



ARGENTINA & CHILE

HIKING THE PATAGONIAN ANDES

An Upscale Walking Adventure through the Jewels of Patagonia



DURATION: 15 days / 14 nights (non-camping)
SEASON: October through March
DEPARTURES: Guaranteed with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 12 participants
TRIP RATING: Moderate/Strenuous Walking Adventure, Grade (III) - This is an active trip, featuring a variety of hikes, based from charming local *hosterías* or *estancias*. Hiking days average 8.5 miles at elevations below 5,000' on established trails in both Fitz Roy and Torres del Paine areas. Also included are long but scenic overland drives on mostly unpaved roads.

2014/15 DATES: NOV 09 - 23 JAN 18 - FEB 01 FEB 15 - MAR 01
Also on request any week throughout the season for a minimum of 4 travelers

INTRODUCTION:

Southern Argentina and Chile share an immense, sparsely populated, and mostly flat expanse divided by the Andes Mountains, commonly known as Patagonia. Here, some of the most dramatic granite spires on earth are constantly being transformed by the movement of immense glaciers. These peaks tower over the surrounding plains, creating the most impressive mountain vistas in South America. To the west of the Continental Divide, the mountains are surrounded by dense forests and lush meadows, dotted with wildflowers. To the east of the Andes are the typical, windswept plains of Patagonia. In the magnificent wilderness areas of Torres del Paine and Los Glaciares National Parks (regions whose spectacular beauty rivals that of Yellowstone and Yosemite), nature rules supreme with wildlife such as the guanaco, ñandú, condor, fox and dozens of bird species. Further south, in the Land of Fire, *Tierra del Fuego*, the beautiful landscapes are more reminiscent of the Alaskan wildlands.

This exciting itinerary is designed for hikers and nature enthusiasts who would like to experience the full range of the Patagonian Andes, with active days and relaxing nights at cozy lodges. We begin and end with tours of the Argentine and Chilean capitals, but the majority of our trip focuses on the wilderness areas. Our adventure begins by exploring Argentina's Glaciers National Park, from El Calafate overland to El Chaltén for 3 days of hiking at the foot of Mount Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre. Returning to El Calafate, we enjoy some Patagonian hospitality at a local *estancia*. We hike to the base of *Filo de los Cristales* peaks for expansive views and visit the spectacular Perito Moreno Glacier. A drive across the Argentine steppe brings us to Torres del Paine Park, Chile, and the highlight of our journey. The final 4 days are spent hiking to view scenic Lakes Nordenskjold and Grey and up to the French River valley for close-up views of impressive peaks with vertical granite walls. Finishing with a drive to Punta Arenas, we fly to Santiago before returning home. Additions to this adventure are available, including a Pre-extension to Tierra del Fuego National Park and a cruise of the Beagle Channel.

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01 (SUN): HOME

Overnight flight to Argentina's cosmopolitan capital, **Buenos Aires**.

DAY 02 (MON): BUENOS AIRES

Our local staff greets you this morning at the Ezeiza International Airport and brings you to the elegant **Emperador Hotel**. Centrally located in the exclusive Recoleta neighborhood, the Emperador is near shopping centers, art galleries, and is a few blocks from the city's landmark, the Obelisk. After lunch on your own, join your local guide for a tour of this active, European-style city. We visit the Plaza de Mayo and Cathedral, Recoleta Cemetery, San Telmo and La Boca neighborhoods, and drive by the Colón Theater and other historical buildings in the city. This evening, enjoy an Argentine welcome dinner and sultry tango show at one of the best venues in the city, Gala Tango. (D)

DAY 03 (TUE): BUENOS AIRES / EL CALAFATE/EL CHALTEN

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our 3.5-hour flight to **El Calafate** (610'). Meet your mountain guide and drive across the windy steppe, expansive terrain typical of Argentine Patagonia, to the base of **Mount Fitz Roy**. Our route takes us around the southeastern shores of Lago Argentino, South America's third largest body of water, and then past the sizeable Lago Viedma. On the drive we watch the granite spires of Mount Fitz Roy rise up behind the turquoise waters of the lakes and will likely spot guanacos (a wild relative of the llama) or ñandú (a flightless bird similar to an ostrich). We arrive at the community of **El Chaltén** in the late afternoon, in the foothills at the base of the massif, and check in at the small but comfortable **Hostería Pudulodge**. Afterwards and time permitting, we'll enjoy a short hike to *Chorrillo del Salto* falls before dinner. If skies are clear this evening, we ponder the thousands of sparkling stars that form Southern Hemisphere constellations such as the *Cruz del Sur* (Southern Cross), the *Corona Australis* (Southern Crown), and look for distant galaxies like Andromeda, or star clusters and the Clouds of Magellan. **Driving distance:** 135 miles or 3 hours; **Hostería elevation:** 1,315' (B,L,D)

DAY 04 (WED): CERRO TORRE

This morning we depart from El Chaltén, where our trail takes us toward the southwest as we hike along the **Fitz Roy River** valley. The trail is fairly easy as we cross some ancient terminal moraines left behind when the glaciers of the last ice age receded. We arrive at the *Mirador* lookout after 1.5 hours of gentle uphill hiking to enjoy inspiring views of Cerro Torre, Fitz Roy and nearby peaks. With sheer walls topped by a mushroom-shaped ice cap, Cerro Torre's 10,265-foot summit is one of mountaineering's most sought-after prizes. Once in the valley, we follow a scenic trail through patches of Lenga trees, forest and flat terrain, pass through a *mallín* (wet meadow) until we reach the last moraine and finally Laguna Torre. After a relaxing picnic lunch, we hike further along the moraine for better views and photo opportunities of the Cerro Torre summit, one of the most challenging climbs in the world, and the Ventisquero Grande glacier. We may spot some chunks of ice by the lake's edge as we start our way back to El Chaltén. Our return takes us by a different trail through a campsite and back to join the main well-marked trail along the course of the Fitz Roy River valley. Overnight at the **Hostería Pudulodge**. Dinner is on your own to try some of the small but cozy restaurants in town. **Hiking Distance:** 10.5 miles or 6.5 hours. (B,L)

DAY 05 (THU): FITZ ROY

Following breakfast this morning we drive about 10 miles up the lovely Las Vueltas River valley along a dirt road to our trailhead for the hike toward **Mount Fitz Roy**. Following the Río Eléctrico River to its junction with the Río Blanco, we make our way closer to the foot of the peaks. Along the route we identify a variety of colorful flowers and several species of birds. Hiking gradually uphill we reach the basecamp area, gaining 980' in elevation, where climbers stage their expeditions to Fitz Roy's 11,290-foot summit. Depending on weather and group condition we have an option, to enjoy a lunch break here or continue ascending the steep zig-zagging trail to Laguna de los Tres (1,300' additional elevation gain). From this small lake we have stunning, close-up views of the nearly vertical rock walls of Fitz Roy's east face, the impressive spire to the south called the Poincenot Needle (9,960'), and the unusually blue Piedras Blancas glacier. The Needle is named for Jacque Poincenot, who was a member of a 3-man expedition team that set out to be the first to reach the peak of Fitz Roy. Unfortunately, though, he drowned after falling into the Fitz Roy River, and his comrades decided to name the impressive spire in his honor. The return is along the Río Blanco, hiking to our starting point and then driving back to the familiar **Hostería Pudulodge**, where we could unwind with a glass of wine in front of the crackling central fireplace. **Hiking distance:** 9.5 miles or 6.5 hours. (hiking all the way to Laguna de los Tres adds 2 more miles round trip, 1,300' elevation gain & 2 hours of additional walking). (B,L,D)

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

DAY 06 (FRI): EL CHALTEN / PERITO MORENO GLACIER

After saying goodbye to the friendly *hostería* staff, we drive back to El Calafate to explore town and enjoy a delicious lunch. We continue driving further into **Los Glaciares National Park** (created in 1937 and declared a World heritage site in 1981), following the Brazo Rico section of Lago Argentino (the largest lake in the country). An hour-long catamaran ride on the lake offers close-up views of the spectacular **Perito Moreno Glacier** (three miles wide and 190 feet high). Later, we drive to the narrowest point on this arm of the lake, stop at a lookout where we observe and photograph the massive sheet of ice from various angles, and walk along the newly built paths that wind along the river bank, directly in front of the glacier and across from its snout. This afternoon we drive to **Estancia Nibepo Aike**, an authentic working ranch offering a limited number of visitors a glimpse into the distinctive Patagonian lifestyle. With nearly 25,000 acres within Parque Nacional Los Glaciares overlooking the *Brazo Sur* arm of Lago Argentino, there are plenty of activities and natural beauty to contemplate. **Driving distance:** 240 miles or 5.5 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 07 (SAT): ESTANCIA NIBEPO AIKE

This morning we walk towards the west to reach the coastline of Lago Argentino and Lago Roca, with an easy, level hike across some slopes to reach the lakeshore. Impressive views abound of the lake and Mount Cervantes (7,805'). The rolling terrain takes about 3.5 hours round trip and covers 5-6 miles (depending on group interest). Birdlife is abundant, such as upland geese, buff neck ibis, Chilean flickers, American kestrel, and many more. Back at the estancia we enjoy a hardy lunch and perhaps a short *siesta*. In the afternoon those who would like can follow a short but steep hike to approach *Filo de los Cristales* peaks. The trail passes through typical Patagonian steppe with panoramic views of the Andes, including Lago Argentino and Perito Moreno Glacier in the distance. Further south are mountains separating Los Glaciares National Park from Paine National Park on the Chilean side. Those who prefer not to hike this afternoon can choose optional activities including; horseback riding with a *vaquiano* guide toward the *Brazo Sur* section of Lago Argentino or Laguna Frias (at additional cost), fishing in nearby lakes, biking or just relaxing and taking in life on the ranch. This afternoon we may observe the sheep shearing process at the ranch. In the evening, savor a hearty Patagonian barbecue with beef or lamb and vegetables, all raised or grown at **Nibepo Aike**. **Total hiking distance:** 7-8 miles or 5-6 hours (B,L,D)

DAY 08 (SUN): GLACIERS NATIONAL PARK / PAINE NATIONAL PARK

Leaving the ranch after breakfast, we drive toward the town of **El Calafate**. This small desert oasis is named for the abundant bushes that dot the countryside. We continue overland across the Patagonian plains to **Paine National Park** whose name (pronounced pie-knee), translates to "blue" in the Mapuche Indian language. After passing through Cerro Castillo, a small village near the Chilean border, we get our first views of the Paine massif, towering above the plains in the distance. Drawing closer to the deep blue waters of Sarmiento Lake, the impressive granite towers come into view. Entering the park (established in 1970 and given World Heritage status in 1978), we may be greeted by small herds of guanacos. After a short break from driving we continue to the Sarmiento Park Station and begin to hike. Our route follows a trail up and over the steppe-covered foothills, gaining about 650' in elevation, past small ponds and meadows down to the Laguna Amarga guard station. Along the way we can photograph noisy *bandurrias*, buff-necked ibis, red foxes, hares, flamingos and upland geese, the latter always seen in pairs. From this point we have a short drive along a dirt road to the **Hotel Las Torres Patagonia**, located beneath the Paine Towers near the Ascencio River. A highlight of the *hostería* is its boutique spa, featuring treatments to wind down after a day of hiking, such as hydro-massages, reflexology and a sauna. **Driving distance:** 225 miles or 6.5 hours; **Hiking distance:** 4.5 miles or 2.5 hours; **Hostería elevation:** 650' (B,L,D)

DAY 09 (MON): NORDENSKJOLD LAKE HIKE

Our route today takes us past a few small lakes, including Laguna Inge. We skirt the foot of Mount Almirante Nieto (8,755'), then continue along the base of the Paine peaks, following a rolling trail along the northern shores of turquoise-colored Lake Nordenskjold. We pass through brushy areas, negotiate boggy sections and tackle stream crossings, stepping from boulder to boulder, as we make our way through the foothills up and down to a lookout point where we can get a glimpse of the impressive **Paine Horns**. There are 25 species of mammals recorded in the park including huemul, a type of deer found only in Chile, and puma, both of which are seen on occasion. Following our lunch break we can cool off in the clear waters of the nearby babbling creek, then return to our hotel on the same trail. In December and January, fields of daisies and other wildflowers fill the meadows. Time permitting, this afternoon we might look for flocks of *cachanas*, or Austral parakeets, or simply watch the afternoon light and clouds play across the mountains. Dinner will be served in the exquisite restaurant at **Hotel Las Torres Patagonia** featuring produce grown in their own organic greenhouse. **Hiking distance:** 9 miles or 6.5 hours; **Hostería elevation:** 650' (B,L,D)

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

DAY 10 (TUE): GREY LAKE

This morning we drive to Laguna Amarga for a brief walk on the lakeshore where we may be able to photograph the Towers reflected on the lake. We continue driving along the scenic dirt road south of the Paine massif and pass by lakes Nordenskjold and Pehoé to cross the Paine River and arrive to the guard station at Lago Grey. We walk along the lakeshore looking for the best views and some small icebergs. At noon the Grey II boat takes us on an hour-long trip around this lovely lake surrounded by peaks. As we get closer to our destination we view the spectacular 4-mile-wide glacier, one of three that originate at the Continental Ice Cap. We may observe the drift of turquoise-colored icebergs, blown to the opposite end of the lake by the unrelenting winds. We disembark at the Refugio Grey and enjoy a picnic lunch in this forested area. In the afternoon we hike to Pehoé Lake, contouring the lower slopes of Cerro Paine Grande (the highest peak in the park at 10,007'). Views of Cerro Zapata (5,020') and several sparkling waterfalls cascading down the mountainsides make this an impressive hike. This area is also excellent for photography and watching for condors, sometimes passing within 100 feet of us as they soar across the ridges. The trail passes a small, secluded lake before reaching a final ridge with fabulous views of Pehoé Lake. We catch the last catamaran at 6:30pm for the picturesque ride to Pudeto. Once at the other side of the lake we visit Salto Grande Falls, formed where Lake Nordenskjold flows into Lake Pehoé, and then drive to **Hotel Rio Serrano**. This new lodge has a modern design with rustic features, a superb restaurant, and a wine bar featuring the work of local vintners. **Hiking distance:** 7 miles or 4 hours; **Hosteria elevation:** 435' (B,L,D)

DAY 11 (WED): PEHOE LAKE / FRENCH VALLEY

Rising early, as this is a longer day of activities, we drive through the park to the Pudeto boat docks on Pehoé Lake. Here we board the first catamaran at 9:30am for the 20-minute ride across the lake. The vessel is covered, but with clear weather most passengers stand outside to take in the wonderful views of the impressive peaks above the Caribbean-turquoise waters. From the docks we follow a trail leading through the rolling foothills at the base of Paine Grande peak. Dotted with scattered scrub forests, in November and December these hillsides are a brilliant red, covered with the blossoms of the firebrush. There are 200 species of plants found in Paine, including calafate bushes and the lovely yellow Lady's Slippers, or *Calceolaria*. We cross the **French River** on a foot bridge to reach the Italian Camp area. From here we marvel at the geology of these incredible rock formations as we watch patches of snow break loose and thunder down rock and ice faces in the distance. For those with an abundance of energy there is an optional steep uphill hike to a lookout point. With luck we can witness condors floating up and down the dramatic granite mountainsides. Returning along the same trail to the Pehoé Lake area, we catch the last catamaran at 6:30pm for the return trip across the lake, then drive to the **Hotel Rio Serrano**. **Hiking distance:** 9.5 miles or 6.5 hours. **Optional hike to lookout:** 1.5 miles or 1.5 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 12 (THU): PAINE NATIONAL PARK / PUERTO NATALES

We drive this morning to the western, more isolated section of the Park to hike along the Pingo River valley. This is a gentle and well-marked forested trail that gives us different scenery and terrain. It is home to the huemul, grey fox and other wildlife. With 105 species of birds in the park, birdwatchers have an opportunity to see the grebe, coot, upland goose, torrent duck, and oyster catcher among others. After a picnic lunch we drive back to the Park's Administration Center for an overview of the region and the geological forces that created the dramatic Paine formations. From this point it is a 2-hour drive following the new dirt road directly to **Puerto Natales**, enjoying some final views of Lago del Toro Lake, the horns and towers. Small herds of guanaco roam freely in this area providing nice photo ops with their young, or *chulengos*. We drive back across the Patagonian steppe and stop to stretch our legs with a short visit to the Milodón Cave, named for the mythic prehistoric mammal thought to have lived here. Continuing to Natales, we check-in to the town's finest hotel, the **CostAustralis**. In Last Hope Sound across from the hotel, Black-necked swans can often be seen paddling at sunset. We join our guide for a congenial, gourmet Farewell Dinner at the hotel. **Hiking distance:** 7 miles or 3.5 hours. **Driving distance:** 72 miles or 3 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 13 (FRI): PUERTO NATALES / SANTIAGO

Departing early, we drive south to the Punta Arenas airport. Time and weather permitting, we may stop en route for a side visit to a small penguin rookery at Otway Sound—one of the few in this part of Chile. There are about a thousand birds at this site, which can only be seen mostly in January through March, although viewing season has lengthened. During the early season they are in their burrows incubating eggs. At the airport, we check-in for our flight to **Santiago**. Upon arrival we transfer to the **Atton El Bosque Hotel** in the upscale suburb of Las Condes. **Driving distance:** 150 miles or 4 hours (the Otway side trip adds 30 miles and 1 additional hour driving). (B,L)

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

DAY 14 (SAT): SANTIAGO

Following breakfast, we'll tour the city taking in the Plaza de la Constitución, the Cathedral, the Presidential Palace, or *Casa de la Moneda*, the Real Audiencia Palace and the pre-Columbian Museum. Afterwards, we can stroll along the ridge of San Cristóbal Hill for an expansive overview of the city and the nearby Andean peaks. There will be time to shop for handicrafts and *artesanía* at the Dominican Crafts fair (or a similar area). The afternoon is at our leisure (hotel dayrooms are provided until 6pm). This evening we're picked up at the hotel and transferred back to the airport to check in for the international flight home. (B)

DAY 15 (SUN): HOME

Arrive home this morning.

NOTES ON THE ITINERARY: Although we do our best to follow the schedule listed above, due to the extremely changeable and unpredictable nature of the weather in Patagonia, as well as other factors beyond our control, including group members' abilities, pace/interest, weather, and road/river/trail conditions as well as local flight and catamaran schedule changes, any itinerary into these regions is subject to change at any time. A flexible attitude is recommended. Participants are encouraged to have prior hiking experience. This program utilizes *hosterías* and *estancias*, and is suitable for physically fit participants accustomed to outdoor activities, age 12 and up. The catamaran service at Paine Park has a low season when the crossing of Pehoé Lake is provided only 2 times a day, allowing us to cross the earliest at noon and return, the latest at 6:30pm, which limits the time we spend hiking in this area. During the high season (Nov 16-Mar 15), there is a third catamaran service at 9:30am. To coincide with the itinerary indicated above, departures should be from November 07, 2014 up to March 04, 2015. We could still operate the Hiking the Patagonian Andes with departures a bit earlier than November 07 or later than March 04, but the hike on DAY 11 will be shorter in order to follow the Pehoé Lake catamaran's seasonal schedule.

Hiking distances and altitudes are approximate, and times indicated are NET. They do not include lunch breaks, rest stops, time to explore the area, photo stops, etc.

One important factor to consider when visiting Patagonia is the tremendous distances that must be covered. This is a vast region, comparable to the combined territory of western states like Texas, California and Montana. The area still has many unpaved roads and there is only sporadic local air service, other than the flights into Punta Arenas or El Calafate. We have designed this adventure to minimize the amount of driving time, but we are still covering approx. 820 miles total during the trip! The Otway Sound visit adds an extra 30 miles (slow going, as the road is rough), and penguin viewing is not attempted during the months of November and December, as the penguins are not visible.

2014 LAND COST: \$8,455 p.p.d. (4-5 participants)
\$7,575 p.p.d. (6-9 participants)
\$7,025 p.p.d. (10-12 participants)
\$1,845 Single Supplement

2014 Land Costs are valid for departures through March 2015.
p.p.d= per person based on double or triple occupancy.

TIERRA DEL FUEGO/USHUAIA PRE-EXTENSION (3 days/2 nights):

DAY 01 (FRI): HOME

Overnight flight to Argentina's cosmopolitan capital, **Buenos Aires**.

DAY 02 (SAT): BUENOS AIRES

We are met this morning at the Ezeiza International Airport and transferred to the elegant Emperador Hotel. Centrally located and a few blocks from the city's landmark, the Obelisk. After lunch on our own we join our local guide for a tour of this active, European-style city. We visit the Plaza de Mayo and Cathedral, Recoleta Cemetery, San Telmo and La Boca neighborhoods, and drive by the Colón Theater and other historical buildings in the city. Later this evening, we enjoy a typical Argentine welcome dinner and sultry tango show. (D)

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

DAY 03 (SUN): BUENOS AIRES / USHUAIA

This morning, we're picked up and transferred to the airport for the 5-hour flight to **Ushuaia**, capital of Tierra del Fuego. We're met upon arrival and driven to the Los Acebos Hotel, located on the hillside overlooking the Beagle Channel, 5 miles outside of town. Depending on our arrival time, we hike up to the Martial Glacier to the sub-antarctic, beech forest tree line where we find unique alpine vegetation such as Balsam bog, Red Crowberry, Chocolate Flower, Yellow Violet, and birds like the dark-faced ground Tyrant, Grey-flanked Cinclodes, or the rare White-bellied Seedsnipe. From this high vantage point, we have a fantastic view of Ushuaia Bay, the Beagle Channel, Navarino and Hoste Islands, and Murray Strait. (B)

DAY 04 (MON): TIERRA DEL FUEGO PARK

Following an early breakfast, we drive to the docks and board a boat or catamaran for a half-day cruise along the Beagle Channel. We cruise to *Isla de los Pájaros* ("birds' island") and *Isla de los Lobos* ("sea lions' island") to closely observe some of the area's marine wildlife. Neotropic and King Cormorants nest on these islands, and Snowy Sheathbills are seen, though they nest in Antarctica. We should also see Brown-hooded Gulls, South American Terns, Black-browed Albatross and Giant Petrels. After circling Les Esclaireurs lighthouse we disembark at Ushuaia's port, then drive west to Tierra del Fuego National Park, a lovely region of clear blue lakes and snow-capped mountains overlooking the Beagle Channel. After a picnic lunch, we walk 2 miles inside the park up the Pampa Alta Trail. After hiking for about 4 hours, we arrive at the top (985'), and view Guanaco Hill, Isla Redonda and Ensenada Bay. We descend along the Coastal Trail, surrounded with dog orchids, anemones, ferns and trees like Winter's Bark and Leña Dura. White-crested Elaenias, Rufous-backed Negritos and Chilean Swallows dart among the trees, and Chimango Caracaras, Black-chested Buzzard Eagles, and Condors sometimes can be seen overhead. We finish at the shores of the Beagle Channel, inhabited by nomadic indigenous sea people thousands of years ago. We return to the Los Acebos Hotel, dinner is on your own this evening. **Driving distance:** 34 miles or about 1.5 hours. (B,L)

DAY 05 (TUE): USHUAIA / EL CALAFATE / EL CHALTEN

We linger over breakfast, savoring the views of the channel before transferring to the airport for our 1-hour flight to **El Calafate**. We join the group that arrives from Buenos Aires and continue with the *Hiking the Patagonian Andes* program as described on page 2 for Day 03.

2014 EXTENSION COST: \$1,625 p.p.d. (2-3 participants)
 \$1,485 p.p.d. (4-6 participants)
 \$ 240 Single Supplement

2014 Extension Costs are valid for departures through March 2015.

p.p.d.= per person based on double or triple occupancy.

This extension requires a minimum of 2 participants to be guaranteed.

ADDITIONAL TRIP EXTENSIONS: Those with extra days might want to extend their vacation and visit some of the region's other impressive destinations. We suggest a 5 day/4 night excursion to Easter Island, a 4 day/3 night tour of the Lake District or visit to the Atacama Desert, or a 3 day/2 night Iguazú Falls extension. These add-ons require a minimum of 2 participants. Contact our office for the **2014 Summary of Trip Extensions** or view them on our website, click on *Trips>Hiking The Patagonian Andes>Extend Your Trip*.

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- All **in-country transfers** as scheduled (transfers on different days are additional). Ground transportation in spacious and comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers.
- Boat and Catamaran transportation where applicable on a seat-in-boat basis.
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance** (Luggage handlers' tips are included).
- All **accommodations in standard-class (4 star) hotels and the best available hosterías** as listed (or at similar hotels or hosterías) on a shared basis with private bath. Note: As reservations for early arrivals or late departures are not placed at the same time as those for our group space, we may have to use a different hotel for those nights. Advanced bookings are recommended if you plan to arrive early or extend your stay. Double

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

beds for couples (primarily king/queen-sized) can be requested in advance, but cannot be guaranteed, as most hotels offer few rooms with double beds.

- Single Supplement provides single room accommodations in all hotels. Due to the small size of most hosterías in Patagonia, there is a maximum of 2 singles allowed per group. If you require single accommodations, making reservations well in advance is recommended.
- All **meals** indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast; L=lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request (advance notification required). For other diets, consult your travel specialist before making a reservation.
- All **guided tours & excursions** (as listed) conducted on a private basis by knowledgeable, English-speaking local guides in each region (includes applicable entrance fees), except the Perito Moreno catamaran excursion, the catamaran rides in Paine, and the boat cruise on the Beagle Channel, which are operated on a seat-in-boat basis. There will be other travelers aboard, although our group will be privately escorted. There will be one tour leader from El Calafate (Day 03) to Punta Arenas (Day 13), but not for the entire trip. Southwind's travel style is to utilize guides who are experts in each region in an effort to enhance your overall learning experience and adhere to principles of Ecotourism.
- **First-class Hiking service** including:
 - Experienced, knowledgeable, English-speaking, Andean guide & assistant guide (assistant provided for groups with 9 or more participants).
 - Packed or picnic lunch.
 - First-aid kit.
 - Entrance fees.

NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, International flights, nor local flights within Argentina or Chile.
- Chilean airport arrival & departure fees (approx. \$17 per person. Reciprocity fee of \$132 for Canadian citizens)
- Five (5) meals at about \$25-30 each per person.
- Tours or other services not listed on the itinerary.
- Alcoholic beverages nor items of a personal nature; such as clothing, equipment, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips to the local staff.
- Expenses incurred in preparing for this program such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets or traveler's insurance, nor additional expenses resulting from flight delays, schedule changes, cancellations, or missed connections.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing coverage to protect your trip investment. Travel insurance is important in case of unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates. Weather, geologic events, local strikes, personal injury/illness for you, your traveling companion or family members, could require itinerary interruption or changes. Missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage or the need for medical attention or evacuation are also reasons why coverage is important. Southwind offers several plans through Travel Insured International (TII) to fit your budget and coverage amount. We recommend TII's *Worldwide Trip Protector* which offers a good value and **free coverage for kids 17/under traveling with a related adult**. If you, your traveling companion or a family member has a pre-existing medical condition, you can still receive coverage if a recurrence of the condition forces you to cancel your trip (some restrictions apply and plan purchase needs to be done **within 21 days of your deposit** date). **Please call our office for a quote** or to discuss your insurance options. You can learn more and purchase a plan at: www.southwindadventures.com/insurance.html.

GUIDES: Guido Vittone - Born in Buenos Aires in 1970, Guido attended a bilingual school, taking part in an exchange program for six months in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1988. Family camping trips and Boy Scout outings led to a deep interest in the many natural areas of Argentina, particularly those of the Patagonian Andes. Guido became a certified mountain guide and took part in an expedition to Lake Baikal in the former Soviet Union. He graduated from a NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) Mountain Instructor course in 1995, and has been guiding in Patagonia for over 14 years. The history and geography of the region are among his main interests.

Martin Castrillo & Jorge Blampied - each with a minimum of 5 years experience leading groups in Patagonia, these local bilingual guides are also among our staff of fine professionals.

Argentina & Chile: Hiking the Patagonian Andes

WEATHER: **Santiago and Buenos Aires** can be expected to be hot and humid during the months of December, January, and February with daytime temperatures of 85-95°F and up to 70-75% humidity (Buenos Aires is generally hotter than Santiago). Nighttime lows in the summer average 65-70° F. The **Patagonia** region has a reputation for changeable, windy and/or rainy weather with mild temperatures. Daytime highs during the summer in Río Gallegos, El Calafate, El Chaltén will be between 60-72°F, with nighttime temperatures ranging between 40-45°F. Paine National Park and areas on the western slope of the Andes typically have more wind and rain than destinations on the eastern side, but rain can be expected in Patagonia at any time, on any departure. The best policy for enjoying this trek is to be prepared for all possibilities ranging from intense sunshine to rain, cold, and/or wind.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE: The Land Cost DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY FLIGHTS. Round-trip **international** air from US gateway cities is approximately \$800-1,100 per person. Dec 15-Jan 15 is a peak travel time so higher fares may apply. Local **in-country** flights ARE NOT INCLUDED, budget on approx \$600-800 per person for Buenos Aires-Calafate and Punta Arenas-Santiago. International carriers offering non-stop service from US gateways include; **American** (JFK, Dallas, Miami), **Delta** (Atlanta) and **LAN** (Miami). **United** (Houston or Newark) offers non-stop to/from Buenos Aires (connect Santiago-Buenos Aires-US on return). Airfares are subject to change at any time before tickets are issued. Upon receipt of your deposit, Southwind will send you recommended air arrangements to match your land itinerary. Airfares are subject to change at any time before tickets are issued.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Submit Southwind's Trip Reservation Form along with a \$1,000 per person per trip deposit (payable by check or credit card). The form and deposit can be completed securely online at www.southwindadventures.com by clicking on "Book a Trip" at the top of our homepage. If you prefer, you can print the Trip Reservation Form and mail/fax it to our office with your deposit. You can also call us at 1-800-377-9463 to make payment arrangements (**your deposit will be charged and your reservation confirmed once we receive your Trip Reservation Form**).

Due to the popularity of Patagonia, we recommend making reservations 4 to 6 months in advance. Once your trip is guaranteed to operate, you will receive a comprehensive pre-departure planning packet.

Land Balance: Final payment is due at 90 days before departure by Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express or check. You will receive a trip invoice indicating your balance due. Provided services and space are available, reservations can be accepted up to 30 days before departure.

Cancellation Fees and other policies are outlined under the 2014 Terms & Conditions on Southwind's website (click Book a Trip>2014 Terms & Conditions).

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