

## 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

**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 Nation



# 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:**

## 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:**

## 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:**

## 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:**

## 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:**

## 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:**

## 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:**

## 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:**

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

Hop on private transportation today to make the journey into the natural beauty of Los Glacieres 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 Glacieres 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:**

## 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:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

**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 Glacieres guided hike
- Los Glacieres transfer to trail head included
- Services of Oasis Crew

**Excluded:**

- International flights
- Travel insurance (mandatory, [get quote here](#))

- 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 (Patagonia Highlights)

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.

### **EI 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

### **EI 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.

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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. 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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**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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