Patagonia - a unique holidaying experience by Gary Clail

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Patagonia is situated at the very tip of Latin America and stretches across both Chile and Argentina. The bucolic landscape is breath-taking in its beauty and formidable in equal measure. It boasts some of the most varied species of wildlife, and this rich diversity is largely thanks to the remoteness of the region. These include the penguins in the south, the world-famous birdlife of the Falkland Islands, the endangered huemul and Patagonia's largest predator, the puma.

The name itself is thought to have been derived from a mythical race of people, known as 'Patagones'. It is believed that Ferdinand Magellan embarked upon a voyage in around 1520 and it was here that he claimed to have first encountered the 'Patagonian Giants'. Magellan also lends his name to the tidal waterway separating the province of Tierra del Feugo with the rest of the mainland and also to a colony of penguins, known as Magellanic penguins.

Charles Darwin famously visited the region whilst working as a naturalist aboard the vessel HMS Beagle in 1832 and his experiences were to have a profound impact on him. It is believed that this was the primary source of inspiration for his cataclysmic book 'The Origin of the Species', written over two decades later in 1859.

Patagonia's main attractions include the famous glaciers and of course the Torres del Paine, three granite towers which dominate much of the skyline. There are activities for the most adventurous of people, including glacier trekking, kayaking, horse riding and hiking to name but a few. However for those that are perhaps a little more cautious or simply looking to experience the many delights of Patagonia in a more relaxed way, then there are a number of well-organised guided tours and plenty of luxury hotels, for those who don't fancy the camping option.

The climate is unpredictable in its nature, with powerful winds frequently reaching speeds of 160-180km and although the climate is generally cold, due to the variety of landscape, extreme sun, wind, rain or snow can be experienced at time of the season, so it's always wise to do a little research before visiting.

This unique location offers an unrivalled experience; an unspoiled wilderness, with rich and varied wildlife, volcanoes and glaciers, Patagonia is both dramatic and spectacular. So, if you're looking for something that's a bit different from the usual package holidays, than consider Patagonia instead, I can guarantee that you will not be disappointed.

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If you're considering Patagonia as your next holiday destination a www.swoop-patagonia.co.ukprovides detailed information on everything you'll need including the region's wildlife, its climate and all its attractions including the famous a Torres del Paine.

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