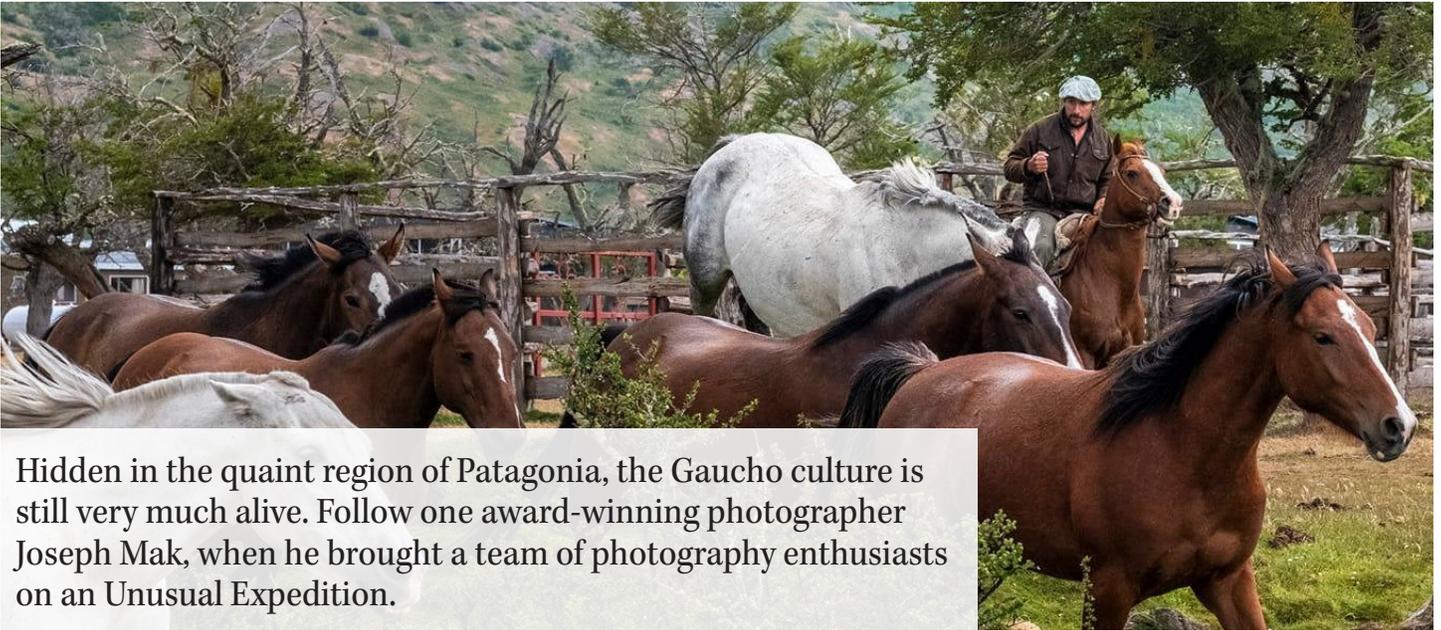


In collaboration with Unusual Expedition

# THE GAUCHOS OF PATAGONIA



Hidden in the quaint region of Patagonia, the Gaucho culture is still very much alive. Follow one award-winning photographer Joseph Mak, when he brought a team of photography enthusiasts on an Unusual Expedition.

When award-winning Singaporean photographer, Joseph Mak, first arrived in Patagonia, the region's picturesque lakes, breath-taking valleys, and resplendent mountains were not his subjects of interest. What he was scouring for was the people behind a hidden yet much-revered culture: the nomadic horsemen of Argentina and Uruguay, also known as the "Gauchos". With historical and literary significance in Argentine and Uruguayan culture from as early as the 18th century, Gauchos are often loosely defined as 'cowboys' today.

Adapting to the chilly weather (even in the summer), the Gauchos of Patagonia, with their signature flat caps, are often seen decked in thicker and more insulated variation of clothing ranging from the modern wind-breaker to the traditional ponchos, and their thick riding trousers (or 'bombachas') are often stained with dirt and dried sweat.



Armed with the knowledge garnered from the previous generations, these Gauchos are the embodiment of fearlessness as they storm the grasslands on their majestic horses, only known to leave behind trails of dust clouds.

"The Gauchos have a distinct charm," Joseph mused. "The horses they ride on are majestic and strong, quite unlike the other horses I've seen."

Joseph, who was leading a photography expedition consisting a group of photography enthusiasts in December last year, met Rodrigo Rogel, a modern-day Gaucho, in an Estancia (Spanish for 'Ranch'). It was here that the group got the opportunity of a lifetime to document the age-old craft of horse-riding and catch a glimpse of Rogel's life.

In the comfort of the rugged, green expanse, it does not take long for one to realize the Gauchos' love for the land. As Rogel and his family shepherd-ed their team of horses, a glimpse into the much-revered craft of doma india— tradition horse taming, especially amongst the troublesome ones—seemingly became apparent. Such window of opportunity was what Joseph needed to conjure up an incredible yet captivating visual diary that captures the spirit of South America's laid-back charm. Under his mentoring, the group from 'Unusual Expedition' also weaved together an equally engaging tale of their own, one that fuses the themes of human-interest, wildlife and geography together.

In many ways, Joseph's photography extends beyond just paying homage to the lands and people he visited. If there is anything we can tell about the Gauchos in Joseph's photographs, it would be a celebratory tale of nomadic tradition, one that has persisted the ebb and flow of time and one only scoured through unusual expeditions.

For more information on Joseph's photography tours, visit [www.unusual-expedition.com](http://www.unusual-expedition.com). Or visit Unusual Expedition's Instagram at [@unusualexpedition](https://www.instagram.com/unusualexpedition).