

Patagonia

Chile - Argentina

Depart-Sydney: 4th February 2007
Return-Sydney: 23rd February 2007

This trip takes in the two most scenic National Parks in Patagonia, a region renowned for its pristine natural beauty. In the Paine National Park in Chile we explore the region on day walks and enjoy the view of the Paine Massif which rises 5000ft. above the grasslands of Chile. In Argentina we explore the Glacier National Park where the Fitzroy Massif rises 11000ft above the glaciers.

Among the glaciers we will be visiting are the Moreno Glacier and Grey Glacier.

On this trip we will be staying in comfortable Hosterias (not to be mistaken for hostels!) and taking day walks and excursions. This gives us opportunity to come back to a hot shower, a warm room and great food after our day's outing.

After visiting the mountain in Patagonia we travel to the North West of Argentina to totally different sort of trip. (Those of us who may not be able to afford the time, have a choice of doing just this first part of the trip in Patagonia). This extension takes us to a major tourist centre of Salta from where we visit the Andean region and the Quebrada de Humahuaca Valley. There are prehispanic ruins to explore and to discover the earliest Argentinian towns founded as early as 1553 by European settlers pushing south from Peru.



For those beginning the journey in Sydney, we fly out on Sunday 4th. of February. We arrive the same day in the early afternoon in Buenos Aires. This gives us time to explore the centre of the city on a walking tour. Those arriving from other parts of the world, can choose to join us either at Buenos Aires on the 4th. February or 5th. February in El Calafate.

5th. February: We fly down to El Calafate where our guide will be waiting for us for the journey to the Moreno-Glacier. After exploring this amazing glacier that seems endless (it is considered to one of the only glaciers that is actually extending) we drive back to El Calafate for the night. Hotel Quijote. Our stay at Hotel Quijote includes breakfast.

6th. February: We have private transport to Torres del Paine National Park. Most of our travels here at the Paine National Park will be without a guide, but with us will be atleast one member of the group who has travelled with us in this region before and will be assisting. This is a long drive that takes you through the country side of Patagonia. Overnight at Hosteria Mirador del Payne on a room only basis.

07th. February: Begin a day walk that takes you to Pehoe. Your luggage will be transferred by private transport to Hosteria Pehoe where we will be spending the night. Accommodation at Pehoe is on a room only basis.

08th. February: You have a free day to explore the surrounding regions on your own or make an outing of it by taking the Catamaran to Glacier Grey. The cost of this excursion by Catamaran to Glacier Grey is not included. Overnight at Hosteria Pehoe on room only basis.

09th. February: Trekking in Torres del Paine. Transport will take you to Hosteria Las Torres and from there you trek to Torres del Paine. Overnight Hosteria Pehoe on room only basis.

10th. February: We have private transport for the journey from Paine to El Calafate and then on to El Chalten in the Fitz Roy National Park. We overnight at Hosteria La Aldea. Accommodation here includes breakfast.

11th. February: While we are here in El Chalten for the next few days - we have a guide, breakfast, lunch (or a lunch box) and dinner at the superb dinners at " Restaurant Ruca Mahuida". Drinks are not included!

Today we trek with a mountain guide to Laguna Torre / Cerro Torre Basecamp. Overnight at Hosteria La Aldea with breakfast. Lunch boxes will be provided for the day's walk and dinner will be at Restaurant Ruca Mahuida.

12th. February: On this day we trek to with a mountain guide from El Chalten to Laguna de los Tres / Fitz Roy. A lunch box will be provided for the day's walk and dinner will be at the Restaurant Ruca Mahuida. We will overnight either at Hosteria La Aldea or the Fitz Roy Inn - where requests for our rooms have been made.

13th. February: Today we trek with a mountain guide to Loma del Pliegue Tumbado. Lunch box will be provided and dinner will be at Restuarant Ruca Mahuida. We overnight at the Fitz Roy Inn.

14th. February: Today we trek with a mountain guide to Cerro Polo for a beautiful view over the whole mountain range. Lunch box will be provided and dinner will be at the Restuarant Ruca Mahuida. Overnight at the Fitz Roy Inn with breakfast.

15th. February: We travel to El Calafate Airport for the flight to Buenos Aires. Arrive at Airport AEP in Buenos Aires and travel to the Hotel Reconquista Garden. The cost of accommodation includes breakfast. The Airport AEP is only about 20 minutes away from the city, where as the International Airport is about 45 minutes away.

16th. February: Travel to the AEP airport (for domestic flights) for the flight to Salta. On arrival transfer to Hotel San Lorenzo or similar hotel for the night.

17th. February: In this region we will be travelling on a tour program called "Nubes con Humahuaca" organised by Movitrack - these are in vehicles that hold up to 8 passengers. In between the tours there will be short walks. On this program you visit Salta, San Antonio de los Cobres, Salinas Grandes, Purmamarca and Maimara. Overnight at Maimara Hotel Posta del Sol or similar with breakfast included.

18th. February: Program: "Nubes con Humahuaca" Travel from Maimara to Salta and then to San Lorenzo. Visit, Tilcara, Humahuaca, Uquia. Overnight at the Hotel Selva Montana or similar.

19th. February: We begin a tour called "Safari Calchaquies" This offers you a variety of landscapes and you get to seem a number of small historic and charming settlements along the way. Visit Los Cardones National Par, Cachi and Molinos and end the day at Coronel Moldes. Overnight at Coronel Moldes with breakfast.

20th. February: Continue with the "Safari Calchaquies" tour. Visit Cafayate and Ruinas de Quilmes before returning to Salta. Transfer to San Lorenzo. Overnight at Selva Montana.

21st. February: Transfer from San Lorenzo to the airport in Salta and fly to Buenos Aires: Transfer from the domestic airport at AEP to the International airport at Ezeiza to connect with the Aerolineas Airlines flight home. to Sydney.

22nd: February: Inflight.

23rd. February: Arrive at Sydney Airport in the morning. End of trip.

I have very happy memories of Patagonia and it is time I got back there. I am hoping that I can join this trip. We have only 5 rooms booked – and so the maximum number we will have on this trip will be 8 members.

If you are considering joining a trip with a difference do let me know soon as I have to firm up the number with our host the adventurous Pablo – who set up in El Chalten, when it had no more than a couple of huts.

He also own " Restaurant Ruca Mahuida" – where I have had some fine meals.

Best wishes,

Mohan