

NOTES

Lined area for notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.



PORT EXPLORER

Punta Arenas CHILE

GENERAL INFORMATION In an effort to bolster its claim to this region of Patagonia the government of Chile established the settlement of Punta Arenas on the shore of the Straits of Magellan in 1843. The name of the town means "sandy point" in Spanish and the location is believed to have been so named by British Vice-Admiral John Byron (grand father of the famous poet). In a quick aside; in the mid 1700s as a young sailor in the Royal Navy John Byron was shipwrecked in Patagonia. He wrote the account of his desperate fight for survival in a popular book of the time titled "The Narrative of the Honorable John Byron".

Punta Arenas claims to be the southern most city of its size in the world. So isolated was the early settlement that it could only have been maintained with the support of the Chilean government. But its location served its original purpose as the government used it for a penal colony. Two earlier attempts by the colonial Spanish to establish forts and towns in the region ended tragically. This region of Patagonia, though breathtakingly beautiful, is one of the harshest and most unforgiving environments in the world.

Punta Arenas began to prosper after gold was discovered in California in the mid 1800s. Ships sailing between the east and west coast of the United States would transit the Straits of Magellan and call at Punta Arenas for refueling and supplies. The town remained a vital coaling station until the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914. The introduction of sheep to the region led to the development of a thriving wool market. Today tourism plays a major role in the city's economy.

HISTORY Only 270 men crewed the small fleet of five ships and few of them had ever sailed out of sight of land. The fleet's navigator was Juan Sebastian Elcano. Its admiral was none other than Ferdinand Magellan. The great Portuguese Captain was tasked by Spain's King Charles I to discover a westward passage to the Spice Islands of Indonesia. They sailed on the tide from the Spanish port city of Sanlúcar de Barrameda on September 20, 1519.

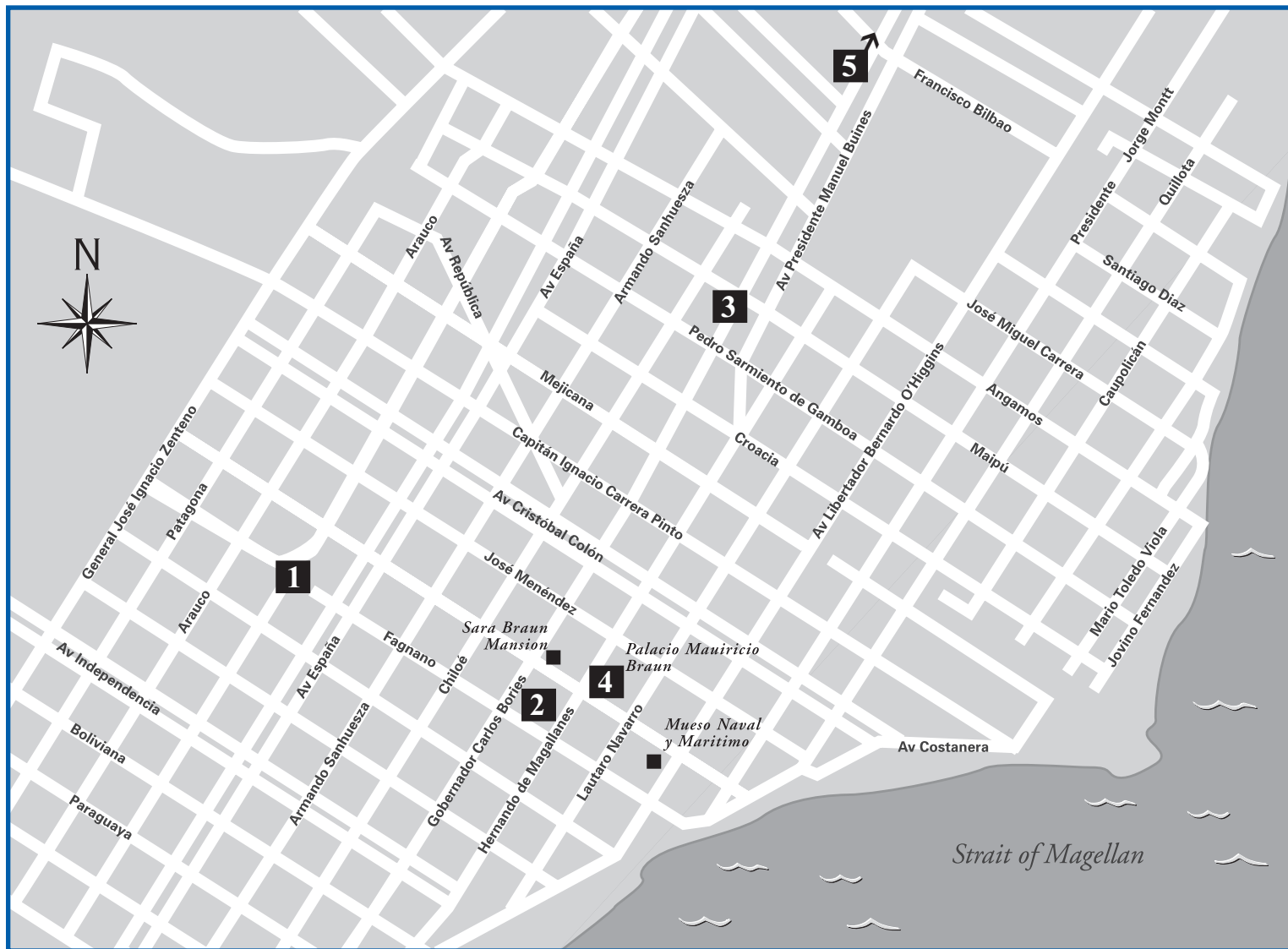
After a year filled with storms, hunger and thirst, disease, desertion, shipwreck, fear and doubt, mutiny and an execution, on October 21, 1520, off South America, navigator Elcano plotted the Admiral's fleet to a point on the ship's map, 52°30'13 south, 68°28'54 west. Unknown for the moment, Magellan had found his safe passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Magellan, Elcano and the fleet cautiously navigated and carefully charted 350 miles through the straits that would later (though he would never know) bear the Admiral's name. It would take over three centuries and a few disastrous attempts by the Spanish, before the Chileans would successfully establish Punta Arenas as a tenuous settlement on the forbidding shores of the Straits of Magellan. The town would go on to become an important refueling and supply station for ships passing between the Atlantic and Pacific. It would grow with the introduction of sheep and a prosperous wool industry. The town became an important point of departure for scientific expeditions destined for the Antarctic as well as a hub for tourists from around the world who come to explore the wonders of southern Patagonia.

continued over



This information has been compiled for the convenience of our guests and is intended solely for that purpose. While we work to ensure that the information contained herein is correct, we cannot accept responsibility for any changes that may have taken place since printing. © RCCL 2008. All rights reserved.



History continued

The first to cross the Pacific, on the morning of April 27, 1521 Magellan was mortally wounded in a battle with native Philippine warriors. He died face down in the island surf after watching his vastly outnumbered men obey his orders to leave him and retreat to their ship. Today, as a visitor stands at the water's edge in Punta Arenas and looks out over the Straits of Magellan, keep in mind the brave men who first sailed here... keep in mind that on September 6, 1522, three years and one month after the fleet of five ships left Spain, Magellan's faithful navigator, Juan Sebastian Elcano piloted "Victoria", the only remaining ship, back into the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Ragged and starving, of the 270 who began the voyage, Elcano and his crew of 17 were the only men to have survived ... they were ... in the name of their Captain, Ferdinand Magellan ... the first to use the stars in the heavens to sail around the world ... a world they changed forever.

#### POINTS OF INTEREST

**1 La Cruz Hill** rises above Punta Arenas and offers a great view of the town and the Straits of Magellan.

**2 The Plaza de Armas** is a beautiful square filled with trees and surrounded by stately buildings. In the center of the plaza is a statue dedicated to Admiral Ferdinand Magellan. The base has a reclining Fuegian native. Tradition holds that visitors who kiss the statue's big toe will one day return to Punta Arenas. From the looks of it there have been many who hope to have the opportunity to come back someday.

**3 The Salesian Churches** in Punta Arenas were established by the nineteenth century Catholic charitable religious order named for St. Francis de Sales. The churches include the Sanctuary María Auxiliadora and the Sacred Heart Cathedral.

**4 The Historical Museum of Magallanes** is a Chilean National Monument. The museum is housed in the Braun-Menéndez mansion, two influential families in the city. The museum tells, through artifacts, documents and photographs the history of region.

**5 The Patagonian Institute** welcomes visitors with a botanical garden and museum. There is an interesting series of exhibits from the colonial period of Punta Arenas.

#### Beyond Punta Arenas

**Otway Bay** is a sanctuary for Magellan Penguins. The famous penguins use the protected shoreline to make their nests and raise their young. The penguin colony is located 75 miles north of Punta Arenas

**Magdalena Island** is a two hour ferry ride north of Punta Arenas through the straits. It is home to one of the largest penguin colonies in Chile.

**Fort Bulnes** is on the shore of the strait about 90 miles south of Punta Arenas. The fort is the recreation of the original that was built by the Chileans in 1843. It is a reminder of the harsh conditions under which the first settlers to the region toiled.

**Puerto de Hambre (Port Famine)** is not far from Fort Bulnes. The Spanish settlement was founded in 1584 as a defense against English pirates who were attacking Spanish colonial towns and treasure galleons. Again, due to the incredibly harsh conditions, the colony failed as all but one of the unfortunate settlers starved to death. In an ironic twist of fate the sole survivor was rescued by Captain Thomas Cavendish... a notorious English pirate.

**The Magallanes National Reserve** is just a few miles west of Punta Arenas. This beautiful park has great hiking and biking trails. From atop the highest point visitors have a fantastic view of the Straits of Magellan and the famous island of Tierra del Fuego.

**The Laguna Parrillar Forest Reserve** is located about 75 miles south of Punta Arenas. This is another protected area that is great for hiking and trout fishing.

**SHORE EXCURSIONS** To make the most of your visit to Punta Arenas 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, Shore Excursion TV Channel or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables. Clouds and rain often move in quickly. It is suggested that guests dress in layers and bring a waterproof jacket.

**LOCAL CUSTOMS** Bargaining: Though prices are fixed in restaurants and stores, bargaining at open-air markets is common.

Tipping: A 10% tip is customary at restaurants, but tipping is not necessary in taxis.

Local Cuisine: *Patagonian Lamb Chops*, *Magellan Spider Crab* and *Smoked Salmon* are among the local favorites. *Chupe* is a hearty and thick fish and potato stew. *Ostiones Parmesanos* are fresh oysters baked in a parmesan coating.

Local drink: The wines of Chile are among the very best in the world. *Pisco Sour* is Chile's national drink.

**SHOPPING FACILITIES** The Duty Free Zone is located a little over a mile north of the downtown area. At the Artesanías Rama Chile (799 Independencia Street) crafts, carvings and woolen clothing are available. At Chile Típico (1015 Ignacio Carrera Pinto) lapis lazuli and other semiprecious stones as well as bronze and copper and metal work are available.

**LOCAL CURRENCY** The local currency is the Chilean peso (CL\$). Foreign currency is not widely accepted in Chile. ATM's are usually available, especially in heavily trafficked tourist areas.

**POST OFFICE & TELEPHONE FACILITIES** The Post Office is located at 911 Bories, downtown near the Plaza.

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

AT&T: 800.225.288

MCI: 800.207.300

Sprint: 800.360.777

**TRANSPORTATION** Taxis are widely available.

**TOURIST INFORMATION** The Tourist Information Office is located in a kiosk at the main Plaza, or at 950 Hernando de Magallanes Avenue (1 block from the Plaza).

**USEFUL WORDS & PHRASES** Chileans speak Spanish very quickly with a unique accent and chilenismos (Chilean sayings), creating a distinct Castellano chileno.

"Po" Usually added at the end of a sentence for emphasis, this is slang for por supuesto, meaning "of course."

¡Chao! Rather than say adios, Chileans part ways in Italian.