

Day 36 – Patagonia and Punta Arenas [Saturday 26-Feb-2011]

We stayed up all night with other guests of the hostel, waiting for our airport taxi. He showed up at 3:30AM. We rode into the airport and that was fairly swift. The lost-and-found department was closed, so there was no practical way for us to check on the Kindle.



At the Santiago Airport I hoped this was not lost and found with my Kindle on top!



Expensive but very tasty breakfast at the Santiago Airport



Sunrise over Patagonia as seen from the airplane window

I was able to take a few pictures from the airplane window even though the guy that sat in the window seat blocked it most of the time.



The ground is engulfed in fog as we approach Puerto Montt, a technical stop



Onwards to Punta Arenas, Chile: approaching Ushuaia and the tip of South America

When we arrived in Punta Arenas, Pamela from La Casa Escondida was waiting for us. All our bags arrived and we hopped into her 4x4 and headed down the road about 10Km to the place we'll be staying at. It is located on the outskirts of Punta Arenas. La Casa Escondida is a family run and hand built art work of wood, including beds, chairs and tables.



The rustic and hand-built interiors of La Casa Escondida are very pleasant



A view of Punta Arenas, Chile, and the Magellan Strait (connecting Atlantic and Pacific)



We had lunch at La Luna in Punta Arenas, Chile. Notice the table in the ceiling!



That was some darn good fresh salmon for lunch. Lilli had pork chops.

After eating lunch, we walked from the down-town area to the north ferry terminal, which is about 4Km. Our plan was to leverage the apparent good weather and see the penguin colony that exists in the Magellan Strait, on the Chilean side. The ferry was really a car ferry, but it appeared to have been chartered in the evening for people to see the penguins.



Magdalena Island, in the Magellan Strait, has a colony of 170,000 penguins on it

The island is barren and full of nests that are under-ground burrows that have been dug by the males. At this time of the year, the chicks have reached the size of the adults and are starting to lose their baby feathers. In about one month they'll all be leaving the island and head north, away from Antarctica (which is around the corner here).



You are allowed to walk in a roped in trail

We were lucky with the weather during the hour that we were ashore. The sun was out for part of the time and it was a pleasant 50F in the sun. But the wind was noticeable.



Our ferry waited off shore to avoid being stuck on the beach during the tide



Most of the penguins just stand there. I have to assume they are feeling good in the sun.



It was quite noisy in the colony as some penguins were calling others



We could also see penguins in the water



The two basic positions of a penguin on Magdalena Island, Chile



Getting ready to walk back on the boat (the Captain and Lilli in the background)

We were so pooped from our early departure from Santiago this morning that we slept on the ferry both going out and back to shore (2 hours each way). It helped a bit.