

MARCH, 2014: PATAGONIA PART II - BEAGLE CHANNEL & STRAIT OF MAGELLAN

From Cape Horn we traveled by small ship up the Beagle Channel to the Strait of Magellan, stopping at several glaciers, then the last morning to Wendy's Isla Magdalena and her 150,000 penguins!

We saw but one other boat on the entire trip, a small tourist ship slightly larger than ours.

The weather changes very rapidly in Patagonia. While we say our northwestern USA gets rain and sun in a single day, in Patagonia the weather is much much more extreme... it changes by the half hour and then repeats, but not necessarily in the same order. It could be sunny, calm and Hawaiian shirt weather when we left the ship, turn to rain, wind and choppy water before we finished the 5 minute ride to shore, then get hot and humid once ashore, then rain and blow fiercely creating white caps on the way back to the ship. Then once back on the ship it might get nice again (or even turn worse). Dressing in layers couldn't have been stressed enough.

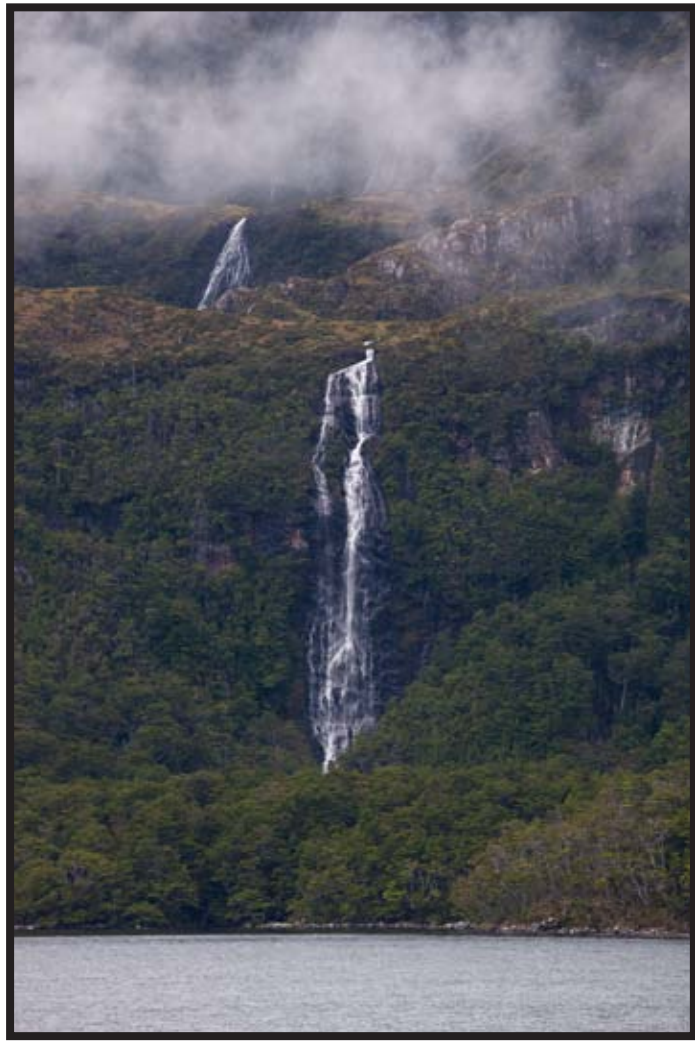
Our weather during this part of the adventure, as dreary as it may have been off and on, was never bad enough where we were not able to get to shore by the Zodiacs. We were told that ours was one of the few trips where this was so and that trips where the weather was so bad that there were no shore excursions for the entire trip were not that uncommon. The ship has standards where if the wind is over 30 knots and/or the sea is too rough, there are no shore excursions. As it was, there were scouting parties on most all shore excursions that would scout the sea and shore landing conditions before allowing us off the ship.

This part of the adventure reminded me of the northwest's inside passage but on a much much grander scale. So much grander, that even I am at a loss for words either fiction or non-fiction that would begin to do it justice. To that end, I'll leave this issue of the Flying Pig Adventures primarily to the images I made.... without much in the way of text and/or explanation....

THE WATERWAYS, MOUNTAINS, WATERFALLS AND CLOUDS













The Glaciers











The Penguins



Above is a rockery of the curious sub-species of Penguins named the Seass-Lioness Penguins, indigenous only to the starboard side of north bound vessels in the Strait of Magellan on afternoon high slack tides...



After retreating one more time to the Mother Ship, we headed to Punta Arenas. By the time we got there the wind had picked up to 90 knots, (103.57 mph). It took two tug boats to get us docked. They would not let us out onto the pier due to the high wind and low body mass of most of us, so a bus was brought to take us the remaining 100 yards to the Chilean customs processing plant. We were then spewed out onto the streets of Punta Arenas to fend for ourselves against the winds...

.END of this issue of the *Flying Pig Adventures*