

## **Trekking Torres del Paine and Fitz Roy expedition.**

### **Trip overview.**

Patagonia is one of the most stunning, diverse, and sparsely populated places on earth. Shared by Argentina and Chile, it is known for its pristine wilderness, magnificent snow-capped peaks, dramatic granite spires, sparkling lakes, and immense glaciers. Its spectacular beauty has been preserved both by its remoteness and the parks that protect the outstanding landscapes. On this 15 day trip, we have picked out the places that will stay in your memory forever: the breathtaking mountain environs of Torres del Paine National Park in Chile and stunning Los Glaciares National Park in Argentina.

### **What's included:**

- 14 nights lodging: 9 in hotels or inns, and 5 in mountain refugios
- Meals as detailed on the itinerary (14 breakfasts, 8 box lunches)
- Transportations as described on the itinerary.
- Entrance fees to the Paine National Park.
- Mountain guide for El Chalten hikes. 2 days.

### **What's not included:**

- International and domestic airfare into Buenos Aires.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Guide gratuities.
- Argentina entry fee (\$160) for Australian and Canadians.
- Optional excursions.
- Porters for your luggage in the W trek in Torres del Paine National Park

*Resting on an inland plain, with the Andes glimmering in the distance, Santiago, the capital of Chile, is the fifth largest city in South America. Santiago is a city that seems destined for growth. The Mapuche destroyed it in 1541, only six months after Pedro de Valdivia founded it, but soon the Spanish were back and building it up again. Today, it is one of the most modern cities on the continent, home to nearly 5 million inhabitants--over a third of all Chileans. The very heart of Santiago is the Plaza de Armas, which lies along the Alameda about five blocks south of the river. The city's European heritage is evident in the Parque Forestal, designed by a French landscaper on the model of Parisian parks. Walkers pass down tree-lined paths along the Mapocho, past small squares and the Museo de Bellas Artes. The Mercado Central is of British design, with wrought-iron ceiling parts that were imported from England in the mid 19th century. Today the market sells a wide variety of fresh, exotic produce.*

### **December 30th, Sun. Santiago City.**

South America's longest and narrowest country, with more than 2,650 miles of beautiful Pacific coastline.

Arrival to Santiago airport Welcome to Chile. Group Transfer to the Hotel depending on time of arrival. Check in and free afternoon to rest and explore the area.

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Santiago city. Capital of Chile.

**December 31 st, Mon.Santiago City.**

Half day CITY TOUR with a local guide who will show you the highlights of this great city of colonial and contemporary contrasts with the oldest residential part of the city, the famous Alameda, Santiago's colorful main avenue, San Francisco Church, and Santa Lucia Hill. Top off your sightseeing with a visit to Cerro San Cristobal for a stunning view of Santiago and the Andes The summit of Cerro San Cristobal offers a birds-eye view of Santiago, the Andean Mountains and the Maipo-Valley. Without a doubt the best viewpoint in the city! Back to Hotel.(B)

**January 1 st. Punta Arenas- Torres del Paine National Park.**

After breakfast and packing up, we will take a private transfer to the airport to catch a flight south to Punta Arenas. the airport, about a 45 minutes drive, depending on the day and time of the day.- Punta Arenas is the southernmost city of Chile. From here we'll drive about 4.5 hours to Torres del Paine National Park where we will spend our first night at the Refugio Torre to start. the hike.(B,D)

Mirador Las Torres Look Out.Patagonia Trails.

**January 2nd Wed. Torres del Paine National Park.**

Hike: Mirador Las Torres. We start our trek today on the famous W, so named for the shape of the trails, hiking from lodge to lodge. First, we head up the Ascencio Valley to the Base of Towers of Paine lookout. The trail involves some steep sections and crossing a boulder field, just before the final lookout where the spectacular towers rise from a turquoise glacial lake. This is the basecamp from which expert climbers start their attempts to scale the sheer forbidding walls of Torres Norte, Central, and Sur. If the weather's right, we'll get that postcard-perfect photograph. We return on the same trail back to our lodge and a well-earned dinner. Hiking: 12 miles, 4000 ft elevation gain, 8 - 9 hours. Overnight Refugio Torres Central (B, L, D)

**January 3rd Thu.Las Torres- Refugio Cuernos.**

After a hearty breakfast, we leave from our lodge and follow the Paso Los Cuernos (Step of the Horns) trail along the north shore of Lago Nordenskjold. With the soaring Horns of Paine massif on our right and the sparkling lake stretching on the left for our entire hike, it's a hard choice which way to look. We'll have a convivial dinner at our lodge, sharing stories with other hikers and sleep in double cabins tucked beside a waterfall Refugio los Cuernos or Domos .Hiking 7 miles, 4-5 hours. (B,L,D)

**January 4 th. Fri.Refugio Cuernos-Paine Grande.**

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Today we hike up and down the magnificent Valle del Frances (French Valley), considered by many to be the most beautiful part of the W trek. A dramatic and different view of sheer cliffs, hanging glaciers, and dramatic rock formations unfolds with every step. Periodically we hear avalanches crashing down from the glacier in the distance as we hike up to the final viewpoint in a naturally-formed amphitheater encircled by the park's most impressive formations: the Hoja (Blade), Mascara (Mask), Espada (Sword), Catedral (Cathedral), Aleta de Tiburon (Shark's Fin) and Fortaleza (Fortress), plus views of Paine Grande, the highest mountain in Torres del Paine at 2,884m (9,462ft). After coming back down the valley, we continue hiking across the steppe to our mountain lodge at Refugio Paine Grande. Hiking 14 miles, 10 hours (B,L,D)

**January 5 th Sat.Paine Grande- Refugio Grey.**

We are at the last leg of the W, hiking today on rolling ups and downs above Lake Grey. We'll have impressive views of the Grey glacier, part of the Southern Patagonian Ice field, and the dramatic Paine massif. After we settle into our lodge, those who want a little more adventure can kayak for several hours past icebergs and the Grey Glacier, weather permitting (extra cost approx \$90). Hiking 7 miles hiking, Gain 1525 ft (4 hours. Overnight Refugio Grey (B,L,D)

**January 6 th Sun.Refugio Grey- back to Paine Grande.El Calafate .**

Lake Pehoe, [Patagoniatrails.cl](http://Patagoniatrails.cl)

You'll retrace the path from yesterday back to the boat lunch near Refugio Paine Grande and catch a shorter boat ride across . 11.30 am. Please recheck at the refugio the night before. Lake Pehoe. Meet your private driver at Pudeto Port, load the vehicle and to drive across the border to El Calafate. Crossing from Chile to Argentina with international customs. Important note: Have your immigration card and passports handy. Arrive to the city of El Calafate accommodation La Estepa Hotel, rest and shower after a long day. Distance driving 335 kms/ 5 hours drive. (B, L)

**January 7 th Mon.Private excursion to the Glaciers National Park.**

The Perito Moreno glacier, one of the world's few glaciers that is not receding. The stunning mass of tiny blue ice peaks at the terminus is even more awesome because of constant cracking sounds when pieces of ice break and crash into the water below. Most glaciers calve, or release ice, in deep water, but not Perito Moreno, where the calving rates are higher than on other Patagonian glaciers. Lago Argentino, the lake where Perito Moreno ends, is shallower than the bodies of water at the ends of most glaciers so the ice bergs don't melt as quickly, perhaps one reason why the glacier is still advancing. Hopefully we will see a car-sized chunk of ice calve into the lake below. Weather permitting, you 'll have your lunch overlooking the glacier along an expansive boardwalk and view points, then take an hour-long boat ride on the lake for another close-up

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perspective. Return to El Calafate in the afternoon. You'll have time to explore the many outdoor stores and artisan shops that offer handcrafts and regional products. Dinner is on your own tonight, with choices from number of great restaurants. Overnight El Calafate. Ideas for Dinner: In El Calafate:Pura Vida , El Calafate. Good option for veggies. A reservation is highly recommended. Tel : +54 92902 493356.(B)

### **January 8 th.Tues.El Chalten**

Beginning of trail.Patagonia Trails.cl

Private transfer in the morning to EL Chalten driving across the Argentino Lake, La Leona and Santa Cruz rivers to finally approach the Viedma Lake with its crystal clear glacier named after the lake and surprise your selves with the El Chalten Fitz Roy Massif. Today's hike will be Cerro Torre. One of the classic treks of El Chalten is to the Cerro Torre Lagoon, at the foot of the amazing Adela range, Torre and Grande glaciers, and the incredible Cerro Torre. Mt. Torre is famous for its beauty, as well as for its climbing difficulty. Every year, countless expeditions attempt to reach the summit, but only a few succeed. In comparison to the next days, our hike today is easier with gentler uphill. Evidence of its glacial past is everywhere as you'll cross terminal moraines and hike in an ancient glacial valley to a magnificent viewpoint of the area and have lunch with a view, weather permitting.

Depending on time we may continue to Laguna Torre. Hiking: 13 miles, 1900 ft elevation gain, 7 hours. Accommodation at hotel for 3 nights. Distance : 215 kms drive.(B)

Dinning options:

Fueguia: A great place, easy and good atmosphere, take cash only.Pesos Argentinos.

La Cerveceria: Here they prepare a very good local stew, called Locro with all the flavours and proteins you need after a long hike. And the local Patagonia beer is a classic since 1998!

For a good high tea: La Chocolateria.

### **January 9 th. Wed.Laguna de los tres look out.**

Torres Hike, Patagonia trails.

Day hike is to the lookout of Laguna de los Tres - a turquoise lagoon named because three glaciers drain into it. We head towards Fitz Roy massif, A UNESCO World Heritage Site, with breathtaking views of its iconic spires and peaks. We follow a beautiful trail to our first panoramic views of Mount Fitz Roy. Our trail then continues through forest and open areas to Rio Blanco, the Fitz Roy basecamp where climbers prepare to climb its 11,290-foot summit. From here it is a steep but worthwhile 1300 ft climb to Laguna de los Tres, a striking azure blue lake at the foot of the massif. From the lake we have close-up views of the vertical rock walls of Fitz Roy's east face, the impressive spire called Poicenet Needle, and the dramatic blue of Piedras Blancas glacier. Retracing our steps, we return to the town of El Chalten for a well deserved dinner and night's rest. Hiking: 12.4 miles, 3100 ft

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(B,L)

**January 10 th Thu. Pliegue Tumbado HIke.**

We walk where the Andean condors fly today. Loma means "hill" in Spanish and Pliegue Tumbado is the name of the grouping of hills at the top. This mountain, 4200 ft tall, is located immediately south of the Cerro Torre valley and offers spectacular views over the mountains, glaciers, and lakes. Our trail starts winding through shrub land and forest as it climbs the slopes of the mountains, arriving at a viewpoint with panoramic views of Fitz Roy, Torre, and the dramatic glacier valley in between both. If we go all the way to the summit, we start climbing a long but gentle path on scree and are rewarded at the top with views of Paso del Viento (Wind Pass) and some of the mountains rising from the Patagonian Icefield. After 6 to 8 hours of hiking we are back in Chalten by late afternoon. Hiking: 12 - 13 miles, 2400+ ft elevation gain, 6 - 8 hours Overnight El Chalten (B, L)

**January 11 th Fri. Bs As Flight.**

Last morning in Patagonia. Time to pack and drive to the airport in El Calafate for your flight back to BS. As. Your transfer will be waiting in BS As local airport and transfer you to the Hotel in Recoleta CYAN Hotel.(B)

**January 12 th Sat. Discover BS As on your own.**

This grandiose city with wide avenues and a vibrant cosmopolitan flair is more generally European than Latin American in character. Having little colonial architecture and few landmark buildings, Buenos Aires is chiefly a city of distinctive neighbourhoods that have their own meeting places, generally coffeehouses or bars. This is a tradition rooted in the colonial period, when the centre of each neighbourhood was a general store and bar known as a pulpería. These neighbourhoods provide a sense of community for people who live in an urban sprawl that by the early 21st century was growing twice as fast as the country as a whole. Free day to go and visit the friendly Buenos Aires Autumn with lovely Av Libertador Jacarandas.

**January 13 th Sun. Fly back.**

Private group transfer to Ezeiza airport to catch flight home. No guide.  
End of services.

**Accommodations**

We will spend 9 nights in double occupancy rooms with ensuite bathrooms in hotels or small inns (hosteria). While on the W trek, we will also spend 5 nights in Torres del Paine in mountain refuges or hostels (refugio), which have dormitory-style sleeping (4 - 8 people to a room) and shared bathrooms.

**Weather**

The seasons, weather and climate in Patagonia are reversed from those in our Northern

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hemisphere. DECEMBER is equivalent to our September when average daytime highs range from 65-70 Fahrenheit in the sun to the low 40's. Night temperatures are typically in the mid to upper 30's. The weather is extremely erratic in Patagonia. It varies from warm sunshine to drizzle, to rain and/or sleet in a matter of minutes, and returning to sunshine just as quickly. Wind is a constant factor, ranging from strong breezes of 15-20 mph to gale forces up to 60 mph. Bring what's on the packing list and you'll be prepared.

### **Travel Insurance**

WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND TRIP CANCELLATION/TRIP INTERRUPTION INSURANCE, WHICH COVERS YOUR COST IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL OR INTERRUPT YOUR TRIP for medical reasons, trip delay, lost baggage, and other unforeseen emergencies and acts of god as weather or climate unpredicted situations.

### **Packing List:**

#### **Footwear and clothing:**

- \_\_\_ 1 pair of lightweight waterproof hiking boots
- \_\_\_ 1 pair of comfortable shoes for general use
- \_\_\_ 2-3 pairs of hiking socks (wool or synthetic equivalent: Smartwool, Thorlo, Darn Tough)
- \_\_\_ 2 pair of comfortable supplex/nylon long pants for hiking - zip-offs work well
- \_\_\_ 1-2 pairs of shorts (one should be quick-drying nylon)
- \_\_\_ 2-3 synthetic or lightweight merino wool T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts
- \_\_\_ 2 lightweight, long-sleeved shirts for hiking - button up front is the best
- \_\_\_ 1 pair lightweight long underwear top – silk, wool or synthetic equivalent
- \_\_\_ 1 pair lightweight/midweight bottoms - silk, wool or synthetic equivalent
- \_\_\_ 1 medium-weight top layer – synthetic or wool pull over - fleece or wool vest works well for this layer
- \_\_\_ 1 warm fleece or lightweight down jacket
- \_\_\_ 1 rain jacket and rain pants – waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex - not a plastic poncho
- \_\_\_ Underwear/nightwear
- \_\_\_ 1 pair wool, Capilene, or Polartec gloves
- \_\_\_ 1 warm/lightweight wool or fleece hat
- \_\_\_ 1 wide brimmed or baseball style hat for protection from the sun/rain
- \_\_\_ 1 – 2 changes of casual clothes to wear at end of day

#### **Toiletries (small everything)**

- \_\_\_ Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, hand sanitizer, shampoo, contact lens paraphernalia, sanitary supplies, ear plugs for the hut in Torres del Paine.
- \_\_\_ Sunscreen and lip protection with sunblock of at least SPF 30
- \_\_\_ Personal first aid/patch kit - Band-Aids, 1 safety pin, moleskin, compeed (or blister bandages), ibuprofen, any personal medications.

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Please note: Individuals who have had or have the potential for a severe allergic reaction to insect stings, specific foods or medications must bring an epi-pen. Please consult your physician and tell your guide.

#### **EQUIPMENT/ESSENTIALS**

- 1 pair Trekking poles
- 1 daypack (see notes on packing list for recommended capacity)
- Rain cover for your daypack
- Capacity to carry 2 liters of water (Please see Notes on Packing List)
- Sunglasses (100% UV protection) w/retention strap
- Small headlamp or flashlight  1 – 2 bandanas/buff
- Ear plugs (for a good night's sleep!)  Wristwatch/travel alarm clock
- Tupperware-like container for sandwich/lunch
- Plastic Bags to take your trash out of the park in T del Paine.

#### **OPTIONAL (personal preference, not required)**

- Camera (extra battery) and film/memory card
- Book, notebook, journal, pencil/pen
- Binoculars
- Your favorite snack (snacks will also be provided)
- 2 pair synthetic, lightweight liner socks (optional -- not everyone uses sock liners)
- Short Gaiters

#### **Daypacks:**

Your daypack should be large enough to hold the following items: 2 liters of water, rain gear, lunch/snacks (for the day), sun screen, warm layer (fleece pullover or vest), personal first aid kit, lightweight gloves, warm hat and personal items such as camera, etc. We recommend a daypack with a capacity of between 1800 and 2400 cubic inches with a hip belt, padded shoulder straps, and 'lifters'. Line your daypack with a durable plastic bag to keep your belongings dry, or have an elasticized pack cover that fits snugly over it. Before you leave home check to be sure that it is comfortable to wear all day and has sufficient space for all of your items. Note: Fanny-packs and hydration packs are not large enough to hold all the items you will need for the hike.

#### **Footwear:**

Well-fitting boots are very important to your safety and enjoyment. If you plan to buy new boots, break them in by wearing them around town and taking some short hikes before your trip. For general hiking, lightweight or midweight cordura or leather boots with a Vibram sole work well. If you have weak ankles or are recovering from an ankle injury, get boots that come above the ankle– you'll find that this will give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain. Remember to waterproof your boots before the trip. Even boots billed as 'waterproof' need to be treated with a waterproofing product.

#### **Personal First Aid Kit:**

Bring a small first aid kit with familiar medicine and first aid supplies you might need. Recommendations include the following: blister or foot remedies like moleskin, Compeed,

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blister bandages, or similar, a small roll of duct tape (always useful!), remedies for respiratory ailments, stomach ailments, sore muscles or joints. The guides will have a first aid kit but having what you know works well for you is a good idea.

**Clothing:**

The clothing listed on the packing list has been chosen for your specific trip conditions and for its versatility for layering. NO COTTON for your active wear! It should all be made from synthetic/synthetic blends, down/down blends or wool/wool blends. Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick Layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity.

**Rain Gear:**

You will need a parka or jacket made of a coated nylon or a waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex, HellyTech, Membrane, H2No, or Ultrex. Be sure it keeps water out. Before making this important purchase, be sure that it fits you properly. It should be large enough to fit over all your layers. In particular, the hood needs to be effective. It should shield your face from the rain and turn with your head. Movement of your arms must not interfere with the hood. Put on your daypack; can you still raise your arms? Your wind/rain pants should be comfortable, allow enough room for your layers, and permit free movement of your legs (for example, can you crouch comfortably?). Partial or full-length leg zippers are useful for easily putting your pants on over your boots. An inexpensive plastic poncho will both leak and tear easily and is not recommended.

**Hydration:**

Being able to easily access your water without assistance, so that you can drink frequently, is important to your safety and enjoyment. One method is to have a water bottle attached to your waist strap. Another option is to use a HYDRATION SYSTEM such as CamelBak, Platypus, and MSR bladder bags, which are collapsible water bags with a hose attachment that you drink from. The bags fit inside or outside your pack with the hose positioned over your shoulder so that you can access your water as you hike. Bladder bags can hold 1 - 3 liters of water.

**Trekking Poles:**

Trekking poles are required for this trip. Trekking poles contribute to your safety by improving your balance and stability, and to your health by saving stress on your hips and knees.

