ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Patagonia Highlights

COUNTRY(IES)	Argentina , Chile
TOUR TYPE	Overland
TRANSPORT	Overland expedition truck
GROUP SIZE	Min: 5 | Max: 24
DURATION	11 days
STARTS	Punta Arenas, Chlle
ENDS	El Chalten, Argentina
MEALS	Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 4, Dinners - 3

TOUR ROUTE MAP **11 Days**



ROUTE: **Punta Arenas** (Start) → **Torres Del Paine National Park** → **Perito Moreno Glacier** → **El Calafate** → **El Chalten** (End)

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

Arrive in Punta Arenas at the gateway to Chilean Patagonia and begin your stay at a relaxed pace. After settling in, free time allows for an easy introduction to the city's windswept streets and historic character. Visits to Cerro de la Cruz and the Lord Lonsdale Shipwreck provide insight into the region's maritime history and panoramic views over the Strait of Magellan. The day concludes with a pre departure meeting to prepare for the journey ahead. This opening experience combines orientation, local landmarks, and practical planning in southern Chile.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Punta Arenas Airport**
  Arrive at Punta Arenas in the Magallanes region of Chile. Begin your time in Patagonia with a relaxed arrival day in the city.

- **Free Time in Punta Arenas**
  Enjoy free time in Punta Arenas, Chile to explore the waterfront and historic streets. You can visit viewpoints and landmarks around the city at your own pace.
- **Explore Cerro de la Cruz in Punta Arenas**
  Visit Cerro de la Cruz viewpoint in Punta Arenas, Chile. Take in panoramic views over the city, the Strait of Magellan and colourful hillside houses.
- **Explore Lord Lonsdale Shipwreck in Punta Arenas**
  See the Lord Lonsdale shipwreck off the shore of Punta Arenas, Chile. The rusting wreck sits near the southern end of town and makes a striking coastal photo stop.
- **Pre in Departure Meeting – Punta Arenas**
  Attend the group pre-departure meeting in Punta Arenas, Chile. Meet your tour leader and review plans for the Patagonia journey ahead.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Hotel Savoy or similar	None	Extra day in Punta Arenas- pre-tour (EXARPS)

DAY 2 Punta Arenas & Penguin Excursion

Travel by boat from Punta Arenas across the Strait of Magellan to Magdalena Island, a protected sanctuary known for its large penguin colony. Walking among the nesting grounds offers close views of Magellanic penguins in their natural habitat. A visit to the historic Magdalena Island Lighthouse adds context to the region’s maritime navigation and remote setting. The return boat journey provides sweeping views of open water and Patagonian skies. This excursion combines wildlife, history, and seafaring tradition in southern Chile.

ACTIVITIES

- **Boat from Punta Arenas to Magdalena Island**
  Travel by boat from Punta Arenas, Chile to Magdalena Island in the Strait of Magellan. The crossing depends on local sea and weather conditions.
- **Penguin Colony Walk in Magdalena Island**
  Walk among the penguin colonies on Magdalena Island near Punta Arenas, Chile. Observe the colony in its natural habitat with wide ocean views.
- **Explore Magdalena Island Lighthouse**
  Visit the historic lighthouse on Magdalena Island in southern Chile. Learn about the island's maritime history and enjoy coastal scenery.
- **Boat from Magdalena Island to Punta Arenas**
  Return by boat from Magdalena Island to Punta Arenas, Chile. Arrive back on the mainland after the wildlife excursion.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hotel Savoy or similar	Breakfast

DAY 3

Drive to Torres del Paine National Park

Travel north from Punta Arenas into the heart of Chilean Patagonia, crossing wide open plains toward the dramatic landscapes of Torres del Paine National Park. The journey reveals changing scenery, from windswept steppe to rising mountain silhouettes. Arrival in the park allows time to settle in and absorb the scale of the surrounding peaks, lakes, and valleys. Free time can be used to relax, take short walks, or enjoy views from nearby viewpoints. This transition day sets the stage for deeper exploration of one of Patagonia's most iconic natural areas.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Punta Arenas to Torres del Paine National Park**
  Travel by road from Punta Arenas to Torres del Paine National Park in Chilean Patagonia. The long drive crosses open steppe landscapes toward the mountains.
- **Free Time in Torres del Paine National Park**
  Settle into camp and enjoy free time inside Torres del Paine National Park, Chile. Choose gentle walks or relax while taking in the dramatic scenery.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Camping at Camping Pehoe or similar	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 4

Torres del Paine National Park

Spend the day immersed in the landscapes of Torres del Paine National Park through guided walks that highlight its mountains, lakes, and glacial valleys. Accompanied by local expertise, these walks provide insight into the park's geography, wildlife, and natural history. The routes offer varied perspectives of Patagonia's iconic scenery while remaining accessible and unhurried. Free time later in the day allows space to relax, enjoy viewpoints, or explore independently. This balanced experience combines structured exploration with personal time in one of South America's most striking national parks.

ACTIVITIES

- **Guided Walks in Torres del Paine National Park**
  Join guided walks in Torres del Paine National Park, Chile. Explore trails with views of lakes, glaciers and the Paine mountain range.
- **Free Time in Torres del Paine National Park**
  Settle into camp and enjoy free time inside Torres del Paine National Park, Chile. Choose gentle walks or relax while taking in the dramatic scenery.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Camping at Camping Pehoe or similar	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 5 Torres del Paine National Park

Enjoy a full day at leisure within Torres del Paine National Park, surrounded by some of Patagonia's most dramatic landscapes. This unstructured time allows you to move at your own pace, whether relaxing at your accommodation, taking short walks, or visiting nearby viewpoints. The park's open spaces, lakes, and mountain backdrops create a calm and immersive atmosphere. This slower day provides balance within the itinerary and time to fully absorb the scale and beauty of the national park.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Torres del Paine National Park**
  Settle into camp and enjoy free time inside Torres del Paine National Park, Chile. Choose gentle walks or relax while taking in the dramatic scenery.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Camping at Camping Pehoe or similar	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 6 Drive to El Calafate

Depart Torres del Paine National Park and travel eastward across Patagonian plains toward El Calafate, crossing from Chile into Argentina. The drive showcases wide open landscapes defined by steppe terrain, distant mountain ranges, and expansive skies. This overland journey marks a geographic and cultural transition within southern Patagonia. Arrival in El Calafate allows time to settle in and enjoy the town's relaxed lakeside setting. Free time offers the opportunity to explore at your own pace or rest ahead of upcoming glacier experiences.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Torres del Paine National Park to El Calafate**
  Travel by road from Torres del Paine National Park in Chile to El Calafate in Argentine Patagonia. Cross the border and continue through wide open steppe landscapes.
- **Free Time in El Calafate**
  Spend the evening at leisure in El Calafate, Argentina. Explore cafes, markets and local shops ahead of the glacier visit.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Glaciar del Libertador or similar	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 7 El Calafate. Perito Moreno Glacier Tour

Visit one of Patagonia's most iconic natural landmarks on a guided excursion to Perito Moreno Glacier in Los Glaciares National Park. The experience reveals the immense scale of the glacier through panoramic viewpoints overlooking its towering ice walls and deep blue crevasses. Boardwalk paths allow close observation of the glacier's

dynamic surface and frequent ice calving events. Set within a vast glacial landscape, the visit highlights the power of nature and the unique geology of southern Argentina. This day offers a memorable encounter with one of the world’s most accessible major glaciers.

ACTIVITIES

- **Perito Moreno Glacier Tour in Los Glaciares National Park**
  Visit Perito Moreno Glacier in Los Glaciares National Park near El Calafate, Argentina. Walk the viewing paths and terraces for close-up views of the ice wall and lake.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Glaciar del Libertador or similar	Breakfast

DAY 8 El Calafate. Free time

Enjoy a full free day in El Calafate with time to rest or explore independently. Lake Argentino, the waterfront and the town’s relaxed atmosphere provide a natural setting for an easier day between more active excursions. Use the open hours however you prefer, whether for a quiet break or some independent wandering.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in El Calafate**
  Spend the evening at leisure in El Calafate, Argentina. Explore cafes, markets and local shops ahead of the glacier visit.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Glaciar del Libertador or similar	Breakfast

DAY 9 Drive to El Chalten. Explore the village

Travel by road from El Calafate to El Chaltén with a photo stop near Mount Fitz Roy when weather and visibility allow. Open Patagonian steppe gradually gives way to more dramatic mountain scenery as the route approaches the trekking town. After arrival, the remaining time is free to settle in or explore independently.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from El Calafate to El Chalten**
  Travel by road from El Calafate to El Chalten in Argentine Patagonia. The route runs through wilderness landscapes with mountain views.
- **Photo Stop at Mount Fitz Roy in El Chalten Region**
  Stop for photos of Mount Fitz Roy near El Chalten, Argentina. Capture the dramatic granite spires that define the Patagonian skyline.
- **Free Time in El Chalten**
  Spend the evening at leisure in El Chalten, Argentina. Explore the village and choose from local restaurants in

this trekking hub.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hotel Kalenshen or similar	Breakfast

DAY 10

El Chalten. Los Glaciares National Park

Travel by private transfer for around forty minutes along the Lago del Desierto road to the El Pilar trailhead in Los Glaciares National Park. Trek beside the Rio Blanco through forest and alpine terrain, passing Piedras Blancas Glacier viewpoints and Poincenot Camp before tackling a steep final kilometre to Laguna de los Tres. On a clear day, the Fitz Roy massif dominates the view. After lunch, descend to El Chaltén, while shorter unguided walks remain available for those not joining the full trek.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from El Chalten to El Pilar Trailhead**
  Transfer from El Chalten to the El Pilar trailhead in Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina. The route heads north toward the Lago del Desierto road.
- **Guided Trek in Los Glaciares National Park**
  Trek through Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina with a local guide. Follow trails along the Rio Blanco toward key viewpoints and mountain valleys.
- **Piedras Blancas Glacier Viewpoint in Los Glaciares National Park**
  Stop at the Piedras Blancas Glacier viewpoint in Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina. Take in icy panoramas and rugged Patagonian terrain.
- **Explore Laguna de los Tres Viewpoint in Fitz Roy Massif**
  Reach high viewpoints overlooking the Fitz Roy Massif and Laguna de los Tres in Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina. On a clear day the whole massif is visible, along with Glacier de los Tres and both Laguna Sucia and Glacier Sucio, a spectacular sight.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hotel Kalenshen or similar	Breakfast

DAY 11

Tour ends in El Chalten

The journey comes to a close in El Chaltén, set beneath the dramatic peaks of the Fitz Roy massif. This final moment marks the end of an overland exploration through Patagonia’s national parks, glaciers, and mountain landscapes. Time in this small trekking town offers a fitting setting to reflect on the natural highlights experienced along the route. Surrounded by alpine scenery, El Chaltén provides a calm and memorable conclusion to the tour.

ACTIVITIES

- **Tour Ends in El Chalten**
  Conclude the trip in El Chalten, Argentina. Continue onward travel independently or by bus toward El Calafate and the airport.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
N/A	Breakfast

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, get a 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

Tour Options

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.

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.

Important Notes

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).

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 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.

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.

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 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.

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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8 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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9 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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10 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 prejudge: 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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11 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://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

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12 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).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? World Nomads Travel Insurance offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

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.

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13 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.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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14 Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can’t fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon’s efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you’ll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

15 Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please contact us.

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16 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 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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17 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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18 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.

19 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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20 Passports & Visas - Chile

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For more information on other nationalities & visas checkout 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.
