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The Argentine Yungas Hold The Key To The North

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The Argentine north is neither the Patagonian poster child of gap year dreams nor the Malbec-drenched plains of gaucho goals, but it holds a deeper magic for those prepared to look further afield, and the Yungas may be its core.

Anyone who has done their research knows that Argentina is home to regions so diverse they could be different countries, with environments ranging from sub-polar to sub-tropical. A trip north facilitates the more tropics-inclined of travellers.

Compared to the Patagonian south and indeed the rest of the country, the north of Argentina is a bargain with no compromise in nature or culture.

Tourism is an important source of revenue for Argentina, and the industry extends far into remote, wild areas and communities, so it can be challenging for holiday-makers and expats to sift wheat from chaff and forge a unique path.

Somewhere Only We Know

Adventurers, content creators or travellers looking for their own patch of barely explored paradise to settle into for a week or month need look no further than Salta's Yungas jungle, and [Pacha K'Anchay](#) may be the eco-tourism gem with the most wonders to unfurl.

Its nearest town is Las Lajitas, with the city of Salta approximately two hours away by car and El Rey National Park only ten minutes away. You can take the Empresa Veloz del Norte bus from Salta capital to the start of route 20, then follow the road until you get to Pacha, and you can also reach it by car via route 20.

Prices at Pacha are negotiable depending on accommodation, which ranges from luxury rooms to tents. Visitors are accepted all year round, from the mild, temperate winter to the scorching jungle summer.

Visitors attending in January gain a chance to learn how to live in harmony with nature, and those attending later in the year will experience a more developed project, with exciting additions such as yoga and guided meditation.

El Rey draws visitors from far and wide. With emphasis on bird-watching and stunning viewpoints, the beautiful reserve shouldn't be missed, but savvy visitors often find themselves at Pacha experiencing the Yungas in slow motion while learning how Argentina is trying to protect this habitat and its north from future degradation.

Give Back To Pachamama (Sustainable Travelling)

Meaning 'light of the sun' in Quechua, Pacha K'Anchay is an eco-village and farm located in the jungle that stretches along the border of Argentina and Bolivia. The unfinished property invites volunteer work in exchange for room and board, but its light-filled, spacious interiors are its own type of luxury.

Tourists with paid stays visit regularly, and regularly end up staying longer than they expect, with acres of this fascinating, anciently avant-garde project to meander through. The attractions of the surrounding area could keep you occupied for weeks, but Pacha specializes in bioclimatic architecture and sustainable agriculture.

Dry toilets, solar panels, organic farming methods, and natural water solutions wind through the extensive property, often in surprising and poetic ways. Recycled materials appear in architecture where least expected, and visitors may quickly find themselves learning how to bake in a mud oven and off-grid stove.

With trails heading into the jungle or along dirt tracks to local rivers and neighbouring farms, Pacha's surroundings are intimate with nature. Dinner with toucans and parrots and strolls alongside deer, tapirs and anteaters are not uncommon here. Giant butterflies and the deep perfume of wild begonias and orchids mark most corners, almost as if civilisation had never laid a hand on the natural world.

Travel Lighter Than Sun (Alternative Travelling)

Anyone looking to travel on a budget should investigate [WWOOF](#) (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms), [Workaway](#), and [Couchsurfing](#). WWOOF and Workaway offer subscribers the opportunity to work at Pacha in exchange for accommodation and food, whilst Couchsurfing offers free accommodation here in return for hosting travellers later down the line.

Volunteers at Pacha K'Anchay are a fixture, with the property usually hosting between five and 20 of them. The property is nearly finished, and most volunteer work focuses on finishing the house, which involves tasks such as sanding, glazing and gardening.

Couchsurfers have the option to work or not, but most assist, whether helping in the kitchen or watering the garden every once in a while. After all, Pacha K'Anchay, deep in

the Argentine wilderness, has never had a visitor who doesn't leave passionate about preserving this peaceful sanctuary and critical carbon sink for generations to come.