

Patagonia, Peaks & Glaciers

13 days | Buenos Aires to Santiago



Immerse yourself in the natural scenery of Argentina and Chile's most breathtaking landscapes. From cruising along the Argentine lake, taking in views of the jaw dropping Perito Moreno Glacier in El Calafate, to exploring the grandeur of Torres del Paine National Park, before finishing in the buzzing metropolis of Santiago de Chile.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Buenos Aires - explore Argentina's captivating capital, dubbed the Paris of South America, on a guided walking tour
- Los Glaciers National Park - marvel at the spectacular Perito Moreno Glacier
- Torres del Paine – stay at one of the best located lodges within the national park, discover the contrasting landscapes of the National Park in the many included excursions available
- Santiago - discover the highlights of Chile's capital city on a walking tour
- El Calafate – explore the thriving tourist resort southern shore of Lago Argentino
- Punta Arenas - wander around Chile's port city on the edge of the Strait of

Magellan with included transfers from your hotel in Torres del Paine

What's Included

- 12 nights standard accommodation (superior and deluxe hotels available on request)
- 12 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 13
- Services of local English-speaking specialist guides
- All Inclusive package at a superior hotel in Torres del Paine, with meals, drinks, a choice of excursions in Torres del Paine and park entrance fees included (deluxe hotel available on request)
- All relevant transfers and transportation on a private basis unless otherwise stated
- Half day city tour of Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile, and a full day Los Glaciers National Park excursion (all on a shared basis, private touring available for a supplement)

What's Not Included

- International and domestic flights and visas
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Buenos Aires

Welcome to Argentina! Upon arrival to the airport, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. After hotel check in, you have the afternoon at leisure to explore this bustling metropolis. **Overnight - Buenos Aires**

Day 2 : Buenos Aires City Tour



After a hearty breakfast embark on a guided tour of the city's contrasting neighbourhoods. Your first port of call is to the iconic Plaza de Mayo, a fundamental symbol of the capital's historic past, to visit all the Cathedral and Old City Hall. Continue to San Telmo, Buenos Aires' most traditional neighbourhood, where you walk through the cobble streets past old colonial houses, before heading south to La Boca. Retaining a strong European feel, La Boca was once home to the city's first immigrants and artists, who transformed this area into a must see for travelers looking for some typical South American energy.

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Other highlights include Puerto Madero - the old city port, Palermo - the city's largest neighbourhood showcasing over 5000 species of plants at the botanical gardens, and Recoleta - where Argentina's rich and famous are buried including the country's most iconic First Lady. Return to the hotel for an evening at leisure. **Overnight - Buenos Aires (B)**

Day 3 : Buenos Aires

Spend the day at leisure exploring the city's many attractions. Follow in the footsteps of famous Argentinian heroes such as Borges and Casares, and sip on a coffee in the iconic Café La Biela, or float from wine bar to wine bar sampling the country's grape. **Overnight - Buenos Aires (B)**

Day 4 : Buenos Aires to El Calafate

Buenos Aires - El Calafate. After breakfast make your way to Buenos Aires airport for your flight to El Calafate, home to the Perito Moreno Glacier. On arrival to your hotel the remainder of the evening is at leisure.

Overnight - El Calafate (B)

Days 5-6 : Los Glaciers NP & Perito Moreno Glacier

The world renowned Perito Moreno glacier is yours to explore today on a full day excursion to Los Glaciers National Park. Discover pre-cordillera sites along the vast Argentino Lake as you drive to Los Glaciers where you start to spot the floating icebergs in the Brazo Rico River. Walk along the paths until you reach the glacier where you have time to admire this natural phenomenon (a boat excursion can be arranged locally). Return to the hotel later this afternoon.

Day 6 is free for you to continue to explore the area. Perhaps return to the national park for further excursions to the Perito Moreno and Upsala glaciers or explore the southern sector of park independently.

Overnight - El Calafate (2) (B:2)

Day 7 : El Calafate to Torres del Paine

This morning there is some free time before the coach takes you to Torres del Paine, your home for the next 3 nights. **Overnight - Torres del Paine (B, D)**

Days 8-9 : Torres del Paine



Over the next 2 days you will have ample opportunity to explore the contrasting landscapes of the Torres del Paine National park in the many activities offered by your hotel in your all-inclusive package. Spend your days following the many trails on foot or horseback alongside the turquoise waters and soaring mountains, or perhaps explore the trails on an adrenalin fuelled bike excursion. Alternatively, take in the scenery of the park from the water on one of the kayaking and catamaran excursions available, as you cruise past icebergs on the stunning Lake Grey.

Aside from exploring the park, there are another number of activities available including visiting a local ranch to experience the thrill of being a Chilean cowboy for the day, fishing, or simply unwinding with a relaxing massage in the onsite spa. Whatever you decide to do, make sure to leave no stone unturned, and keep an eye out for the abundance of resident wildlife including Andean deer and foxes.

Please note: The excursions available vary, and will depend on the accommodation type chosen at the time of booking.

Overnight - Torres del Paine (B:2, L:2, D:2)

Day 10 : Torres del Paine to Santiago

Torres del Paine - Santiago. Depart for Punta Arenas airport for your flight to Santiago,

Chile's vibrant capital. On arrival transfer to your hotel for some free time to relax and unwind. (B)

Day 11 : Santiago City Tour

This morning explore the Chilean capital's appealing blend of classic and modern. Learn about the city's origins at the Plaza de Armas, where the cathedral, main post office and city hall are located. Next, head to the civic district and the surroundings of La Moneda government palace, before driving to one of Santiago's old neighbourhoods, such as Concha y Toro or Republica, marked by elegant and traditional architecture. This afternoon travel east for a glimpse of modern Santiago, where you stop at a local handicraft store to admire the Lapizlazuli masterpieces, made with stone unique to Chile and Afghanistan, and perhaps a Pisco Sour. **Overnight - Santiago (B)**

Day 12 : Santiago

Enjoy a day at leisure to further explore Santiago's highlights. Nature lovers can head for the hills that surround the city to admire the spectacular panoramic views of the city and the Andes. **Overnight - Santiago (B)**

Day 13 : Santiago

Today marks the end of your incredible adventure. After breakfast and hotel check out you will be transferred to the airport in Santiago for your onward departure journey.(B)

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Argentina Country Guide

Argentina - Fact File

- Official Name: Argentine Republic
- Capital: Buenos Aires
- Population: 38 million
- Total Area: 2.8 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholic 92% (less than 20% practicing), Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, other 4%
- Voltage: 220 volts. Argentina has European type two-pinned round sockets in most old buildings and the Australian style three-pin flat sockets in most new buildings.

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- Dialling Code: +54
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -3
- Airport Departure Tax: US\$18

Argentina - Visas

UK, Australian, Canadian, US, South African and New Zealand passport holders do not require a visa for entry into Argentina for up to 90 days.

For entry into Argentina you must:

- Hold a passport valid at least six months on entry with one blank visa page
- Hold proof of sufficient funds
- Hold proof of onward/return airline tickets
- Hold documents showing proof of purpose of trip
- Hold all documents required for the next destination
- Confirm with their airline that boarding will be permitted without a visa as these conditions are subject to change

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours.

Argentina - Climate

The Argentine climate ranges from hot and humid in the north to cold and windy in the south. In northern Argentina, summer is hot and winter fairly mild while in contrast, Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of Argentina, is quite often cold with continual winds, rain at times and freezing winter temperatures.

Buenos Aires, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with well-defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees in the lush parks. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot and winter can be cold. It usually begins to rain in April and reaches its highest level during June and July, then decreases gradually to almost nothing in November.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Argentina - Money

Important

In Latin America you will have problems changing the US\$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not bring them. In some countries banks won't even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President's face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Argentina is the Argentine peso. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies.

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Argentina, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins.

Argentina - Local Transport

Much of Buenos Aires can be visited on foot. Most sightseeing in Buenos Aires can be reached on foot from our hotel, with La Boca being the furthest at about an hour's walk. There is also a good, if rather dated, underground metro system (called the "subte") which has 5 lines and is very cheap at approx \$0.30 per journey.

There are local buses called "colectivos", which are also inexpensive, but you MUST have the right change (ask hotel reception for prices) as you have to drop the money into a machine. We recommend you use taxis (black & yellow) at night as they are fairly cheap and usually have meters fitted. Just make sure

that the driver turns it on when you get in. Remember that you will pay more for taxis at night.

Argentina - Food & Drink

As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$1, a light meal will cost around \$5-\$6, and even a meal in one of the better restaurants in Buenos Aires costs very little in comparison to what you would expect to pay at home. Obviously this depends on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks, which will certainly increase the bill. If you eat in Puerto Madero or Recoleta in Buenos Aires you are likely to pay quite a bit more, however there is a huge choice of good reasonably-priced restaurants in the city centre where you can get a good meal (and great steaks).

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below;

- 1 litre of water US\$0.70
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US\$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer US\$0.70
- 50cl bottle of beer US\$1.00
- Food

Food

In Argentina the basic diet focuses around meat mostly with french fries (papas fritas), mashed potatoes (pure) or 'papas suflé' (local typical deep fried potatoes that blow up like little balloons and are delicious). As there is a large Italian population you'll have no problem getting pasta dishes or pizzas. In fact, in the larger cities, you'll have no problem getting all types of food.

For breakfast it's normal to eat croissants (media lunas) with a good strong coffee. Most Argentines would have a large lunch at around 1pm then at around 5pm, they all head to the 'confiterías' for tea, sandwiches and cakes. Dinner is usually eaten around 10pm and is often grilled beef (asado) in

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different forms. Other dishes include 'lomo ala pimiento' (pepper steak), giant ribs (asado de tira) and mixed grills (parrillada) which include beef, intestines, offal, blood sausage (morcilla) and spicy sausage (chorizos) or thick grilled steak (churrasco). 'Bife de chorizo' is a rump steak (nothing to do with the sausage of the same name) and 'bife a caballo' is steak topped with a fried egg. Although seafood is not so common you can get fish (pescado) which can be served grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs (apanado) or with a sauce. There are also plenty of chicken (pollo) dishes available. 'Milanesa de pollo' (boneless chicken cooked with breadcrumbs) is a favourite.

For a cheap and hearty meal 'tenedor libre' restaurants offer a fixed price buffet. These are usually very good value and you can eat as much as you like.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular particularly in south Argentina. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. Argentina also has some of the best coffee in the world.

In Argentina some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. Imported beers and spirits are available but local spirits tend to be cheaper. There is an array of rums, gins and brandy and the fabulous Argentine wines can be extremely cheap (from US\$1 a bottle) There are also various brands of beers including Quilmes, Rubia, Negra Ahumada, and Negra Extra XXX.

Chile Country Guide

Chile - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Chile
 - Capital: Santiago
 - Population: 18 million
 - Total Area: 756,102 square kilometres
 - Official Language: Spanish
 - Religions: Roman Catholics 77%, Protestants 16%
 - Voltage: In Chile the standard voltage is 220 V and the frequency is 50 Hz. You can use your electric appliances in Chile, if the standard voltage in your country is in between 220 - 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa).
 - Dialling Code: +56
 - Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4
- For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- Airport Departure Tax: \$30 USD

Chile - Visas

Most nationals, including citizens of the EU, North American and Australasia do not need to acquire a visa in advance to enter Chile. However some nationalities must pay an entry fee on arrival by air (e.g. United States \$100, Canada \$55 and Australia \$34, these costs may change). Entry is granted on production of a passport valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. Most nationalities can enter for up to 90 days, although it's up to the immigration official to decide whether you're allocated 30, 60 or 90 days on arrival. Visa requirements do change periodically so you should check for the latest information on your specific visa requirements with your local Chilean Embassy or Consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

APIS and ESTA - important flight information: ESTA - if flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your application to ESTA online. This costs \$14 per person. This must be done by you personally.

Passports must also be machine-readable (MRP). Avoid locking suitcases if transiting the USA, as their customs authorities retain the right to break into them.

APIS - Many countries now oblige airlines to provide additional information about passengers prior to the flight departure. This

Advance Passenger Information (APIS) must be supplied to us promptly in order to issue tickets and avoid fare increases. We will provide the airlines with the relevant details if we are booking your international flights. If the information is not provided you may be denied boarding.

Chile - Climate

Chile is very long and narrow (it is no more than 180 km wide at any point) and the Andes Mountains are a dominant feature running down the entire length of the country. Because of its length, Chile encompasses a variety of climates (the country contains both arid deserts and icebergs). There's no one time that's perfect to visit every part of the country, but it seldom rains during October to March, humidity is low, midday temperatures reach about 32°C and the nights are cool. It is colder and rains a lot in Santiago and in the south in May to August. A sweater (and, in the south, a heavy jacket) should be taken no matter when you go, as nights can be cool-to-cold nearly everywhere.

Santiago, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with well-defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot although at night it cools down slightly, and on the coast this temperature drop can be much more extreme. Autumn is between March and May, and temperatures decrease gradually. Daytime winter temperatures are reasonable but mornings can be very cold.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Chile - Money

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Local currency

The monetary unit in Chile is the Chilean peso, which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies. Travellers cheques must be changed before 12pm except at 'casas de cambio' (which do tend to offer better rates than banks anyway).

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Chile, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins. When arriving at the Santiago International Airport we suggest that you get some Pesos at one of the little banks just inside the luggage hall or use one of the ATMs outside the terminal. Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your trip – particularly if it is a weekend.

Chile - Local Transport

Much of Santiago can be visited on foot. There is a very good underground metro system which has three lines and is very cheap at US \$0.40-\$0.60 per journey. You can also buy a 10 journey card for about US\$4. The last trains are at around 10pm. There are local buses called micros, which are also cheap, but you should try to have the right change (ask at the hotel reception for prices). They also have 'colectivos' (shared taxis on fixed routes). We recommend the use of taxis at night as they are fairly cheap and usually have meters - just make sure that the driver turns it on when you get in. Remember that you will pay more for taxis at night.

Chile - Food & Drink

All meals are included when camping and lunch is included on travelling days in the truck. When staying in hotels all meals are at your own expense. As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$1.50, a light meal will cost around US\$5-8, and a meal in one of the better restaurants in Santiago will compare with developed countries in the west. Obviously this does depend on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. In cheaper restaurants where Chileans and backpackers eat, you can get meals for as little as US\$3 if you shop around.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

Food

In Chile the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and sometimes salad. Compared to countries further north, Chile's cuisine is quite creative and tasty. 'Cazuela de ave' is a stew of large chunks of chicken, potatoes, rice, onions with green peppers and 'pastel de choclo' is a casserole of beef, onions and olives topped with a maize mash baked in an earthenware bowl. 'Parillada', a mixed grill of meats, offal and intestines served at your table in a charcoal brazier (miniature barbecue) is popular here as in all the southern countries. Other favourite dishes include 'lomo ala pimienta' (pepper steak) and 'humitas' (mashed corn mixed with spices and butter baked in a maize leaf).

Seafood is the basis for many of Chile's favourite dishes and the 'congriso' is their national fish. One of the most popular ways to serve it is 'caldillo de congrio' (a soup with large pieces of the fish with onions and potato balls). Other delicious fish include 'corvina' (bass), 'albacore' (swordfish) and 'cojinoa' (no translation). Try a 'paila choncha' (a bouillabaisse type dish with heaps of flavour) or a 'parillada de mariscos' a mixed seafood grill. There is a whole host of other seafood available including clams (almejas), mussels (choritos/choygas), sea-urchin (erizo), barnacles (picorocos) and seaweed.

Typical snacks are 'emanadas de pino' (pasties with onions, raisins, olives meat and peppers) and 'prieta', a blood sausage (black pudding) stuffed with cabbage

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular you will just have to search a little harder for the restaurants that cater to your tastes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water US\$1.50
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US\$1
- 30cl bottle of beer US\$1.50
- 50cl bottle of beer US\$3

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water (especially outside of Santiago). Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. However fruit juices are sometimes made from unboiled tap water, so could upset your stomach. An easy way around this is to order the juice 'con leche' with milk instead. For decent coffee try one of the cafe chains: Cafe Haiti, Tio Pepe or Cafe Brasil.

In Chile some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available, but tend to be expensive. Alternatively there is an array of local rums, gins, brandy available and the fabulous Chilean wines which can be extremely cheap (from US\$1.50 a bottle). There are various brands of beers including Cristal, Escudo, Austral, Heineken and Royal Guard (light), there is also a brown ale type

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beer from the south called Malta. Please note that many places will charge a refundable deposit for the bottles.