

THE ANDES ADVENTURE: From Chile to Argentina on Horseback

South America might not be your first thought when planning your next riding getaway, but it's worth a second look.

Story and photos by SHAWN HAMILTON

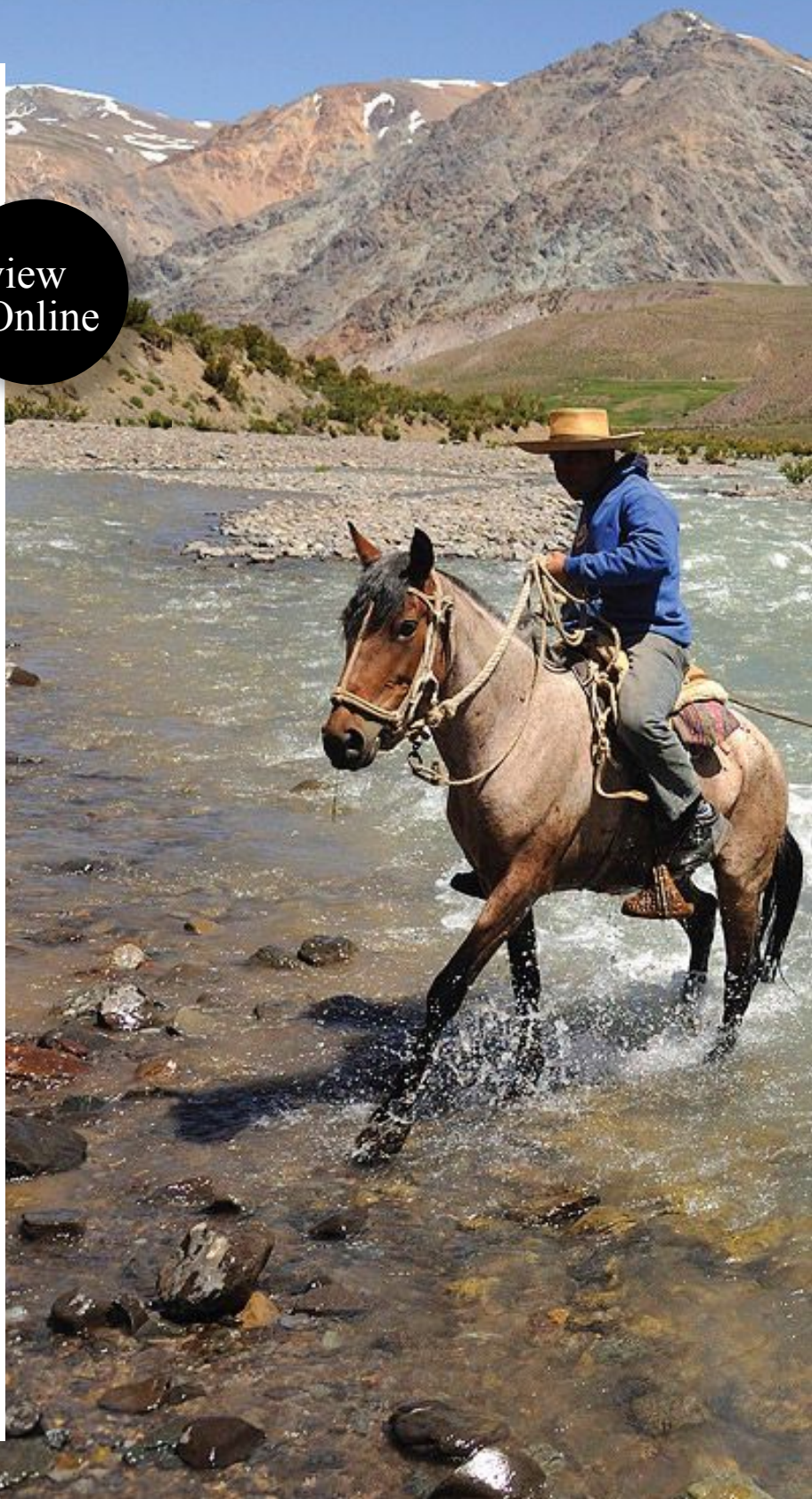
If you're an adventurous equestrian seeking a spectacular addition to your bucket list, look no further than this ride of a lifetime: the seven-day trip across the Andes Mountains on horseback from Chile to Argentina.

Following the historic trail Jose San Martin and his army rode in 1817 when they liberated Chile from Royalist rule, native Criollo horses transport you across rushing rivers, navigate narrow ridges and zig-zag up steep pitches reaching altitudes of 4,500 meters. Yellow, red and blue flowered valleys welcome you into the mountains while enormous condors soar overhead, and guanacos (wild llamas) run freely beside the trail.

Eduardo Finkel, owner of the horseback vacation company Pioneros, teams up with two of his best guides and a number of gauchos to transport you back in time. Each day, mules haul provisions to a new camp under the stars, where you'll enjoy meals cooked over an open fire and accompanied by some of Argentina's most favored Malbec wine.

With spectacular vistas and constantly changing ecosystems, combined with true Argentinean hospitality, this vacation is one of the most unique adventures one can enjoy on horseback.

view
Online





A gaucho leads

the group's pack mules and spare horses—including a mare and foal—through one of countless river crossings.



The legendary crossing of the Andes through the route taken by San Martín in 1817. While the roar of freedom was still heard in France and U.S., its echo rolled into South America ... patriotic voices with gigantic dreams put an end to 350 years of monarchic domination and opened an era of individual free will.





A gaucho herds
the pack mules, which
are allowed to roam
free at night, back
toward the camp in
the early morning.



PHOTO FEATURE



Pioneros guide Andres loves on his faithful mount.



The group enjoys a lunchtime hailstorm near the Chilean-Argentinean border.



Guide Andres cooks dinner over the open fire.

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