King Charles V, the famous Portuguese explorer and navigator Ferdinand Magellan discovered and sailed into the straits that would later bear his name. As night fell he and his crew marveled at the many fires lit along the shore by the aboriginal Indians. Magellan called the area Tierra del Fuego. He would be astounded at the primitive nature of the people who inhabited "the end of the world".

A little over three centuries later, in 1832, the British ship HMS Beagle was circumnavigating the earth on its famous second voyage of discovery. It was on this voyage that, as ship's naturalist, Charles Darwin joined the crew of Captain Robert Fitzroy. Upon reaching Tierra del Fuego Darwin too was stunned at the utterly primal state in which the indigenous people lived.

The aboriginal tribes neither realized nor understood the lowly state in which they were regarded by westerners. It would matter little in the grand scheme. The Selknam and Yaganes people were quickly dying off from western disease brought to their shore by Europeans and against which they had no resistance. Neither had they any defense against European guns which decimated their food supply and with which they themselves were ruthlessly and methodically hunted down and slaughtered. In less than one generation the tribes of Tierra del Fuego, a people who had struggled to survive in this brutally unforgiving land for 12 thousand years, were driven into extinction.



Beginning in 1884, to bolster its claim to the region, the government of Argentina began to build a series of prisons around Ushuaia, a small settlement that was little more than an English missionary outpost at the time. Fishing, logging, cattle and sheep ranching, together with the discovery of gold, all combined to lure more settlers to Ushuaia and the surrounding region. Today visitors from around the world come to Ushuaia to discover for themselves the natural wonders of Tierra del Fuego...“the end of the world”.

#### USHUAIA PLACES OF INTEREST

**1** The **Prison Museum** is part of the refurbished military prison complex that began construction in the early 1900s. The museum has on display many prison cells and artifacts that show the harsh environment endured by some of Argentina’s most hardened criminals as well as those who simply fell out of favor with the country’s political powers of their day.

**2** The **Maritime Museum** is also located in the old and infamous military prison on the grounds of the former Presidio de Ushuaia. The museum displays a number of exhibits that tell the story of Ushuaia and its relationship to the surrounding islands and the sea. The museum is supported in large part by the town and the Argentine Navy.

**3** The **End of the World Museum** traces the heritage and history of Ushuaia and the surrounding region beginning with the indigenous people and continuing through to the first European explorers, adventures and settlers.

#### Beyond Ushuaia

**4** The **Sea Wolves Island** (Isla de los Lobos) Nature Reserve is reached by boat through the Beagle Channel. The island is the protected home to a large colony of sea lions, seals and sea birds.

**5** The **Tierra del Fuego National Park** is an amazingly beautiful reserve that includes numerous hiking trails and walking paths that wind through forests, around the lakes and along the rocky bays and inlets that dot the coastline of the Beagle Channel. The trails continue beside rivers that flow with the runoff of the snow covered mountain peaks. The park also features the Tierra del Fuego Southern Train that slowly makes its way through this wonderfully scenic wilderness.

**6** The **Martial Glacier** is just a couple miles northeast of Ushuaia. A chairlift takes visitors from the base to the top. The views are spectacular.

## SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Ushuaia and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take with you only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard. Clouds and rain often move in quickly. It is recommended to dress in layers and bring a waterproof jacket.

## LOCAL CUSTOMS

Bargaining: Prices are generally fixed.

Tipping: A 10% tip is customary at restaurants.

## LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALITIES

This region is famous for salmon and other seafood. Some favorite local dishes include: Patagonia Pie combines freshly caught salmon (cooked and shredded) with carrots, red pepper, parsley, ginger, salt and pepper, garlic, cream and hard-boiled eggs then mixed to make a pie filling, sprinkled with grated cheese and baked till golden brown. Patagonian Lamb Chops, Magellan Spider Crab and Smoked Salmon are among the local favorites.

Yerba Mate is Argentina's national drink. It is a strong herbal tea. Wine has been grown in Argentina for over 400 years and today the country is the 5th largest producer in the world. Little has been exported over the years due to mediocre quality and the fact that the Argentineans consume most of it themselves. Over the past decade or so, some of the best wineries (large and small) have greatly improved their vintage and consequently expanded their export markets. Today many of Argentina's best wines are highly sought after and greatly appreciated.

## SHOPPING

Ushuaia is a tax free zone. San Martin St. is the main shopping area for stone, metal, wood and wool crafts and clothing. Try to find a good local craftsman (as opposed to foreign factory made). Don't be surprised if you get a scent of sweet warm chocolate on San Martin St. Just follow your nose...you will not be disappointed.

## LOCAL CURRENCY

Argentina's currency is the peso (ARS). Several banks have ATMs and will accept traveler's checks for a fee.

## POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES

The Correo Argentino (Argentine Post) is located at the intersection of San Martin Street and Godoy Street.

Dial the following access numbers to use a personal calling card:

AT&T: 0800.555.4288

MCI: 0800.555.1002

## TRANSPORTATION

Car rentals and 4WD vehicles are available. There are a few taxis in town.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

The City Tourist Information Office is located at 674 San Martin Street. The Provincial Tourist Information Office (Instituto Fuegoينو de Turismo) is located at Albatros Hotel, 505 Avenida Maipu.

## USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Yes - Si

No - No

Good Day - Buenos Dias

Good Bye - Adios

Thank-you - Gracias

You're welcome - De Nada

