

## CHILE - EL CIRCUITO



### TRIP CODE

CLTSECP

### DEPARTURE

Every Wednesday from  
October to March

### DURATION

9 Days

### LOCATIONS

Chile, Patagonia



## INTRODUCTION

The Paine Circuit around the famous Torres del Paine Massif is one of the most striking trekking routes in the world. The Circuit is the perfect adventure for trekkers who crave the ultimate challenge in Torres del Paine and want to be part of a unique group experience with expert guides in one of the world's most stunning national parks.

## ITINERARY

**DAY 1: Transfer from Punta Arenas to Las Torres Campsite**

This morning you will be met at the airport or your hotel in Punta Arenas before setting off for the world famous Torres del Paine National Park. En route stop in the town of Puerto Natales, a small but lively town on the shores of Seno Ultima Esperanza to enjoy a hearty lunch of delicious local food. Continue on stopping once more at the enormous Milodon Cave.



NO IMAGE  
AVAILABLE

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## DAY 2: Camp Dickson trek

Begin today with a long trek to Lake Dickson. The terrain is relatively easy and views of the middle Torre and the granite walls of the Paine mountain range provide more than enough encouragement. Surrounded by ancient Patagonian beech forest, Lake Dickson is the largest lake on the north side of the circuit and is framed by the Cerro Ohmet peak. From here, enjoy a spectacular view of the Dickson Glacier which flows into the lake. The trek continues along the eastern bank of the Paine River where you can take a break at a lookout point offering a superb panoramic view of Lake Paine below. It is then onto Refugio Dickson to spend the night.



## DAY 3: Camp Dickson to Camp Perros


The trail this morning follows Los Perros River through the wildest and least accessible section of the trek. A virgin beech forest, crossed by many watercourses, leads the way towards the lovely Los Perros Lagoon. On your approach to the camp, catch sight of the incredible Perros Glacier. Settle in for a night of camping at Los Perros.



## DAY 4: Camp Perros to Camp Grey

Today's section is probably the most physically demanding of the circuit as you first make your way through swampy terrain before climbing the John Garner pass. At 1,300m/4,000ft, this is the highest point on the trek and offers an awe-inspiring view of the Grey Glacier, an enormous fractured mass of ice which chokes the valley below. The route then continues in a southerly direction along forested slopes where you continue to enjoy spectacular views of the Southern Ice Cap and the Grey Glacier. Reaching Camp Grey, enjoy a well-deserved dinner before spending the night under the canvas.



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### DAY 5: : Camp Grey to Lake Pehoé

Before you set off to the Lake Pehoé Camp, you have the option of taking an easy mini trek on the Grey Glacier, a truly extraordinary experience! Alternatively there is time to relax and simply soak up the stunning surrounds. After lunch, begin your hike following the eastern shore of Lake Grey, passing through clearings of Calafate bushes and enjoying incredible views of Lake Grey and its glacier. After a relatively short climb to follow a flat ridge, descend through a shallow valley to reach the camp located at the beautiful turquoise Lake Pehoé.



### DAY 6: Camp Pehoé to Camp Cuernos

This morning begin a challenging trek to Valle Frances (French Valley), following a steep trail that takes you deep into the heart of the Paine Massif. The French Valley is considered to be one of the most beautiful places in the park and indeed the world. The high altitude valley is ringed by a curtain of almost vertical rock which creates an amphitheatre of granite walls and spires. It is famous for its 360 degree panoramic views of Los Cuernos, the French Glacier and Lago Nordenskjöld. After lunch begin your descent down the winding path through the grasslands and forests until reaching the campsite at Cuernos to spend the night.



### DAY 7: Camp Cuernos to EcoCamp

Today you follow the winding Cuernos Trail along the beautiful Lake Nordenskjöld. Formed by a melting glacier the high concentration of minerals gives the lake a striking green colour. This morning, enjoy magnificent views of the iconic three "Horns"; Cuerno Principal (2,600m), Cuerno Este (2,200m) and Cuerno Norte (2,400m), which tower over the park, the changing colours of the rock providing you with an incredible silent show. This afternoon, reach the well-equipped EcoCamp, a collection of dome structured tents which nestle perfectly into their surroundings. Enjoy a hearty dinner and take advantage of the camp's social quarters to meet and share memories with fellow travellers.



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## DAY 8: Torres del Paine


After breakfast embark on your last and possibly most rewarding hiking challenge: the trek to the famous Paine Towers. Set off from the EcoCamp and join the undulating path to the scenic Ascencio Valley. From here, follow a steep trail until the magnificent Towers come into full view. The three granite towers, Torre D’Agostini (2850m / 9,350ft), Torre Central (2,800m / 9,186ft) and Torre Norte (2,600m / 8,530ft) rise majestically before you providing one of the most breathtaking sights in the world! Enjoy lunch against this stunning backdrop before returning to the EcoCamp to relax and reflect on an unforgettable day.



## DAY 9: Farewell to Torres del Paine

Board your early morning vehicle for the scenic ride back to Punta Arenas or Calafate.




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## INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Camping in two-person tents
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Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All ground transport as indicated in the itinerary</li> <li>• Regular bus tickets Calafate to Puerto Natales if starting or finishing in El Calafate, check last section</li> <li>• 8 nights camping*, including all equipment EXCEPT mat and sleeping bag</li> <li>• Park fees for Cueva del Milodon and Torres del Paine National Park</li> <li>• One expert English speaking trekking guide</li> <li>• The porter service for this trip</li> </ul> <p>Meals (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, BL: Box Lunch, D: Dinner):</p> <p>day 1: L, D</p> <p>day 2: B, BL, D</p> <p>day 3: B, BL, D</p> <p>day 4: B, BL, D</p> <p>day 5: B, BL, D</p> <p>day 6: B, BL, D</p> <p>day 7: B, BL, D</p> <p>day 8: B, BL, D</p> <p>day 9: B, BL</p>
	<p><b>Excluded</b></p> <p>Flight tickets.</p> <p>Insurance (it is mandatory you purchase appropriate insurance for this trip).</p> <p>Voluntary tipping of guides and staff.</p> <p>Soft drinks or snacks not served with the meals included at the EcoCamp. Bringing US\$ in cash for buying extra drinks/snacks or souvenirs in Torres del Paine NP is suggested.</p> <p>Items of personal nature.</p>
Difficulty Rating	4 (average fitness and above)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	<p>Possible to start and/or end the tour in El Calafate, Argentina. Upgrades to dome accommodation at the EcoCamp are available: ask us for details.</p> <p>Advertised rate based on groups of 4 people</p> <p>Trip code: PAT017</p>
Price Dependent upon	Availability and Season: NB. Tour incurs a surcharge around Christmas time.

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## SUSTAINABILITY

Eco camp has gained an award-winning reputation for its eco-friendly policies and innovative use of green technology. We are leaders in environmentally responsible travel to areas of fragile natural resources and we minimise the footprint of every visitor in Torres del Paine National Park through our careful development strategy and implementation of green technology. Our low impact design and focus on raising guests’

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awareness of how to care for their environment highlights our commitment to a greener present and future for tourism. Conservation is central to the philosophy driving our operations, and we have been certified as complying with the highest international standards of environmental management, such as ISO14001.

The design premise behind EcoCamp was to create accommodation where travellers could connect with nature and explore Torres del Paine without leaving a footprint. At EcoCamp guests are immersed in their natural surroundings, hearing the wind race through the sky while looking up at the stars through the ceiling of their cozy dome. All natural light and heat energy is utilised and electricity comes from hydro and solar energy. Domes blend naturally into their surrounding environment and flora and fauna continues to flourish on EcoCamp ground.

Our premise from the start has been to take comfort to the limits of what is sustainable and for this reason we resist the concept of luxury because environmental conservation will always be prioritised over any luxurious amenities or practices which could be detrimental to the park.

EcoCamp's dome design was inspired by the The Kaweskars (Alacalufes), a group of nomadic Patagonian inhabitants whose presence in Torres del Paine is documented. They arrived by canoe in the 15th century and made no demands on natural resources as they travelled from place to place, setting up and dismantling their semi-circular huts built from simple materials, leaving no trace behind. To keep warm they lit fires inside the domes.

EcoCamp is a tribute to the ancient Kaweskar dwellings and way of life and the essence of their dome homes has been kept by maintaining a simple nomadic design in the midst of natural surroundings. Just like the Kaweskars, EcoCamp respects nature and aims to leaves no footprint behind in the wilderness.

All of our electricity (which is very little as most of our efforts go to efficiency and electricity saving) comes from a micro-hydro turbine and photovoltaic panels. Energy is gathered together in a 24V battery bank to power all of EcoCamp's refrigerators, lighting, electrical appliances, stereos etc. Propane gas is only used to heat water and superior domes. A pilot scheme to heat shower water with solar energy is in motion.

Water from the river enters the micro-hydro turbine at 5 litres per second with a net pressure of 38 meters delivering a steady power of 800 Watts. An inverter is used to switch from the 24V DC in the battery bank to 220 AC, the standard voltage in Chile. An array of 1700 Watt photovoltaic panels - also connected to the battery bank - collect the extra energy needed at Ecocamp.

Electricity is limited and only available to guests for charging camera batteries and laptops, not using hairdryers or electric razors. Solar energy is very efficient in summer when Patagonia receives up to 17 hours of sunlight daily.

Domes have skylight windows so natural light and heat can be utilized. This not only allows guests to follow natural light patterns but saves electricity, leaving us confident that our renewable energy sources are sufficient and fossil fuels are not needed. Suite domes have a wood stove for warmth, recycling dead wood from the park and avoiding the need to use diesel.

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EcoCamp's sustainable design, structure, implementation and maintenance is all the direct work of the owners themselves. Javier Lopez and Yerko Ivelic, both Chilean engineers, worked to design a hotel concept which would allow them to rely almost entirely on green energy. They then installed the micro-hydro turbine and composting toilet devices and taught a team of skilled workers how to work and maintain these features. To this date, ten years after EcoCamp's opening, the owners continue to travel to Torres del Paine to oversee implementation and maintenance of the sophisticated structure they put in place all those years ago.

We have a basic policy of environmentally-sensitive waste management which includes bringing as little paper, tin and plastic into the wilderness as possible. All waste brought in is separated at the source and stored according to its recycling status: organic, paper, glass, and dangerous or toxic materials. All non-organic materials are removed and sent to the closest town of Punta Arenas to be recycled or disposed of and organic material is fed to a neighbouring pig farm.

Guides ensure guests leave no rubbish en route during treks, and that all non-biodegradable material is brought back to EcoCamp to be properly disposed of. Guests reuse zip-lock lunch bags and water flasks.

We choose all of our suppliers extremely carefully, ensuring they are all aware of and meet with our environmental standards. We buy in bulk so as to limit individual packaging and our suppliers limit packaging brought into the park to an absolute minimum.

Guests recycle their lunch bags everyday and use the same flask which they re-fill with water en route during their trek. We have a traveller handbook in all domes informing guests of our ecological practices and their responsibilities while in the park, which include staying on the raised wooden walkways, never smoking inside domes, using biodegradable hygiene products, always returning waste to the recycling point at EcoCamp, taking batteries back home, minimising time in the shower and sharing transport to and from EcoCamp.

EcoCamp has the world's southern-most composting device, and the first in the hotel industry in the whole of Chile and Patagonia. Composting chambers collect waste from toilets and solid waste remains in the chamber, mixed with paper and wood chips, and is heated to keep microorganisms alive and the compost process active. Liquids are passed through a cleaning chamber, filtered, then passed into the ground. Due to the low temperatures in Patagonia, great effort is required to maintain the active process.

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