



CHILE

HIKING THE W ROUTE IN CHILE'S PATAGONIA

BY FOOT

7-DAYS

This trek is to one of the world's last great refuges of wild nature. Located in the southernmost region of Chile, Patagonia is beautiful beyond belief. The beauty is found in mansion-sized icebergs that float silently in the dark waters of the fjords; in the winds that blow snowy dust from the mountain tops; in the aqua-blue glaciers that calve into deep, placid lakes; and in the valleys of Torres del Paine National Park surrounded by steep granite faces. These images are synonymous with Patagonia. On this 7-day adventure to the southern hemisphere, we are dwarfed at every turn by the power of nature, forgotten by time and unspoiled by human progress.

Day 1

PUNTA ARENAS - PUERTO NATALES - TORRES DEL PAINE

ARRIVAL

All travellers must arrive into the Punta Arenas airport by 11am today for a 11:30am transfer to Torres del Paine. There is also a transfer at 3:30pm if you are not able to get in on an earlier flight. We'll be there to greet you at the airport and transfer you to the famous Torres del Paine National Park, 345 km/216 miles away. In summer time (Dec-Mar), the sun sets around 11pm giving us plenty of light to admire the landscape en route and the craggy mountains while entering the park. The drive is a scenic one along the pampa and if we're lucky we'll see guanacos, rheas and huge rabbits grazing on the plains. We'll make a short stop in the township of Puerto Natales for lunch. There will be an extensive orientation meeting this evening over dinner where we will answer any questions that you may have about the adventure that lies ahead. Overnight at the EcoCamp.

Accommodation: EcoCamp

Meals: Lunch, Dinner



Day 2

TORRES DEL PAINE - PASO LOS CUERNOS

HIKING

We have a full day on foot today trekking along the Paso Los Cuernos, a trail that was named because it passes under the Cuernos del Paine - peaks with beautiful black "horns" of slate atop gray granite. The surrounding landscape is one of snow-peaked mountain ranges, fire bushes abundant with exotic red flowers and frequent wind funnels that develop on the emerald waters of Lago Nordenskjöld. Hopefully, we'll have a sunny day with clear views of the famous Horns. The journey ends at the Los Cuernos Refuge, a beautiful refuge below the Los Cuernos peaks on the lake. If there is no space at this refuge, we'll finish at Domo el Francés, located between Cuernos and Italiano camping sites, with amazing views of Nordenskjöld Lake. The Domos el Francés are similar to the EcoCamp and a one-hour trek from Los Cuernos Refuge. The evening is free for relaxing and enjoying dinner.

Hiking Duration: 7 hours

Distance: 12km / 7.5mi

Ascent: +244 m (800ft)

Accommodation: Mountain Hut (Dormitory) or Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Day 3

TORRES DEL PAINE - FRENCH VALLEY HIKING

After breakfast, we begin a challenging trek to Valle Frances (French Valley), a steep trail that goes into the very heart of the Paine Massif. An active walk leads us to the hanging bridge over the French River, located at the foot of the southeast face of the Massif. From this point, we can enjoy our first truly wonderful view and then continue up the trail until reaching the upper prospects of the valley. The entire group of geological formations of the high valley can be admired here. It is time to have a picnic and recover from the walk. An optional trek to Mirador Britanico is available as well. Next, we descend through an undulating terrain of mixed grassland and light forest until reaching the Refugio Paine Grande, located in the peaceful shores of Lake Pehoe. Finally, upon reaching the Refugio, the luggage is organized and there is time to talk about the day while enjoying a replenishing dinner.

Hiking Duration: 8 hours
Distance: 26km / 16mi
Ascent: +686m (2250ft)
Accommodation: Mountain Hut (Dormitory) or Tent
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

TORRES DEL PAINE - GREY GLACIER HIKING

After a typical southern Chilean breakfast, we set off on foot from the shores of Lake Pehoe to the northern end of Lago Grey. Once we reach the glacier, we break for a picnic lunch sitting on a craggy peak adjacent to the massive structure and watch pieces of ice calving thunderously into the deep grey lake below. Afterwards, we'll board a boat and travel across Lago Grey to the face of the Grey Glacier, a massive wall of ancient ice sculpted by the time and the elements. The lake is littered with gigantic blue and white icebergs that were once part of the glacier. From the southern end of Lake Grey, we'll transfer to the eco-camp. If the weather conditions do not allow us to navigate the Grey Lake, we'll instead hike a sightseeing point offering a view of the Glacier. Then we'll return on foot to Paine Grande and take a catamaran to Pudeto's dock, from where we'll drive back to the EcoCamp.

Hiking Duration: 4 hours
Hiking Distance: 11km / 7mi
Ascent: +244m (800ft)
Accommodation: EcoCamp
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



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Day 5

TORRES DEL PAINE - VALLE ASCENCIO

HIKING

After a hearty breakfast, our goal is to complete the most famous trekking trail in Torres del Paine National Park. If we have a clear day, we will set off on foot to the famous Towers of Paine, a triad of sculpted granite peaks and a part of massif of El Paine. We'll follow the same path, along dirt trails in a vast and varied landscape of rugged wilderness. Dry mountain spots, beech forests and small rivers are passed along the scenic walk into the valley. It's not a difficult walk, but energy should nevertheless be saved for the final challenge: the moraine. The last two miles is a scramble on foot along steep and rugged terrain to the base of this magnificent granite sculpture. After a considerable effort, the Towers come into full view rising majestically before us with the glacial lake visible below. This is one of the most breathtaking sights in the world. The famous Torres del Paine (2,900 m/9,400 ft) consist of three gigantic granite monoliths, the remains of a great cirque sheared away by the forces of glacial ice. Sitting beneath the spires, enjoying lunch, you will feel the intense power of the natural world, for this place is truly magnificent. Once everyone is ready, we backtrack along the same trail through Ascencio Valley and return to the EcoCamp.

Hiking Duration: 10 hours

Hiking Distance: 22km / 14mi

Ascent: +914m (3,000ft)

Accommodation: EcoCamp

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

TORRES DEL PAINE - EASTERN LAKES

HIKING

Today's hike is easier than the past few days, giving our bodies a chance to recover from the last few days of hiking. After breakfast, we drive towards Laguna Azul, passing Cañadón Macho, home to many wild guanacos and ñandúes. We'll get incredible views here of the Patagonian steppe and the Torres del Paine. At Laguna Azul, we'll hike to a lookout point where our reward is an incredible viewpoint of both the lagoon and the imposing granite towers. After lunch, we drive to the northern shore of Sarmiento Lake where the Fauna Trail begins. Hiking northbound, we'll have opportunities to see the impressive range of Patagonian fauna grazing on the plains, including: guanacos, ostrich-like ñandús and maybe the occasional puma print! We pass the charming Goic Lagoon and after approximately 5km of easy walking, we will reach the Laguna Amarga ranger station where we meet our driver and vehicle and drive back to our cozy EcoCamp to celebrate a final farewell dinner.

Distance: 6km / 4mi

Ascent: +300m (984ft)

Accommodation: EcoCamp

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 7

TORRES DEL PAINE - PUNTA ARENAS

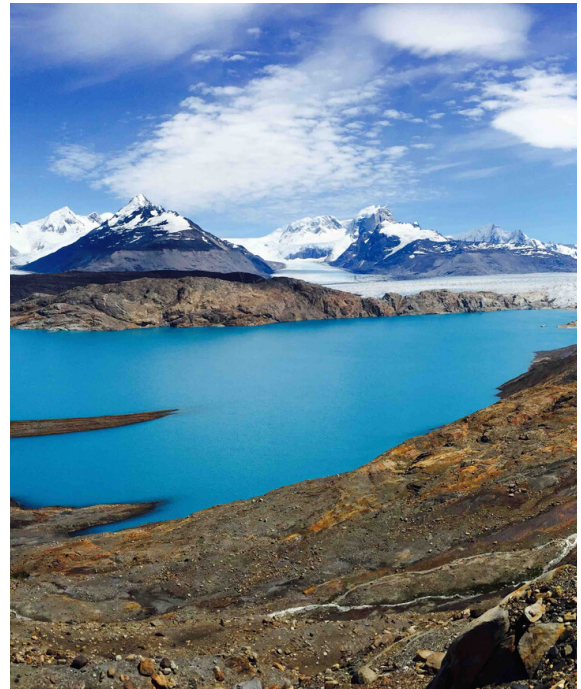
DEPARTURE

Early in the morning board the vehicle back to Punta Arenas in time to catch the flight back to Santiago or onwards to join an extension program. Please make sure you book a flight that leaves Punta Arenas after 3:00pm.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

NOTE about Ascent/Descent numbers:

The ascent/descent numbers are usually generated using Ride with GPS. The numbers are TOTAL ascent/descent for the day and these numbers do not suggest altitude. There are usually multiple small ascents and descents added up throughout the day to reach this total ascent/descent for the day. (While our numbers are generally consistent with Ride with GPS, depending on the mapping technology used, numbers may vary).



TRIP INCLUSIONS

Trip Includes

All accommodation in mountain huts (dormitory) or camping in tents and twin shared in the EcoCamp, meals as indicated, internal transportation (excluding flights), park entrance fees, airport transfers and English-speaking guides.

Not Included

International and internal flights, airport departure taxes, gratuities, meals not indicated and items of a personal nature.

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