

Chile & Argentina: Patagonia & Torres del Paine National Park

Air Package Itinerary

Pampas stretching as far as the eye can see, ancient caves where prehistoric animals left their bones—Patagonia has a timeless, boundless feel unlike anyplace else on earth. With horizons this vast, it's hard to know where to turn your gaze. Fortunately, your expert guides know just how to direct you. Above tower the imposing stone sentinels of Torres del Paine, while across the way dozens of condors wheel in flight, and a solitary guanaco stands silhouetted on the ridgeline. Whatever your pursuit—sharing a gaucho-style *asado* with your hosts on a 100,000-hectare working *estancia*; watching pink clouds of flamingos rise from a lonely lakeshore, or listening to the roar of ice slabs crashing down from the Perito Moreno Glacier—this Patagonia hiking tour delivers unforgettable visions of grandeur.



Highlights

Marvel at jagged mountain massifs as you walk valley and mountain trails, from “the Horns” and “the Towers” to the Baguales Mountains.

Spot astonishing wildlife in its natural habitat—eagles, flamingoes, guanacos, armadillos, and perhaps the elusive puma.

Get a glimpse of Patagonian and gaucho life during stays at traditional, working *estancias*.

Indulge in the finest Chilean and Argentinean cuisine, prepared with care using locally sourced ingredients.

On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate. Averaging 4 to 8 miles per day with ascents and descents, it offers options on most days. The terrain is varied – often hilly, uneven, single-track trails that can be rocky, hard-packed dirt, or sometimes soft ground over tufts of grass that can be uneven. Most trails are exposed with little coverage from the sun; Patagonia can be very windy and cold so dressing in layers is important. We share some ideas in the packing list you will receive.

DAY 1

Flight

Fly to Punta Arenas, Chile

Begin your adventure by departing from a convenient gateway city in the United States or Canada. Spend your first night aloft.

DAY 2

Arrival

Arrive in Punta Arenas, Chile

Upon arrival at Punta Arenas' Presidente Carlos Ibáñez International Airport, a representative holding a Country Walkers sign meets you as you exit the baggage claim area. Please note that there may be up to a 45-minute wait if there are other guests arriving within the same time frame. A complimentary small-group transfer is provided to your city center hotel approximately 25 minutes away. The remainder of the day is at your leisure (no meals included).

Country Walkers provides you with City Information that includes recommendations on what to see and do in Punta Arenas during your stay.

DAY 3

Join your *Chile & Argentina: Patagonia & Torres del Paine National Park* tour. Transfer to Puerto Natales. Welcome dinner

Estancia Olga Teresa condor viewing with waterside walk; 3 miles, easy

From Punta Arenas, a scenic one-hour transfer brings you to Estancia Olga Teresa, a nature reserve surrounded by sweeping mountain vistas. Here, you'll embark on an easy hike into the vast, rugged Chilean landscape, past towering cliffs home to one of the largest condor rookeries in the country. The national bird of Chile, condors appear on the Chilean coat of arms, and today, you'll witness these impressive birds in their natural habitat as they gracefully soar overhead. Your guide will provide binoculars for a closer look at the rookery.

You'll continue your hike on a flat, circular route along the sound. Enjoy the coastal scenery as your guide

explains the oceanic history of the area and the story of the first settlers. Lunch today is a Chilean barbeque, prepared and served at a farmhouse on the *estancia*. After lunch, you transfer about two hours to Puerto Natales, traversing a region of breathtaking beauty and pristine magnificence. Upon arrival, there'll be ample free time to see your incredible surroundings and take advantage of the hotel's location, perhaps admiring the black-necked swans on the Señoret Canal right outside your door. Puerto Natales is a small port town with an adventuresome feel, a legacy of its days as a center for the sheep industry. This evening, join your fellow walkers for a welcome drink and dinner.

Accommodation: Hotel Altiplanico Sur, Puerto Natales, Chile

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4

Three Caves

5 miles, easy, 650 ft. elevation gain and loss. Rio Serrano flats; 3 – 4 miles, easy

After breakfast, you transfer to the Torres del Paine massif, just 90 minutes away. En route, stop for a fascinating walk near the Milodón Cave, named for the discovered remains of an extinct species of ground sloth that stood almost 10 feet tall. A file-mile loop walk delivers you to three different caves where the remains of other mammals and ancient humans have been found. As you explore, your guide fills you in on the area's unique geology and ancient megafauna as well the lives of those early humans and settlers here. After a thoughtfully prepared picnic lunch, complete the drive to the edge of Torres del Paine National Park. Your small, intimate hotel crouches alongside the Rio Serrano and offers sweeping views of Patagonia's majestic peaks.

After you settle in, join a walk along the river flats of the Rio Serrano. Leaving right from the lodge, this walk traces the Rio Nutria. Admire lovely river views and, as you make your way through some stretches of sylvan forest, enjoy sightings of fantastic birdlife, perhaps the upland goose, great grebe, and ringed kingfisher.

Accommodation: Pampa Lodge, Magallanes y la Antartica Chilena Region, Chile

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5

Beach walk to Glacier Grey overlook

3 miles, easy to moderate. Rio Pingo; 4 miles, easy to moderate, 600 ft. elevation gain & loss

Sunrises over the Paine massif are impossible to beat, as you'll discover throughout your stay. Torres del Paine National Park was first brought to the world's attention in 1880 when Scottish traveler Lady Florence Dixie chronicled her adventure here. In her book *Across Patagonia*, she described the three distinct *torres*, or towers, associated with the region as "Cleopatra's Needles." By some accounts, she and her fellow travelers were the first foreign tourists to lay eyes on these geological wonders.

After a hearty breakfast, head to the shores of Grey Lake, where a two-mile walk along the scenic beach starts your day off on the right foot. Continue your hike by crossing over the rushing Rio Pingo, thick with glacial sediment, before winding through an ancient forest of lenga trees (deciduous trees native to the southern Andes). The trail emerges on a rocky beach and follows a narrow spit of land crossing Grey Lake. It culminates on the tip of a peninsula offering panoramic views of the lake, icebergs, and the lake's source, Grey Glacier. Return along the same trail and enjoy a lovely lunch at the Lago Grey Hotel, with sweeping views of the lake. After lunch, embark on an afternoon walk along the Rio Pingo.

Accommodation: Pampa Lodge

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6

Fauna Trail

4.5 miles easy to moderate, 650 ft. elevation gain, 750 ft. elevation loss. Guided historical walk at Estancia Cerro Guido; 1 mile, easy

Cross the park on a one-hour drive, heading toward the eastern pampas. Lakes of turquoise and green, and the famed jagged peaks of the Torres massif, add drama and wonder to your morning. Upon arrival at the national park entrance at Porteria Sarmiento, you set out across the expansive grasslands of the park's southern reaches, heading toward another park entrance at Laguna Amarga. This little-known walking path attracts few visitors, which makes for excellent opportunities to spot the local wildlife. Herds of guanaco reside here, and they show little fear of humans. Look to the sky to catch a glimpse of condors taking flight, or gaze to the ground to see foxes or armadillos scurrying along. With a breathtaking backdrop of the staggering Paine Massif, this is the Patagonia that you've dreamt of—a vast natural haven

at the end of the world. You may detour about 45 minutes to view ancient cave paintings dating back some 6,000 years.

Following today's invigorating walk, continue east toward the Patagonian steppe, stretching between the Andes and the Atlantic Ocean. Your destination is a working estancia, where you spend two nights. Sheep, horseback riders, and infinite skies might remind you of the American West, but the culture that thrives here is distinctly Chilean. A tour of the property highlights its rich history, sheep-shearing facility, horse stables, vegetable garden, and greenhouse.

Accommodation: Estancia Cerro Guido, Chile

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7

Estancia La Cumbres

4 – 5 miles, easy to moderate options

You awake this morning as the sun illuminates the towering walls of the Torres del Paine. After a hearty farm breakfast, transfer 45 minutes to Estancia La Cumbres at the Baguales Range on the border with Argentina. Today holds a special treat because you are joined by a local paleontologist. As you trace the contours of remote, pristine valleys, you learn about Patagonia's geologic past. Various types of fossils were left behind in the surrounding hills after the Atlantic Ocean retreated thousands of years ago. Fossilized leaves, tree trunks, shellfish, and shark teeth are among the relics you might see.

Back at your overnight ranch, you'll experience more of Patagonian farm life up close. This evening, settle in for a typical *asado* prepared the traditional *gaucho* way—lamb roasted over open coals served beneath a canopy of stars.

Accommodation: Estancia Cerro Guido

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8

Flamingo Lagoon

3 – 4 miles, easy

Travel into Argentina today. There's a lot of land to cover, but the long transfer (approximately five hours including stops and the border crossing) gives you ample opportunity to take in the vastness of the Patagonian steppe. All in all, it's a spectacular morning of breathtaking vistas. You head north, paralleling soaring Andean peaks, on the legendary Route 40, the longest continual road in Argentina and one of the longest in the world. Before formalities at the border of La Esperanza, there is time for a coffee and souvenir shopping. After the break, you continue on to your next lodge at the edge of Glaciers National Park, or Los Glaciares, home to one of the largest ice caps in the world. Its massive expanse feeds 47 glaciers, 13 of which flow toward the Atlantic Ocean.

A tasty, albeit, late lunch is served upon your arrival. Once you're finished, you may choose to take a dip in the hotel's swimming pool, sink into a leather couch in one of the elegant lounges with floor to ceiling picture windows, or join your guides on a walk from the lodge to a nearby lagoon. The lagoon's flocks of bright pink flamingos are an astounding contrast to the muted colors of the steppe around you. Dinner this evening is served in the hotel's elegant restaurant.

Accommodation: Eolo Lodge, El Calafate, Santa Cruz, Argentina

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9

Cerro Frías

3 miles, moderate, 750 ft. elevation gain. Perito Moreno Glacier; 2 miles, easy

After breakfast, you may spend the morning as you wish. Perhaps walk right from your hotel up a Cerro Frías footpath, where astonishing views of Lago Argentino and the Andes Range unfold before you. The Paine Massif rises in the south and the stunning "needles" of Mount Fitz Roy soar up to 11,000 feet in the north. You can also see the Baguelas Range on the Chilean border. If you prefer, saddle up for a horseback riding excursion, included with your stay. Or just relax and enjoy the offerings of this 5-star property.

You depart later this afternoon for a thrilling excursion to the Perito Moreno Glacier. The timing of our visit means the day-trippers have left, so you're able to enjoy this spectacular mammoth of nature in relative

solitude. The face of the Perito Moreno is about three miles wide; it averages 240 feet in height above Lago Argentino's surface and plunges more than 300 feet below the water. It advances more quickly than most glaciers, creaking and splitting as it goes, calving great chunks of ice into the lake. Even if you have seen other glaciers before, Perito Moreno will long linger in your memory. It's the perfect place to end your Patagonia adventure. Tonight, enjoy a culinary feast of local specialties for your farewell dinner.

Accommodation: Eolo Lodge, El Calafate, Santa Cruz, Argentina

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10

Your *Chile & Argentina: Patagonia & Torres del Paine National Park* tour concludes

Enjoy breakfast this morning and transfer to the town of El Calafate. Enjoy free time over lunch before continuing to the airport to catch your flight to Buenos Aires. There'll be time after you settle in to take in the city's European-style sophistication and you're sure to find a spot to enjoy a fine Argentinean meal for dinner, participating wholeheartedly in the locals' love of eating.

Accommodation: Recoleta Grand Hotel, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11

Departure

Your flights may arrive at your final destination in North America the following day.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Air Package

Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓	✓
All on-tour meals except 1 lunch	✓	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓	✓
Roundtrip airfare	✓	
Buenos Aires	✓	
Airport car service for arrival & departure	✓	
Pre- and post-tour breakfasts	✓	
Business-class upgrades available	✓	