

Crossing the Andes (6 min video, going from Argentina to Chile) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJUyUavOeMs>

30 seconds – irrigated fields

General Jose San Martin spent time helping communities develop irrigation projects so that they could support the army when the time came to declare independence.

50 seconds – view ahead to the mountains

The army will have to cross these mountains to attack the Spanish.

1:15 entering the mountains

A look at a rocky creek shows why following the rivers would be difficult.

1:45 a brief look at Aconcagua, highest mountain in western hemisphere

At 22,841 feet, it is 1-1/2 times as high as the highest mountain in Colorado.

2:05 the first of several tunnels

The modern road is much easier; San Martin did not have any tunnels!

2:55 the customs station at the border with Chile

3:12 the border sign – in a “low” spot surrounded by high mountains

3:40 the road is starting to go downhill Notice - there are no trees and not much grass.
What would General Jose San Martin’s 2000 horses eat? What 16,000 mules carry!

4:10 switchbacks on the road, to go down the steep slope safely

What does this do to the cost of transporting things, even today?

4:40 down low enough (and warm enough) to grow trees

5:15 still lower, it is still warmer, but now too dry for trees

5:17 and suddenly we are on the flat land, where people can irrigate fields and grow food

Climate here is like southern California – and in a few seconds you see grape vineyards

Subiendo los Caracoles (6 minute video, going from Chile to Argentina) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtZqxDpTrI> with music track

First minute, fast driving across a plain – you think this is scary, just wait . . .

1:07 Truck warning sign, container truck from China, switchbacks on road ahead

1:37 It’s a well constructed road – notice the switchbacks on the slope ahead.
Notice also that we are already too high (and too cold) for trees to grow.

3:00 two minutes of similar-looking switchbacks (boring!) – could comment about car ahead, a whole category of smaller-than-US vehicles with much better gas mileage

5:10 ¡Idiota! ¡Imbecil! ¡Bobo! ¡Estúpido! Car passing on double yellow with trucks coming

5:55 Not a tunnel, an avalanche shelter for the road – snow comes down the chute to the right
The 10000-foot-long tunnel through the high mountains comes just after the end of this video

To see pictures of the switchbacks, search for images using keywords “Los Caracoles Pass”

The road ranks #8 on <http://inetjournal.com/blog/10-most-dangerous-roads-in-the-world>

Crossing the Andes



Modern photo of switchbacks on the road to Los Caracoles Pass (Paso Los Libertadores)

Photo released into public domain by Karora; downloaded from Wiki Commons 2/21/2016

Use Google Maps to look at the road, which goes from Santiago, Chile, to Mendoza, Argentina.

Good short summary: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paso_Internacional_Los_Libertadores

Map of the six routes: <http://www.diasdehistoria.com.ar/content/las-huellas-de-una-gesta-heroica>

If Washington Crossing the Delaware to make a surprise attack on the English was heroic,

How would you describe General Jose San Martin, 5200 troops, 2000 horses, and 16,000 mules crossing the high Andes through 6 mountain passes like the one in the photo to make a surprise attack on the Spanish during the South American War for Independence?

