

ARGENTINA - WILD PATAGONIA OVERLAND



INTRODUCTION

On this incredible journey, we will travel from Ushuaia, Argentina, the most southerly city in the world, through the remote expanses of Patagonia. Explore the southern ice fields, breath-taking glaciers, vast national parks and the magnificent snow-capped Andes mountain range. Travelling north along the infamous Route 40 we arrive into a region of lush green forests and sparkling blue lakes that make up the Chilean and Argentinean lakes districts. Enjoy the wonderful Chilean wine region before finishing the tour in Santiago, the vibrant, cosmopolitan capital of Chile. This is a voyage of intense natural beauty and a chance to be at one with the great outdoors.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Ushuaia

We begin our tour in the picturesque seaside city of Ushuaia, the most southerly city in the world. This tour is operated under our group travel brand, Viva Expeditions. Viva specialises in guided small group tours to Latin America. Please join your tour leader for a tour meeting at 6:30pm, look out for joining details in the lobby. Enjoy a welcome dinner with the group this evening



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DURATION

27 Days

LOCATIONS

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DAY 1: Ushuaia

Ushuaia is the most southerly city in the world with a dramatic setting overlooking the Beagle Channel, surrounded by mountains. It is a major port for Antarctic bound vessels and an interesting city to explore. The Museo Marítimo y del Presidio de Ushuaia, (Maritime & the Prison of Ushuaia Museum), located in the former prison of Ushuaia in buildings dating back to 1906, is well worth a visit. Tierra del Fuego National Park, a short bus ride from Ushuaia was the first shoreline National Park to be established in Argentina. It is a rugged, mountainous park with great views of Lapataia Bay and dramatic scenery with waterfalls, mountains, glaciers and lakes including parts of Fagnano and Roca Lakes. There are many hiking trails within the park including the Coastal Path (Senda Costera) that connects Ensenada Bay to Lapataia Bay on Lago Roca and the park is home to many species of birds and animals. Meals: Dinner (D)



DAY 2: Ushuaia

In the morning, you will embark the catamaran that will take you through the waters of Beagle Channel. Sailing along Ushuaia Bay you get an excellent panoramic view of the city framed by Andean mountains. Passing by Archipelago Bridges you'll reach Birds Island, where you will be able to appreciate the vast variety of sea birds that live in the area: cormorants, skuas, petrels, ducks, sea gulls, etc. Close to this place, you will see the Sea Lions and a unique opportunity to watch at the same time sea lions of two distinct species. You will finally get to Les Eclaireurs Lighthouse, the iconic symbol of the beagle channel before returning to Ushuaia. In the afternoon we visit Tierra Del Fuego National Park where you will be able to enjoy the wonderful natural environment with visits to Ensenada Bay, Alakush Visitors Centre including a small museum, learn about the indigenous Yamana, see an old beaver dam and finish at Lapataia Bay, "The End of the Road" where the end of the famous Pan American Highway is found more than 17000km/11000mi from where it begins. Meals: Breakfast (B)



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DAY 3: Ushuaia - Cerro Sombrero

Our first big drive day sees us head over the Garibaldi Pass (500m/1500ft) and leave the mountains behind us. We pass the massive Lago Fagnano, the heart of the island and cross the border into Chile. After lunch, we visit a King Penguin colony. King Penguins are usually only found on sub Antarctic islands, such as the remote and difficult to access South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. Observing them in Tierra del Fuego, therefore, is a unique opportunity! We continue onto the tiny town of Cerro Sombrero surrounded by the steppe. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



DAY 4: Cerro Sombrero - Punta Arenas

Crossing the Straits of Magellan, we arrive into Punta Arenas, a place of historical riches; see the mansions and museums of the wealthy wool barons who lived the high life during the boom of the 1890s or take on the wind as you walk along the beautiful promenade by the water's edge. You have the afternoon at leisure to explore the city. Tonight, you will enjoy a meal prepared by a talented, local chef who takes local regional foods and gives you a taste of the variety of unusual tastes and flavours they have. Meals: (B), (D)



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DAY 5: Punta Arenas - Torres del Paine

Today we head to South Americas finest National Park, stopping before in the seaside town of Puerto Natales for lunch and supplies. Puerto Natales sitting right on the Ultima Esperanza, the Last Hope Sound and is a major gateway to the fjords of Chile. Torres Del Paine, South Americas finest National Park and a trekker's paradise. Declared a Reserve of the Biosphere by UNESCO in 1978 it is located amongst the mountain range of the Andes and the Patagonian steppe. In this zone, the colossal towers and horns of granite and rock that have given world-wide fame to it, with heights of up to 3,050 meters above the sea level. The park preserves fragile ecosystems, numerous animals like guanacos, condors, ñandues (South American ostrich), foxes and the elusive puma. The 3 most famous treks inside the park are: (a) Greys Glacier Hike (b) French Valley Hike (c) Los Torres Hike Instead of walking these continuously, carrying all your hiking gear like on the Big W (a 4 day hike), we break it into three separate walks, covering different sections of the park and hiking an average of 15km (9.5mi) to 20km (12mi) each day. The group is assisted by expert local trekking guides who share information about the environment and guide you through the hiking trails. If you are not hiking there are other activities available inside Torres Del Paine including tours by vehicle, boat and on horse-back. However, please note these activities are subject to availability and minimum numbers and will incur an additional cost. Weather plays a big part in whether these activities will be on offer. Please ask about our Torres Light Add-On. Meals include: (B), (D)



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DAY 6: Las Torres

Las Torres Hike (Difficult) Hiking to view the iconic Las Torres (the Towers) is a challenging yet immensely satisfying hike, a highlight for all experienced trekkers. The Towers are the three massive granite columns that encircle the smaller Torres Glacier. The Towers hike is by far the most strenuous of all the hikes. From the entrance, you have a 1.5km/1mi flat warm up to the start of the trailhead at Hosteria Las Torres. You start off climbing up the side of one of the mountains, all dirt paths and quite steep in gradient in areas. It then flattens out as you scale the side of the valley with a great river underneath you. A short downhill section will bring you to the refugio Chileno. Here you can buy snacks and rest for a while and use the facilities. Although you can see the tips of the towers from the refugio, this hike is fully appreciated when you are able to hike the full length. Once you leave the refugio you start climbing again for about 1 hour crossing rivers and passing through a beautiful forest. The final 45 minutes are quite challenging as you scramble up boulders to the base of the towers. *We offer a fantastic optional day for those unable to attempt the Towers. It involves heading to another section of the park, enjoying a shorter hike and visiting indigenous hand paintings while still having a view of the Towers. Full walk takes approximately 8 - 9 hours return including time for lunch and depending on your ability/physical strength.

Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 7: Torres del Paine

French Valley Hike (Moderate - Difficult) The French Valley is the most beautiful valley in the Torres del Paine National Park. It is a steep hike and offers incredible its unique panoramic views of Los Cuernos del Paine, the French Glacier and Lakes Nordenskjold, Pehoé, Scottsburg and Toro. This walk starts at the same place as the Greys Glacier walk and between the hikes we stay overnight at the Paine Grande Refuge so you do not have to return across the lake to our hotel, effectively allowing you additional time to complete the hikes. (please note you will take an overnight bag with you (provided) and your main luggage will be stored for you) This is a very different walk to the Greys Glacier. Slightly longer for the shorter walk and at times the track can be rocky and steep. The entrance to the valley is Italiano Camp (7.5km/4.5mi) and is our short hike stopping point. For those who continue up into the valley to the French Lookout the trail becomes steep with loose gravel and boulders. With a 300m/1000ft elevation gain you have wonderful views of the valley as well as the amazing view of mountains all around. You can sit, watch and hear ice crack and maybe even see a mini avalanche. Full walk takes approximately 8 - 9 hours return including time for lunch and depending on your ability and physical strength. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 8: Torres del Paine to Puerto Natales

Greys Glacier trek (Easy - moderate) Grey Glacier is one of the principal tourist attractions located in Chile. As soon as you get to this place you will be breath taken with the lakes creamy blue colour dotted with icebergs floating and the Patagonia Icefield at the back. Initially you will walk through a valley before climbing a steep incline, onto a ridge taking you first through a burnout forest and then into a green live forest. A little further along the trail brings you to an elevated view of Grey Lake. You hike along an exposed ridge line before reaching the Grey Glacier Lookout point. (Approx 2.5hrs) If you are looking for a short hike this would be your turn around point, heading back the same way to the start of the trail. Continuing down another 2 hours further from this point you get to the main Refugio Grey Glacier view point which brings you a lot closer to this magnificent ice sheet. From here you have a magnificent view of the glacier across the water and usually the wonderful blue of the icebergs floating in the lake below. All viewpoints of the glacier are from a front on angle. Full walk takes approximately 7 - 8 hours return including time for lunch and depending on your ability/physical strength. At the conclusion of your full day trekking we will head to our hotel in Puerto Natales. Arriving in the late evening. Meals: (B), (L)



DAY 9: Puerto Natales to El Calafate

Leaving this remarkable region, we cross at a remote border post into Argentina. We continue through the steppe before seeing the beautiful Lake Argentina, the biggest freshwater lake in Argentina. We arrive into El Calafate, our base to visit the impressive Perito Moreno glacier. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 10: El Calafate

The Perito Moreno Glacier is one of the earth's most dynamic and accessible ice fields. Visiting this glacier, we can witness from a series of walkways huge chunks of ice breaking free from the face of the glacier and crashing with a mighty roar into the water. We leave early to have the area for just ourselves to enjoy, with no rush and plenty of time for bird and animal spotting, every time you want to stop for pictures you'll be able to. Along the way, we will learn about the guachos (cowboys) and life on the estancias before stopping at one of them for a coffee. On our way to the glacier our expert local guide will explain the amazing phenomena that this glacier is famous for and why it is considered stable and not retreating like many other glaciers in the area. If lucky, a highlight is watching and hearing giant chunks of ice plummet into the waters of Lake Argentina. After a few hours of free time to explore the walkways we transfer to the port and enjoy a one hour boat ride that brings us 300m (1000ft) from the glacier's wall. This is a wonderful way to get close to the glacier and appreciate its daunting size and power. After this amazing encounter, we head back to El Calafate town. Meals: (B), (L)



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DAY 11: El Calafate - El Chalten

Today drive around the beautiful Lake Argentina to El Chalten. Enroute we will stop at a historic homestead saloon with some famous outlaw visitors. We will arrive to El Chalten, a small town nestled quietly under the imposing peak of Chalten (also known as Mount Fitzroy, named after the captain of the Beagle, who navigated Darwin's Expedition of the area in 1834). This afternoon we meet our wonder local guides and hike up to Laguna Capri, this is the first 6kms (12kms return) of the Laguna de los Tres trail. It is a continuously ascending trail to the laguna but our local guides will maintain a comfortable pace to enable you to enjoy and stop for photos and information. We will navigate our way around the loop of lookout points giving you a spectacular view of the Mount FitzRoy range. You will also be able to see the Piedras Blancas glacier and taken in the flora and fauna of the park. We return back to El Chalten town. Meals: (B), (L)



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DAY 12: El Chalten

A full day hiking in the wonderful Los Glaciares National Park, (*Lago Torre hike is our preferred option). Enjoy spectacular scenery and obtain views of the magical Cerro Torre or the wonderful Mount Fitzroy. Keep your eyes peeled to spot regional birds including woodpeckers, caracaras and condors. *The Lago Torre trail takes us first to a wonderful view point with a picture postcard shot of almost the entire mountain range included Cerro Torre and Mount Fitzroy. From this point, we can also see the Margarita Waterfall and the Rio Fitzroy. Continuing up to a saddleback in the mountain we are gifted with a view of the valley and can easily see the snow-capped Andes range. Descending into the valley and through the high deciduous beech tree forest over we hike over an old moraine and finish at Lake Torre which is flanked by the Cerro Torre Glacier. The complete Cerro Torre hike requires a moderate level of fitness and is a full day of hiking. We offer a shorter hiking plan that enables you to still see the stunning surrounding scenery but you would need to do the full extension to see the Cerro Torre Glacier. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 13: El Chalten - Gobernador Gregores

A free morning allows time for a short hike in the Los Glaciares National Park. You can climb up to the eagle and condor lookout points or stroll along the river to a the wonderful Chorrillo waterfall. After lunch, we continue north on the famous Route 40, paralleling the remarkable Andean mountain range. Enjoy the landscapes of the Patagonian Steppe. We spend the night in Gobernador Gregores, a small town with links to the old caravan trail. Meals: (B), (D)



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DAY 14: Cuevas de las Manos

Today we make a special visit the Cuevas de las Manos (Cave of the Hands) which one of the most important archaeological sites in South America. The caves feature paintings that are the most ancient artistic expressions of the native people of the subcontinent. The paintings were done by the first settlers of these lands, ancestors of the Tehuelche people (or Patagones), and date back to different periods from 9300 to 3300 years ago. The site was declared World Heritage by the UNESCO in 1999. We continue and spend the night in Perito Moreno, a small rural town that sits right on the famous Ruta 40. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



DAY 15: Route 40 - Coyhaique

Today we cross back into Chile's remote southern region. After lunch we have a wonderful drive through the Cerro Castillo Reserve with a chance to spot the rare Huemul deer. The Carretera Austral (Southern Road) is a remote, unspoiled region of intense natural beauty and is often referred to as one of South America's best road trips. We then continue our journey to Coyhaique where you can walk the viewpoint circuit around this city - considered the "big smoke" of the Carretera Austral. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



DAY 16: Coyhaique - Queulat National Park

A short drive from Coyhaique town is the wonderful Coyhaique Reserve where we will enjoy a morning hike (8km/5mi) to the Lago Verde - Green Lake. Our afternoon drive is filled with lush pastures, mirror lakes and snow capped mountains as we follow the Rio Simpson. As we venture through two more valleys we pass through several small country towns that were created when building the road access through this rugged area. We finish the day with a windy 33 curves as we descend from 500m/1500ft to sea level. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 17: Queulat National Park

In such a remote and rugged area, you might just like to snuggle up in your cabin, but today you'll have the opportunity to hike to a nearby waterfall, take navigation to a personally owned island in the fjords or try a little sea kayaking (weather permitting). Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 18: Queulat National Park - Futaleufu

Take the rare opportunity to get up close and personal with a spectacular hanging glacier in the Queulat National Park. Nature at its finest! We will take a hike to get close to the spectacular Hanging Glacier which is the magnificent centre piece of the park. Enjoy being surrounded by virgin evergreen forests made up by species like coihue, tepa, tepuala, and Chilean rhubarbs. We will visit the fishing village of Puyuhuapi, located on the edge of the Chilean Fiords in a setting of incomparable beauty. Continuing, we'll stop along the way to take photos and admire the spectacular natural vistas. Wild rivers flow through lush forests, waterfalls tumble along steep cliff faces, and the world is reflected in mirror like lakes. We cross the mighty Futaleufu river and finish this day at a wonderful local lodge in the small town of the same name. Run by a local Chilean family this accommodation gives you a special feeling of this welcoming town. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 19: Futaleufu - Bariloche

Crossing back into Argentina we have a short stop in Trevelling, a small town with links to Welsh immigrants. We also pass through the town of Esquel where the famous "Old Patagonian Express" still runs. We'll weave through the green valley and arrive into the resort town of Bariloche, nestled peacefully on the shores of Nahuel Huapi Lake. San Carlos de Bariloche lies on the southern shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi in the foothills of the Andes surrounded by mountains and forests. Its location is stunning, surrounded by the Nahuel Huapi National Park, the oldest National Park in Argentina. With its Alpine-styled architecture, its picturesque lakeside setting overlooked by mountains and forests as well as numerous boutique chocolate shops and St. Bernard dogs, the city has a Swiss-like atmosphere. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 20: Bariloche

A free morning allows you time to head up to Cerro Otto via a gondola where you can sit in the revolving café with a 360 degree views. You can also explore the forest at the top spotting condors and falcons as you go. In the afternoon we take time to explore the scenic Circuito Chico in the Nahuel Huapi National Park following the road along the lake. We learn about how Bariloche got started, head up the chairlift to Cerro Campanario, stop at various lookout points and discover the hidden lake. We finish off this lovely afternoon at Argentina's most famous resort, Hotel Llao Llao, where will enjoy High Tea overlooking the lake. Meals: (B), High Tea



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DAY 21: Bariloche

A day at leisure here gives you time to pursue interests such as sailing on the massive Nahuel Huapi Lake, horse riding on a local estancia, taking a tour to see the monstrous Tronador peak, play golf or walk one of the many walking tracks in the area. Meals: (B)



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DAY 22: Bariloche - Pucon

We will drive the spectacular Seven Lakes route enjoying the spectacular mountain scenery and numerous glacially formed lakes for which the region is named. We cross once again into Chile arriving at Pucon, a lovely town located in the heart of Chiles Lake District. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 23: Pucon

Today we combine a wonderful natural environment with a cultural experience unique to this area. In the morning, we will visit either the Villarrica National Park or one of the surrounding national reserve parks, all of which protect thousands of hectares of rivers, waterfalls, alpine lakes and forest. One of the features of these parks is the millenarian forests of Araucarias, which are the perfect backdrop for the small lakes, ponds and mountains that are scattered throughout the park. In the afternoon, we visit a traditional Mapuche family. We are invited to learn and experience the Ruka of the Mapuche people, the heart of their culture. You will learn about their daily life,, gain a wonderful insight into their culture and enjoy a traditional Mapuche meal Meals: (B), (L)



NO IMAGE AVAILABLE

DAY 24: Pucon

Enjoy a day at leisure here where it is possible to organise numerous outdoor activities such as a one day hike up the Villarica Volcano to reach the fiery crater or take the bus out to Huerquehue National Park and experience the amazing lakes trail. You could enjoy kayaking, mountain biking, horse riding, fishing, white water rafting and even sky diving, or simply relaxing by the lake admiring the beauty of your surroundings. Meals: (B)



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DAY 25: Pucon - Santa Cruz

Journeying north we pass through small villages and past picturesque lakes and mountains to arrive into Santa Cruz, located in the heart of Chiles Wine Region. On the way we will stop from lunch at the impressive Salto de Laja waterfalls. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 26: Santa Cruz - Santiago

Enjoy the Colchagua Valley, famous for producing some of Chile's finest wines. During this day we will visit a winery, with wine tasting and wine making included. Of interest is the Cabernet Sauvignon variety which thrives during the grape growing season due to the hot sunny climate in this part of Chile, and the Carmenere variety that was thought to be extinct until rediscovered in Chile in 1994. We also visit the Colchagua Museum, known today as one the most complete Museums in South America. An afternoon drive brings us into Santiago. Santiago, Chile's capital and largest city, lies in a valley surrounded by the snow-capped mountains of the Andes and the Chilean Coastal Range. Founded in 1541, Santiago has been Chile's capital since colonial times. It is a vibrant and cosmopolitan city and although it features many colonial buildings, it has grown into a modern metropolis and the cultural centre of the country. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 27: Depature

Depart Santiago with wonderful memories, and a new respect of our wonderful planet courtesy of Patagonia. Meals: (B) You may depart anytime after breakfast today, please make your own way for onward arrangements. Note: The information regarding itinerary is given in good faith and is subject to change and /or cancellation, due to weather / political and / or country instabilities and general safety / road conditions etc. Any such changes and/or cancellations which are in our control will be decided by the crew and will be discussed with the group beforehand whenever possible.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Hotels in most locations. Cabins and refuge
Inclusions	22 nights accommodation in standard hotels 3 nights accommodation in comfortable cabins 1 night accommodation in a hiking lodge with shared bunk beds and facilities Transportation in custom built all-terrain expedition vehicles 26 Breakfasts, 18 Lunches, 19 Dinners Experienced tour leader as well as local guides Fully escorted in South America Experienced Driver/Mechanic All National Park Entrance fees
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Single supplement for guaranteed single room is 25% of the total tour cost. However we offer a willing to share option for all solo travellers where we will pair you with another traveller of the same sex to share a twin room.
Notes	Please note this is a small group tour. However, departures are guaranteed with 2 pax.
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.
- 4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.

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5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structures to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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