

## Patagonia Highlights

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**Country(ies):** Argentina & Chile

**Tour type:** Overland

**Transport:** Overland expedition truck

**Group size:** Min: 5 | Max: 20

**Days:** 11 Days

**Start location:** Punta Arenas, Chile

**End location:** El Chalten, Argentina

**Departs On:**

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 4, Dinners - 3

**Highlights:**

Colourful city of Punta Arenas, Magdalena penguin colony, Torres del Paine National Park - guided hike to view the Three Towers, El Calafate market & cafes, Perito Moreno Glacier tour, views of Mount Fitz Roy, Trekking in Los Glaciares National Park

**Places Visited:** Punta Arenas, Torres del Paine National Park, El Calafate, Perito Moreno Glacier, El Calafate, Perito Moreno Glacier



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive Punta Arenas

Begin your adventure in the quaint and colourful city of Punta Arenas, the urban capital of the Magallanes province and gateway to Patagonia. Today is free to arrive at your leisure and enjoy some free time exploring the city. Highlights include visiting the Cerro de la Cruz which gives you a view of the city, the bay and the colourful houses as well as an old shipwreck just off the shore at the southern end of town, called Lord Lonsdale Shipwreck which has been around for 100 years. Don't forget to go for a beer, a Cerveza Austral to be exact, as it's one of the most famous and best beers in Chile!

**Please Note:** There will be a pre departure meeting at 6pm tonight with your tour leader and group.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Savoy or similar

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Punta Arenas- pre-tour (EXARPS)

## Day 2: Punta Arenas & Penguin Excursion

Today enjoy an included excursion to the small island of Magdalena. After a boat ride to the island you will come face-to-face with the largest penguin colonies that you can find in the south of Chile. The island remains largely untouched and holds an abundance of natural beauty, with barren landscapes and vast ocean views. Hundreds of penguins roam free and are unfazed when visitors walk through the island, perfect for some amazing photo opportunities! Here you can also find the historic lighthouse which houses interesting information about the island and local history. Back on the mainland you can dine on the freshest seafood from crab to oysters in one of the many seafront restaurants.

**Please Note:** Availability of the included Penguin Excursion depends on local weather conditions, and can on occasion be cancelled without notice.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Savoy or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Drive to Torres del Paine National Park

This morning we hop on-board our overland truck and take to the great outdoors in the heart of Torres Del Paine National Park. Complete with jaw-dropping landscapes and emerald forests, the area is an internationally recognised UNESCO World Heritage site. Located on the Chilean side of Patagonia, it measures a huge 181 000 hectares, and is home to various animals including condors, South Andean deer, and the llamas closest cousin, the guanaco. Once endangered, around 3000 now call the vast park their home and you will be sure to see a few on your walks. Upon arrival, we will settle into the campsite and you are free to start enjoying the various excursions on offer.

Please Note: We camp for three nights in Torres del Paine National Park. Solo travellers will share a tent with a group member of the same sex. Facilities are basic however there is a canteen, bar, small shop and (limited) hot water, as well as plug sockets in shared areas. If you don't have your own sleeping bag you can rent one from your Tour Leader for \$50 USD, depending on availability. All meals are included while camping.

**Approximate Travel Time:** 6hrs on the overland truck.

**OVERNIGHT:** Camping at Camping Pehoe or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Torres del Paine National Park

Today enjoy a full day exploring the national park with many guided walks and other optional activities available. Perhaps take a glacier boat tour across Lago Pehoe where weather permitting you can see into the French Valley, Paine Grande and Los Cuernos. There are guided hikes showcase the best of the national park build in some amazing glacial views. Some of these can be quite demanding and up to a high altitude, but there are a good range of options for all grades of walkers. Perhaps the most popular trek offers incredible views of the famous 'towers', the three distinctive granite peaks of the Paine mountain range. It's quite challenging, with the whole route being 19km, however it is well worth it. For the longer treks such as the towers walk, a reasonable level of fitness is required and you need to be prepared for all weather conditions. We recommend packing trekking boots, waterproof trousers and a positive outlook to all weather!

Come evening, relax in one of the most peaceful places on earth as you enjoy time with your group and fellow travellers in the camps. You can play card games, share stories and learn more about Patagonia from the various guides on hand.

**OVERNIGHT:** Camping at Camping Pehoe or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 5: Torres del Paine National Park

Your time is free to enjoy another full day in this majestic landscape. Your tour leader and local guides will be on hand to assist with recommendations for different activities depending on the weather conditions.

**OVERNIGHT:** Camping at Camping Pehoe or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Drive to El Calafate

Next up is the enchanting city of El Calafate, full of Patagonian charm and surrounded by snow-capped mountains. Resting on the Argentinian side of Patagonia, the town was founded in 1927 and originally used to shelter the local wool traders. Over time, with the popularity of the nearby National Parks growing, the town has flourished and welcomes many visitors each year. Named after the local berry calafate, it is rumoured that those who eat the berry will at some point always return to Patagonia.

Tomorrow is a packed day visiting the Perito Moreno Glacier, so make the most of the local artisans market, the little cafes, excellent ice-cream shops and if you like your meat, the lamb found in El Calafate is particularly delicious.

**Approximate Travel Time:** 6hrs to 7hrs on the overland truck.

**OVERNIGHT:** Glaciar del Libertador or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: El Calafate. Perito Moreno Glacier Tour

Today we experience the jaw dropping Perito Moreno Glacier and surrounding park. The spectacular ice formation is around 30 kilometres in length and fed by the Southern Patagonian Ice Field, the third largest reserve of freshwater in the world. While many glaciers worldwide are currently decreasing in size, the Perito Moreno glacier is baffling geologists by slightly advancing in size over time. Named after Argentine explorer Francisco Merino, the glacier is coloured in a variety of hues from blue to grey to white and continually creaks and cracks. Advancing at a speed of around two metres per day, it can put on a spectacular show when giant chunks of ice at the outermost edges crack

under tremendous pressure, rupture and crash into the water – a process known as calving. You will have the chance to walk around some paths and terraces where you can get some great views of the glacier.

**OVERNIGHT:** Glaciar del Libertador or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: El Calafate. Free time

Today is free to explore this beautiful region further. There are a huge range of adventurous activities available, including mountain treks, river kayaking and lake cruises amongst the icebergs of Lago Argentino. You could also visit an Estancia, or sheep farm, enjoy a traditional BBQ and take a horse ride through the fields.

**OVERNIGHT:** Glaciar del Libertador or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 9: Drive to El Chalten. Explore the village

Today we will travel to El Chalten, a village located within Los Glaciares National Park and the starting point of many beautiful walking trails. While on the truck enjoy some of the best views of the tour as you journey through the wilderness, stopping at Mount Fitz Roy for some spectacular photo opportunities. This grand mountain stands on the border between Chile and Argentina, with a large part close to the summit remaining undefined as to which country it belongs to. Arriving in El Chalten, you will feel immersed in the unspoiled nature that surrounds you. Founded in 1985, the small town has fantastic views of the mountains that shadow over it, and was even named Argentina's Trekking Capital. Spend the rest of the evening enjoying the town and dine in one of the many quaint restaurants. For such a small place there is a surprising amount on offer from local delicacies to other foods from all over Argentina.

**Approximate Travel Time:** 3 to 4hrs on the overland truck.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Kalenshen or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 10: El Chalten. Los Glaciares National Park

Hop on private transportation today to make the journey into the natural beauty of Los Glaciares National Park. Our local expert guide for the day will meet us at our hotel and get us ready for today's hike, an alternative to the traditional hike to the Fitz Roy viewpoint. Our exploration of the natural beauty of Los Glaciares National Park starts with a 40-minute transfer to El Pilar, heading north out of El Chalten, via the road leading to Lago del Desierto (Desert Lake). From here we start trekking along the Rio Blanco gently ascending from 500m to 800m altitude until we arrive at the Poincenot camp. On the way we will pass the Piedras Blancas Glacier viewpoint and the Piedras Blancas Lagoon as well as the Valley del Marconi and the entrance to the southern ice field. With our legs warmed up nicely, we start a steep 1km climb of rocky steps with little vegetation around to protect us from the Patagonian wind. While physically demanding, the views that receive us at the top are some of the most impressive in Patagonia. From here, on a clear day, we can see the entire Fitz Roy Massif, the Laguna de los Tres, Glacier de los Tres as well as both Laguna Sucia and Glacier Sucio, a spectacular sight. After a quick lunch, weather permitting, we begin the hour descent to Rio Blanco again before joining the traditional route straight down to El Chalten. Shorter unguided walks are available if you don't want to do the full trek today.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Kalenshen or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 11: Tour ends in El Chalten

Your adventure comes to an end today. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation, either through us or independently, then you will have more time to explore the sights. El Chalten is located around 200 km from El Calafate airport, with a journey time of around 3.5 hours. There are regular buses between the two towns, please ask your tour leader for information. If you are booking a flight from El Calafate airport on the departure day you will need to allow enough time to travel.

Our overland truck will be travelling to El Calafate and the airport today and it is possible to remain on the truck for this journey if you have an afternoon flight time. Please check with us first for details as departure times can vary.

### **OVERNIGHT:**

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Included

- Accommodation - 3 nights camping & 7 nights simple hostels/hotels
- Camping and cooking equipment
- All transport on Oasis Expedition Truck
- Meals - daily breakfast, lunches & dinners while camping, lunch en-route to El Calafate
- Punta Arenas penguin excursion
- Torres del Paine National Park - park entrance fee
- Torres del Paine National Park - guided hike
- Perito Moreno Glacier tour
- El Calafate Glacier park entrance fee
- Los Glaciares guided hike
- Los Glaciares transfer to trail head included
- Services of Oasis Crew

## Excluded

- International flights
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Visas for Chile & Argentina (see tour notes)
- Airport transfers
- Meals not included in the itinerary
- Optional excursions
- Drinks, snacks, tips and personal expenses

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

## Locally Available Options

**Min numbers:** 1

The following options can be arranged through your tour leader while you are on the tour. Pricing is given in US dollars as a guide - local prices may vary based on the current official and 'local' USD exchange rates.  El Calafate Horse Riding: \$75 Estancia visit with horse riding and Upsala Glacier: \$200 Kayaking Moreno Glacier: \$200 Kayaking Rio Santa Cruz: \$100 Estancia Visit: \$80 El Chalten Glacier Cagliero Ice trekking: \$220 Rafting: \$80 These options are all arranged and operated by local activity providers who you will contract with directly when you make your payment to them. 

**Price:** Starting from - \$0

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## 1. Accommodation

This tour is based on a mix of comfortable but relatively simple hotels in Punta Arenas, El Calafate, and El Chalten, with 3 nights camping in Torres del Paine National Park. The hotels used have been chosen for their location, service levels, and suitability for groups like ours. Rooms are well furnished with en-suite bathrooms.

For the camping section, we provide good quality tents and thick camping mats. You will need to bring a sleeping bag and travel pillow (sleeping bags are available for hire for US\$40 - please let us know in advance if you would like one).

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## 2. Transport

### Our Vehicle

Patagonia's roads are remote and can be punishing on vehicles. Our overland expedition vehicle is built for the job. Based on a powerful, reliable and durable Mercedes truck chassis, it is more than capable of coping with almost any surface or road condition. Regular servicing and a pride in our vehicles limit mechanical issues and we carry a full complement of tools and spare parts. This means that if a problem were to occur we are almost always able to rectify it en-route with minimal disruption.

The passenger compartment has been professionally coach built from the ground up as an overland vehicle and combines the comforts of a coach with the rugged functionality required for adventurous group expeditions.

### Inside

The passenger cabin features comfortable, spacious, reclining coach seats, eight of which are around 2 tables which are suited to card games or journal writing. There are spacious overhead compartments where you can store your day pack for easy access when we're on the road. The vehicle also features USB charging, a high-quality sound system, plus a board full of maps and local information. Every window has curtains allowing protection from the sun and can be opened easily for photos.

For your safety the vehicle is equipped with seat belts and carries first aid and fire extinguishers.

### Security & Storage

The vehicle will always remain locked and secure when not in use, only we hold the keys, and we park up in the safest possible areas – often in secure parks. If you need to access the interior of the truck when the crew are not around, the main door is accessible via a security code lock, the number of which we will give you at the start of the trip.

We have two safes inside the vehicle. One is very well hidden and is very small. This one is purely for important items such as passports and cash. Our second safe is larger, and therefore more accessible. This is for valuables such as cameras, mobile phones, laptops etc. All items are left at your own risk. It is important that everybody on board helps with maintaining security by ensuring windows are closed, the door is locked etc.

Daypacks can be kept in the internal overhead racks and there is a large compartment for the safe storage of your large holdalls or backpacks.

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## 3. Joining the tour, Pre-departure meeting

The trip begins on Day 1 with a pre-departure meeting in our first hotel, usually at around 6.00pm. When you arrive at the hotel, you will find a note from us at reception detailing where and when to meet within the hotel. This initial meeting will involve an introduction, a detailed description of the trip plus an opportunity for you to ask any questions.

The tour leader will also collect:

- 2 photocopies of your passport information page,

- your travel insurance documents (showing the policy number, confirmation that the dates of the policy will cover you for the entire trip, and a 24-hour emergency assistance number)
- your local payment in US Dollars cash

It is essential that you attend this meeting - please let the UK office or your tour leader know if you are unable to do so.

If you would like to add some extra nights in the same hotel before the tour starts, please contact us for assistance with pre-booking these.

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#### **4. Food & Drink**

Breakfasts are included throughout the tour, either provided by the hotel you are staying in overnight, or at the truck while you are camping. Lunches and dinners are also included while camping at Torres del Paine National Park. Vegetarians will be catered for, but it is essential that we are aware of any special dietary requirements at time of booking as it will not be possible to purchase additional supplies once inside the Park.

For the other meals while on the tour, you can eat out at local cafes, snack shops, and restaurants. The cuisine of Patagonia is a delicate mix of traditional and modern flavours, with a big emphasis on rustic and warming dishes - perfect after a day of exploring. For the meat lover, the steak of Argentina is world famous, and the gaucho's favourite - lamb - is rich in taste and cooked fresh on open barbecues, known as an 'Asado'. Seafood is at the top of the menu throughout the area - with local delicacies like king crab and conger eel on offer. Those with a sweet tooth will enjoy trying the countless pastries and homemade chocolates. Patagonia as a whole has a good selection of goods, if there is anything you feel unable to live without, we recommend you bring it with you from home.

And that's just the food.... wineries cover the Northern region, and microbreweries can be found in most towns.

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#### **5. Physical Fitness & Mobility**

The adventurous nature of this tour means that a reasonable physical ability is needed in order to enjoy your trip. This particularly applies to Patagonia as the trip is based around the great outdoors and the vast majority of activities that are available throughout the trips require basic fitness.

The vehicle itself is only accessible via a short set of stairs, so you must be able to get in and out without assistance. Our tour offers different trekking options depending on your ability or just how you feel on the day.

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#### **6. Hygiene, Health & Safety**

Our vehicle carries a professionally stocked first aid kit on board the vehicle, allowing us to offer help and advice for minor incidents. In the rare event of a more serious incident, we carry phones or radios in order to call for medical assistance. We also know the areas we travel in well, and are able to locate the nearest hospital or doctor. It is essential that you obtain personal travel insurance for your trip, plus tell us of any allergies, medical conditions or other health related concerns that you may have. We also recommend you bring your own mini first aid kit for taking out and about with you, plus any personal medication you may need.

We provide hand sanitizer onboard the vehicle and all passengers should use this when entering the vehicle to help prevent the spread of germs. All utensils, interior surfaces and lockers of the vehicle are regularly washed and cleaned with detergent and anti-bacterial agents.

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#### **7. International Flights**



Both Argentina and Chile are well served by international flights, both from the UK and Europe, from the USA, and from other international destinations.

Tours which combine both countries can easily be booked on a single 'open jaw' ticket with various airlines, For example flying into Santiago, and out of Buenos Aires.

We do not sell international flights to customers in the United Kingdom, but are happy to help with quotes and information to help you book an appropriate flight.

We are happy to sell flights to our international customers in the USA and elsewhere. Please contact us for a quote to fit your tour and your preferred departure airport.

Both countries also have extensive domestic flight connections, and our tours are designed to fit easily with connections to Santiago and Buenos Aires at either end of the trip. Please check the time of any pre-departure meeting on Day 1 before booking flights to join the tour and ensure that you arrive in plenty of time to join it. Extra nights before and after the tour can be booked through us in the same accommodation (subject to availability).

### **Flight CO2 Emissions:**

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## **8. Passports & Visas - Argentina**

### **Passports:**

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER the date your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips.

If you have dual nationality you can only use one passport for the entire trip.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have a valid passport.

Please bring 2 photocopies of your passport details to give to your tour leader.

As a guideline, you will need at least 1 blank page per country in your passport.

### **Visas:**

The information below is to be used only as a guide and may change without prior notice. It is advisable to contact the relevant embassy in plenty of time before the trip departs to check the current visa requirements. It is your responsibility to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require. Visas obtained when crossing land borders must be paid for in USD cash ONLY. On arrival to countries in South America, you will be given an 'Immigration card'. It is important that you keep this with your passport during your entire stay in the particular country as it is needed for departure. Failure to produce this immigration slip can result in a fine.

### **Transiting via the USA**

Travellers who are flying to South America via the US will require either a US visa or for certain nationalities an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) to take advantage of the visa waiver programme. These can be processed and paid for before you leave home.

If you have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia or Yemen since March 2011 you will not qualify for the ESTA and must apply for a visa in person.

It is very important you establish your ESTA eligibility and have the correct documentation before departing, as if you

do not have the right authorisation upon checking in at the airport you may not be permitted to travel. For more information on other nationalities & visas checkout [www.projectvisa.com](http://www.projectvisa.com) Argentina

## Argentina Visa

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Argentina.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

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## 9. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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## 10. Local Payment

The local payment is part of your overall trip payment and is an amount that every passenger must pay on Day 1 of the trip. It can only be paid in US\$ cash, and the notes must be of good quality as it can be very difficult to exchange worn and dirty notes. Please do not bring all of your Local Payment in US\$100 notes, a good mix of \$20s, \$50s and \$100s is preferable. Please also make sure that they are post 2013 and do not have a serial number starting with CB. In many countries smaller US\$ notes are simply not accepted and as such notes smaller than \$20 are best avoided. Please remember that you will need to pre-order US\$ cash for your LP before you leave home as your LP is payable all at once at the start of your trip. You cannot pay in local currency using ATMs due to the withdrawal limits in place and their unreliability. In addition, ATM transaction fees can seriously add to your travelling expenses.

The reason we ask for a local payment is that it is the most cost effective and practical way to get hard currency to South America so that the Tour leaders have access to cash to pay for items during the trip which are difficult to pay for by credit card, and that cannot be pre-paid for from the UK. It also avoids expensive cash withdrawal fees and credit card usage fees which ultimately makes the trip price cheaper for you.

The Local Payment is a guaranteed amount, set before your trip departs, and unlike 'group kitty' systems used on some other Overland trips, we will not ask you to contribute more once the trip is underway.

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## 11. Money

The currency unit for Argentina is the Argentine Peso (ARS). The Peso symbol is the same as the dollar sign (\$). 1 Peso is subdivided into 100 centavos.

As a general rule it is best to bring your spending money in a combination of cash US dollars, pre-paid travel currency cards and debit/credit cards. You will also need US Dollars cash for your Local Payment.

**Make sure that all your notes are in good condition. Old, torn or marked notes are often refused by the banks and shops.** Please ensure your notes are dated post 2013 and do not have a serial number starting with CB.

When buying US Dollars before you travel it is best to ask for clean notes with no tears or markings.

Some travellers worry about carrying so much cash with them, however all the trucks we use are equipped with an onboard safe for the security of your money and passport. Please also remember that Visas obtained when crossing land borders, where required, need to be paid for in US dollars cash only.

## Spending Money

From past trips and traveller feedback US\$150 to US\$200 per week should cover costs such as some meals out, soft drinks and beers, email & communications, souvenirs and other general spending.

Personal spending habits & budgets differ greatly from person to person.

Budget on visa costs and optional activities separately (see visa section & optional excursions section) & allow extra for your Local Payment contribution.

Airport departure taxes are included in flight ticket prices.

### **Changing money**

Change your money only at banks, hotels, airports or forex bureaus. It is illegal to change money on the street, and people offering this service may be opportunistic thieves or undercover police. Your crew will advise you where & when you can change money & with what means. It is also a good idea to have a small CASH emergency fund, to allow for the unexpected.

### **Credit & Debit Cards**

If you are intending using your credit or debit card, we suggest taking more than one card with you as you may find that your card is not accepted in the first ATM you try. For credit and debit cards Visa is best. Mastercard is widely accepted, but American Express are generally not accepted throughout South America. We recommend that you inform your bank that you will be using your card abroad to avoid it being blocked.

### **Pre-Paid Travel Currency Cards**

These cards are similar to normal Credit and Debit cards but they can be pre loaded with cash before you travel with a set amount allowing you to withdraw this cash using the card at normal ATMs. It is a more secure way to access cash on your trip, but again do not rely on these as your sole means of funds on a trip. Several banks and companies now offer these cards, but be sure to look into the rates for withdrawing cash when making your decision. When using these cards abroad you will use them to withdraw the local currency from an ATM and not the currency that you loaded onto the card.

### **ATMs**

These are available in all the towns we pass on our route and allow you to withdraw local currency only. We discourage you from relying on your ATM card as a primary source of funds in case it is lost/stolen/swallowed, or the machine isn't working. In some destinations we probably won't even see a bank or ATM for days on end. Even where do find them, they cannot always be relied upon - things change, and ATMs don't always work! Besides memorising your PIN, it is also important to be aware of your daily withdrawal limit and bank withdrawal costs. Fees for using ATMs in Argentina can also be high and we recommend bringing USD cash to exchange to save yourself unnecessary costs.

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## **12. Financial Security**

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

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## **13. What to take**

Argentina, and Patagonia in particular, is known for its extreme weather. In one trip you are likely to experience all 4 seasons! It is near impossible to predict the weather far in advance.

As such it is important to have the correct equipment to ensure a comfortable tour. We have prepared a general packing list below for a suggestion of the basic equipment required for trekking and camping.

Clothing: Layering is key, so you can adapt to different conditions.

- Waterproof shell type jacket.
- Fleece, down jacket, insulating layers.
- Base layers.
- Thermal layers, if you feel the cold these are invaluable.
- Good quality hiking boots/shoes. Comfortable shoes for the evening.
- Comfortable trekking pants/trousers. Including one set of waterproof cover trousers.
- Beanie type hat for warmth. Cap or brimmed hat for sun shade.
- Buff type neck covering.
- Trekking type socks.
- Gloves.
- Daypack, between 10-30 litres.
- Refillable water bottle.
- Walking poles, if required.
- Head torch.

Camping: We provide high quality tents and thick sleeping mats. In addition, you will need:

- Sleeping bag, 3 or 4 season sleeping bag and liner. We have these available to rent for US\$50, payable on arrival. If required, please reserve at time of booking.
- Small travel pillow.
- Quick drying travel towel.

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## 14. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and

the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

***IMPORTANT:** We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

### **Covid-19**

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).**

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## **15. Follow Us Online**

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](https://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](https://www.twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

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## **16. Responsible Tourism**

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudice: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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## 17. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.

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## 18. Passports & Visas - Chile

### Passports

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER the date your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips.

If you have dual nationality you can only use one passport for the entire trip.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have a valid passport.

Please bring 2 photocopies of your passport details to give to your tour leader.

As a guideline, you will need at least 1 blank page per country in your passport.

### Visas:

The information below is to be used only as a guide and may change without prior notice. It is advisable to contact the relevant embassy in plenty of time before the trip departs to check the current visa requirements. It is your responsibility to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require. Visas obtained when crossing land borders must be paid for in USD cash ONLY. On arrival to countries in South America, you will be given an 'Immigration card'. It is important that you keep this with your passport during your entire stay in the particular country as it is needed for

departure. Failure to produce this immigration slip can result in a fine.

### **Transiting via the USA**

Travellers who are flying to South America via the US will require either a US visa or for certain nationalities an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) to take advantage of the visa waiver programme. These can be processed and paid for before you leave home.

If you have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia or Yemen since March 2011 you will not qualify for the ESTA and must apply for a visa in person.

It is very important you establish your ESTA eligibility and have the correct documentation before departing, as if you do not have the right authorisation upon checking in at the airport you may not be permitted to travel.

For more information on other nationalities & visas checkout [www.projectvisa.com](http://www.projectvisa.com) Argentina

### **Chile Visa**

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, New Zealand, USA and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Chile.

**USA** passport holders are all required to pay a 'reciprocity fee' if they are flying into Santiago International Airport only. This is approximately \$160 USD for Americans.

If entering Chile via a **land border**, this is not applicable.

Starting from the 16th May 2020 - **Australian** passport holders will be required to obtain an **e-visa** to enter Chile. There will be single entry and multiple entry visas available.

Passport holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

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**Printed on:** Sunday 19th of May 2024

**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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