

For tours departing beyond 2009, itineraries may be subject to change. This will be confirmed by the publication of the 2010 brochure (issued in Oct 09).

2009
Tour Dossier

EXPLORE!
ON FOOT

ARGENTINA • CHILE Dossier Ref. TO

Torres del Paine Circuit

Amended 08 Dec 2009. Valid from 01 Jun 2009 to 31 Dec 2009
Since first issue this dossier has been updated with amendments to the following sections: itinerary, single room option, visa & luggage

As our itineraries may be amended from time to time, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers, please ensure you have the most up-to-date copy of this dossier immediately before you travel. You can download the dossier from our website, www.explore.co.uk. Of course we will notify you of any significant changes, but sometimes minor changes may simply be added to the tour dossier.

JOINING TOUR ABROAD

14 days/13 nights Tour Only
Buenos Aires back to Buenos Aires

Join Buenos Aires (day 1)
End Buenos Aires (day 14)

Clients booked on 'Tour Only' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point in Buenos Aires. Please refer to separate 'Joining Instructions' for name and address of hotel and time of rendezvous with tour leader.

GROUP TRAVEL FROM LONDON

16 days/15 nights Tour including
Connecting Group Flights
London-Buenos Aires-London

Depart from London Gatwick to join tour in Buenos Aires the same day. Transfer to hotel. Land Only passengers arrive the following day.

Return from Buenos Aires (day 14 of Land Only itinerary) on overnight flight and arrive London Gatwick the following day.

Passengers with non-group flights booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

Earth Matters

- By using local support crew and horses, we ensure that your money goes directly back into the local economy.
 - Everything carried into the Torres del Paine must be taken out again. You should take care to cut down on excess waste before you travel (by disposing of unwanted packaging etc).
 - The Travel Foundation
- Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk

• Tourism Concern

Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk

- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Among the many highlights on this tour, we particularly mention:

- * **BUENOS AIRES** City tour, visiting Plaza de Mayo, La Boca, the port area and downtown sights.
- * **EL CALAFATE** Small town in the heart of Patagonia, on the shores of Lago Argentino.
- * **TORRES DEL PAINE NATIONAL PARK** Trekking the famous 8 day circuit of this stunning National Park.
- * **OVERNIGHTING IN TREKKING LODGES AND CAMPSITES.**

This outstanding trek concentrates on one of the most beautiful parts of the Americas. Whilst hiking the circuit we will stay in simple but comfortable refuges for 6 out of 8 nights. Accommodation is dorm style with showers and heated dining area. The Torres del Paine massif, standing on the cusp of the South American ice shelf and the vast wilderness of Patagonia, is a truly awe-inspiring sight to behold. Rimmed by blue-green glacial lakes, the granite peaks reach skywards from just above sea level to heights of over 3,000 metres like giant teeth of some prehistoric beast. Nestling below, each valley has a microclimate of its own: some dense with lush beach forest; or rich with the explosive reds of the Patagonian firebush; others are wild and barren, with the haunting remains of petrified trees scattered amongst the scrub. The history of this land is shaped entirely by the natural forces of the earth and the elements. The scars forged by ancient glaciers upon the landscape are evidence of a violent past. With Andean condors circling overhead and guanacos grazing in the valleys, this supported trek offers a genuine wilderness experience.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

Be Prepared: While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day route printed below, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary as seasonal flight schedules may result in amendments to timings, and overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

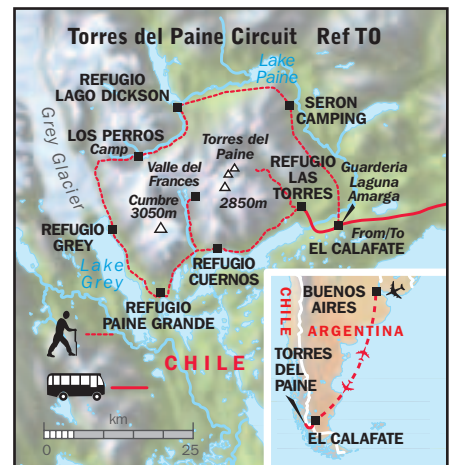
The weather in Torres del Paine can be unpredictable and so the route and timings may change if the weather prevents us from our usual itinerary.

Accommodation and Included Meals: please find the key to our accommodation ratings overleaf, and note that included meals are indicated in the itinerary below and are shown on the day they are provided (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner).

CO₂ Offsets Included

The biggest environmental impact of your holiday with Explore is the CO₂ generated by your flights. As a responsible tour operator, we have included in our tour prices the costs of offsetting CO₂ emissions from all international and domestic flights forming part of the tour. Our chosen offset partner is Climate Care. If you are making independent flight arrangements to join one of our tours, may we urge you to take responsibility for your CO₂ emissions by offsetting through Climate Care, or a similar offsetting scheme.

T019DEC09 Please note: that due to this tour operating over the New Year period the optional excursion to the Perito Moreno Glacier will not be available on Day 13, New Year's Day.
Please note: the lodge we planned to use in Dickson on night 4 cannot confirm our allocation, therefore, we will now camp on this night of the tour.



Day 1. Join tour Buenos Aires

Arrive Buenos Aires and check-in at hotel in the morning. In the afternoon your tour leader will arrange a city tour to see the major points of interest including the Plaza de Mayo, La Boca and the downtown area. Known as the Paris of South America, this extraordinary metropolis spreads over some 200 square kilometres and contains up to 13 million people living within its environs. A vibrant, political and cosmopolitan city, there are plenty of interesting things to see, from world-class museums and galleries, to theatres and shows. You may also choose to wander the city streets, admiring the impressive architecture and relaxing parks, or enjoy the traditional Porteño pastime of people watching from the many cafés – always alive with the sound of passionate debate! **Overnight hotel H+.**

Day 2. Fly to El Calafate

Today we leave the city far behind as we fly across the vast Patagonian wastes to descend over the deep blue waters of Lago Argentino, at El Calafate. On a clear day, this descent allows breathtaking views of the distant peaks of the Andes. There is time this afternoon to explore the settlement, perhaps including a short walk to the shores of Lago Argentino, via the Laguna Nimes bird reserve (optional). There are a number of excellent restaurants and cafés in town – don't miss the opportunity to try the fruit of the calafate bush: local folklore says that those who eat this berry will one day return to Patagonia. **Overnight hosteria H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 3. Drive to Torres del Paine National Park; trek to Campo Serón

This morning we depart El Calafate and drive, by public bus, through the stark and barren Patagonian plains. Beneath the enormous skies characteristic of this part of the world, there is little sign of habitation other than the occasional 'estancia' (local farm) sheltering behind its windbreak of trees, or a lonesome gaucho on horse-back braving the elements. Crossing over the border into Chile we transfer to chartered bus and enjoy our first views of the Paine Massif, which we'll circumnavigate over the next eight days. The views continue to get more impressive as we approach our trail – head at Guarderia Laguna Amarga (approx. 4.5 hours, 12kms with pack horses). Arriving late afternoon, an undulating path leads us to our first overnight stop, Serón camping, host to many species of birds including Parinas, Black Woodpeckers and Buffed Neck Ibis. **Overnight camping C (included meals: B, D).**

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For bookings outside the UK please contact your local travel agent representing Explore.

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Day 4. Trek to Lago Dickson via Lago Paine
From Serón camping we enjoy an easy trek through undulating terrain to Lago Paine along the Cordillera Paine circuit. On the way we pass through beautiful forested landscapes, which escaped a great fire that took place at the beginning of the last century. We hope to see black woodpeckers today; listen out for the sound of their furious hammering upon these gnarled trees! Once we arrive at Lago Paine, we have a spectacular view of the north side of the Paine Massif, seeing the stunning peaks of Cerro Oggioni, Cerro Tridente, and Cerro Cabeza del Indio. The trek continues westwards along the southern bank of the Paine river. We descend down to the lake shore, then continue across open grasslands along the river towards Refugio Dickson (approx. 6-7 hours, 18km with porters). **Overnight in trekking lodge H (included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 5. Trek to Los Perros; Camping
Today we follow Los Perros river to the wildest and least accessible section of the trek. It is here where we begin what is perhaps the longest forest walk in Patagonia – trekking through impressive ancient virgin beech forests (look out for four different varieties: lenga, ñire, cohihue and guindo). The path is crossed by many water courses and offers the best and closest views of the Paine massif. Our camp awaits us at Laguna Los Perros, in the middle of dense forest. (approx. 4 hours, 10km, with porters). **Overnight camping C (included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 6. Trek to Paso John Gardner – Refugio Grey
Today we ascend for several hours until we reach the John Gardner pass (1241 mts), the highest point of the circuit. Here we should be rewarded by an awe-inspiring view of the south Patagonian ice cap and the Ventisquero (Glacier) Grey, an enormous fractured mass of ice covering the valley. Glacier Grey empties part of the giant South Patagonic icefield into Lago Grey, and the lake is often filled with impressive giant icebergs drifting across the waters. The route continues roughly south along the trail, crossing forested slopes, gorges and streams, with superb views along the way. (approx. 11-12 hours, 22km with Porters). **2 nights in trekking lodge H (included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 7. At Lago Grey
Today we can rest and soak up the beautiful views or enjoy an optional trip to Glacier Grey, where you may be able to test your ice-walking skills or turn your hand to ice-climbing (optional and often not available in early season). Alternatively you may want to take some short walks in the local area. **(Included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 8. Trek to Paine Grande
This morning we make a leisurely start and our trek continues along the eastern banks of Lago Grey through clearings of calafate bushes. The view over the lake and its sculptured icebergs drifting across the waters is again very impressive. The path leads over undulating terrain towards the shores of

Paine Grande. (approx. 4 hours, 11km with Porters). **Overnight in trekking lodge H (included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 9. Trek to Valle Francés – Refugio Los Cuernos
Leaving behind emerald green Pehoe lake, the track makes its way through the undulating terrain of mixed grassland, firebush and light forest. We pass Skottsberg lake and the south-east slopes of Cerro Paine to meet river Frances. From here we follow the river upstream to Mirador Francés, offering views of Glaciar Francés. Subject to weather conditions, we continue to a small hut built by a British climbing expedition. This magnificent setting is surrounded by high peaks on all sides – Cerro Aleta de Tiburon (Shark's Fin mount), Cerro Cabeza de Indio (Indians Head mount), Cerro Escudo (Shield mount), Cerro Fortaleza (Fortress mount), Cerro Espada (Sword mount), Cerro Hoja (Blade mount) and to the north the famous Cuernos del Paine. We head back down the valley again and then carry on walking along the panoramic trail to the shores of the blue Nordenskjöld lake, where we find our next lodge. (approx. 9-10 hours, 27km with porters). **Overnight in trekking lodge H (included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 10. Trek to Refugio Torres
Today's trail is known as Sendero Paso Los Cuernos, due to the fact that it passes under the dramatic Cuernos (horns). We walk alongside the shores of the beautiful Nordenskjöld lake, crossing small rivers and wide grasslands along the way. The hike today is very relaxing, taking us to the Asencio river and on to our final Refugio. (5 hours, 11km with horses). **2 nights in trekking lodge H (included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 11. Trek to Torres del Paine viewpoint
Our final day of trekking takes us to the foot of what has inspired us much over the last week – the impressive granite towers of Torres del Paine. Climbing steeply, high above the scattered blue lakes, we hike along the Asencio river, and up towards the Torres. After a final clamber over steep terminal moraine deposited by a glacier centuries ago, we reach a panoramic point from where we admire one of the best known sights of Patagonia, the Paine Towers, rising very close above a green lagoon. The famous Torres del Paine (2,900m/9,400ft) consist of three gigantic granite monoliths, overlooking a landscape shaped by the forces of glacial ice and the elements. After returning to Refugio Las Torres, we can relax and enjoy our final afternoon within this awe-inspiring National Park. (approx. 9 hours, 20km). **(Included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 12. Drive to Calafate
From the lost world of Torres del Paine we transfer by private bus to the Argentine border and continue on to Calafate, where we spend our final night in Patagonia. **Overnight hosteria H+ (included meals: B, L).**

Day 13. Fly to Buenos Aires
Depending on flight times, there may be time to enjoy one of a number of excursions available locally. This may include a local

walk, or a trip to Perito Moreno in Los Glaciares National Park. The opportunity to get up close to this natural wonder, by boat or from the walk-ways over-looking this huge expanse of cracked ice is highly recommended. With a snout over 5km wide and 55m high, the Perito Moreno Glacier commands a profound silence – interrupted only by the thunderous roar of crashing blue ice as it calves into the milky lake below. A truly unforgettable experience. Finally we leave the wilds of Patagonia behind and step into the heat and bustle of Buenos Aires feeling we have left behind a lost world. Will the folklore surrounding the calafate berries we ate turn out to be true? **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 14. Tour ends Buenos Aires (Included meals: B).

PERSONAL EXPENSES

You'll also need some extra money to cover meals not included in the tour price, other sightseeing, **airport taxes (approx US\$30)**, tips, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Foreign Exchange

Local Currency: Argentina: Peso. Chile: Peso.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry all your funds in US\$ or Euros Cash (NOT Sterling, which is almost impossible to change). It is advisable to take a minimum of **US\$300 – 400** of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they may be difficult to exchange.

ATM Availability: ATMs available in Buenos Aires and in El Calafate - N.B. ATMs do not dispense US\$.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are useful and can be used in Buenos Aires and Calafate, but may be subject to a service charge.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers' Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change (American Express are the easiest to change).

Additional Information: Please be aware that most services in Argentina and Chile need to be paid in the local currencies, as many shops or restaurants do not accept USD.

Booking a Single Room

All of our tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. On this particular tour we are pleased to be able to offer customers the option of pre-booking a guaranteed single room. Due to the variety of accommodation used on this tour, single rooms are available for a majority of the nightstops, however it would still mean sharing on nights 4 and 6 to 11 inclusive.

EXPLORE ACCOMMODATION RATINGS : An important feature of many Explore tours is the wide range of accommodation used, and since the beginning our philosophy has been to select accommodation to suit the itinerary - not the other way round.

To help gauge the comfort level on your chosen tour, we have graded the accommodation standards at all night-stops using the rating guide below. Please keep in mind however that standards can vary from one trip to the next, and occasionally we may need to change a night-stop without advance warning.

Hotels / lodges / guesthouses - or similar

H++ : Comfortable hotels, lodges or guesthouses with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. With air-conditioning/heating where appropriate and with reliable hot and cold water. Generally good levels of service and often with added amenities such as restaurant, bar, gardens or swimming pool.

H+ : Standard hotels, lodges or guesthouses, usually with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. These are generally standard, no-frills hotels with adequate amenities and service standards. Whilst comfort levels are perfectly acceptable to most, please don't expect too much! These are often small, family run establishments.

H : Basic hotels, lodges or guesthouses (also village houses, mountain huts, hotels etc often come into this category). Accommodation may be communal or dorm-style, and WC / washing facilities are usually shared. Running hot and cold water may be unreliable or even unavailable. These can be the most rewarding and memorable places to stay, but comfort levels are low.

Camping

C++ : Comfortable, full service camping generally in permanent, fixed camps with walk-in tents, proper beds and often with en-suite facilities and other amenities such as dining area, bar, gardens and a swimming pool. Your bed-linen is provided.

C+ : Standard camping in private or public campsites, usually with WC and washing / showering facilities in a shared ablutions building. Typically in two person tents, and some level of participation is often required. Generally bed linen or sleeping bags are not provided.

C : Basic camping in wild camps where facilities / amenities may be limited or non-existent. Generally there is no running water, and we dig a temporary bush toilet. Two person tents are often used, but occasionally we sleep under the stars. Participation normally required and sleeping bags usually not provided.

To book please call 0844 499 0901 • www.explore.co.uk

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Up-to-date information re: global exchange rates can be obtained at <https://www.currency-express.com/explore/>

Meal Plan

Local Food and Drink: 13 breakfasts, 9 lunches and 9 dinners are included on this trip, please be prepared to pay for all other meals. Please note that Patagonia can be considerably more expensive than Buenos Aires. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location and the prices below are given as an average guide only.

	UK	Argentina	Chile
Coffee	£1.20	£0.80	£0.85
Soft drink	0.80	0.80	1.10
Bottle of Beer	2.50	1.00	1.20
2 Course Meal*	10.00	4.50	15.00
3 Course Meal**	18.00	8.50	20.00
Bottle of wine	10.00	4.00	9.00

*Cheap local fare in a small cafe or restaurant.

**Typical food in a simple, reasonably comfortable mid-range restaurant.

Tipping

Local Staff: In this area tipping is a recognised part of life, local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow US\$60 for tipping.

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Other Sightseeing

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: Most optionals need to be paid for in USD cash, so please bring a variety of denominations.

BUENOS AIRES Tigre Delta Cruise US\$25; visit Colonia in Uruguay by hydrofoil US\$210, Tango Show/Dinner US\$92.

GLACIAR GREY Glacier ice trek and ice climbing US\$150 (sometimes does not operate early in the season).

EL CALAFATE Glacier trek (equipment supplied) US\$120, Boat to view Perito Moreno glacier US\$15; Mountain bike hire US\$5 per hour; Estancia visit US\$60.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Seasonal Climate

Although we operate at the best time of year, **Patagonian Chile can be wet, wild and windy**, while Calafate on the other side of the Andes is usually drier. The region has a typical cool, temperate climate, rather similar to the British Isles, but more windy and very changeable/unpredictable. Close to the mountains, with their permanent ice-cap, it can be cold, particularly at night.

Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following

the BBC weather link on this page.

Visa Requirements

Argentina: Visas are not required by UK, USA, NZ, AUS and Canadian citizens.

Chile: Visas are not required by UK, USA, NZ, AUS and Canadian citizens.

Please note: Please note that flights on the tour may transit through the USA. According to US law, passengers may have to disembark, collect luggage and clear immigration before re-boarding for the onward flight.

Holders of the UK, AUS, NZ, CAN and several EU country passports can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) if they hold a machine readable passport. They must also be entering the country by sea or air on a carrier participating in the visa waiver scheme, holding a return/onward ticket. As well as being machine readable, if your passport was issued on or after 26 October 2005, it must contain both a digital photograph of the holder and also an integrated circuit chip that stores biographic information.

From 12 January 2009 all passengers travelling to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme must provide their details online no later than 72 hours prior to travel. British travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be detained and sent home. In addition to passport information, you must also supply the full address of your first night's accommodation in the USA. This information can be obtained from your joining instructions which are sent out approximately 3 weeks before travel.

For more information, and to apply online, please visit the following website at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Once obtained, the application will be valid for a period of two years, or for the validity of your passport (whichever is shorter). At present, US authorities do not propose to levy a charge for this service, although they have reserved the right to consider doing so in the future.

For more information about who is eligible for the VWP, or any other questions you may have regarding your eligibility, or machine readable passports, please contact your local consular office, or visit www.usembassy.org.uk

Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, polio and infectious hepatitis.

Special Note: Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

This is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Electric Supply and Plugs

For comprehensive information regarding voltages and plug types in use in the countries visited, follow the relevant link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all bookings. You must take your policy document with you on tour, as your tour leader will ask to see this at the start of the trip. Your documentation must state in writing that you are the named policyholder and that the cover is valid for your period of travel. Your policy document must also indicate that you have medical expenses and emergency repatriation cover and a 24-hour contact telephone number for your Insurance Company must be shown on your documentation in case of emergency.

If you are unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip you will not be allowed to join the trip. If you have purchased Explore Insurance you should carry the Master Certificate leaflet with you, which outlines the conditions of the policy together with a copy of your Confirmation Invoice, which is your proof of purchase of insurance. Explore Worldwide are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority.

Know Before You Go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination including safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements and health. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice>

GENERAL INFORMATION

A=Argentina C=Chile

Area: (A) 2,780,400 sq.km. (C) 756,626 sq.km.

Population: (A) 36,260,130. (C) 14,419,000.

Government: Republic.

Language: Spanish.

Religion: Mainly Roman Catholic.

Currency: (A) Peso. (C) Chilean Peso.

Local Time: (A) GMT -3. (C) GMT-3. (variable).

Electricity: 220v AC 50Hz.

Banks: (A) 0900-1500 Mon-Fri.

(C) 0900-1400 Mon-Fri.

Shops: (A) 0900-1900 Mon-Fri.

(C) 1000-2000 Mon-Fri; 1000-1400 Sat.

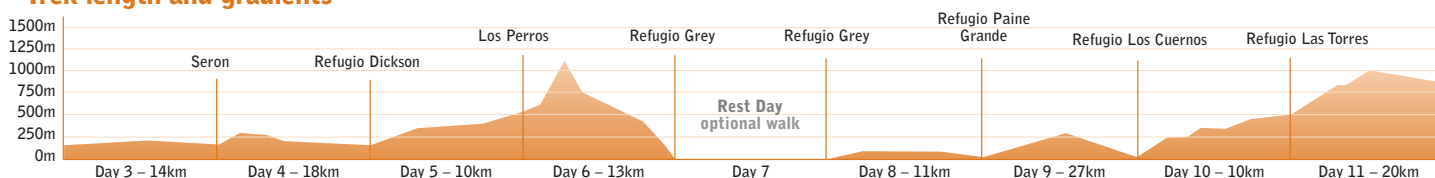
Books: 'South America's National Parks' by William Leitch (The Mountaineers); 'In Patagonia' by Bruce Chatwin.

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

Being properly equipped is one of the keys to a successful trek. Use the Explore **'General Information Booklet'** for guidance for day-to-day but use the following check list and notes to be sure that you have what you need for the actual trek.

Clothing: Pack essentially for **'All Tours'**. A warm sweater or fleece, good waterproof and windproof jacket and waterproof trousers are essential, as weather conditions can change suddenly while walking. Gaiters are advisable as the snow can be heavy in parts. Warm waterproof gloves, hat and thermal underclothes are also recommended. A torch is useful in case of powercuts/ emergencies.

Trek length and gradients



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The Explore **'General Information Booklet'**, together with the appropriate trip dossier, deals in detail with most of the things you need to know (passports, visas, health care, etc). The purpose of this additional sheet is to be more explicit regarding luggage, packing and equipment.

GRADING & FITNESS FOR TORRES DEL PAINE CIRCUIT

To enjoy any trek it is essential to be in shape before you arrive. It is not wise to regard a trek as a means of getting into shape or losing excess weight. Start a programme of conditioning well before departure – in fact as soon as you book – and be aware that short walks on the flat do little to prepare you for the gradients of the Andes. Running, hill walking and other more active sports are suitable.

Walking Grades and Fitness:

Grading is a somewhat difficult topic as much depends on the individuals own perception of his or her abilities. The following is intended as a **general guide to our walking grades**. This is rated **Grade C**.

Grade C walks (Strenuous): are for the more serious hill walker and a higher level of physical fitness is required. Walking days are normally 6-8 hours and may involve up to 900m or more of ascent and descent. You should be prepared for several consecutive days walking, often at higher altitudes, so stamina is important.

You should note that we will not reach altitudes over 1,300 metres on this trek. However, some days we walk for up to 12 hours, and the terrain can be quite rough and irregular.

EQUIPMENT PROVIDED

The following equipment list is provided by Explore once you are on the trek:

- * 2-person tents
- * Sleeping mats

All cooking and kitchen gear and dining facilities are permanently fixed at our night stops.

EQUIPMENT TO BRING

Being properly equipped is one of the keys to a successful trek. Use the Explore **'General Information Booklet'** for guidance for day-to-day but use the following check list and notes to be sure that you have what you need for the actual trek.

Luggage

☆ Left Luggage

Please note that it is possible to leave luggage at the hotel in Buenos Aires and in Calafate while on the trek.

☆ Trek Kit Bag

Your trek luggage including sleeping bag will be carried in dry bags by porters. In Calafate you will be provided with plastic bags to transport your belongings for the trek to Torres del Paine. You can leave anything else behind at the hotel in Calafate in main luggage. If you want to use your own soft bag/holdall to take belongings to Paine this is fine. However, the weight of this bag will be included in your weight allowance. **The weight limit for horses is 15kg, however, the limit for porters is 7.5kg. So please be aware that if you decide to pack 15kg for the horses, you'll need to carry 7.5kg yourself on top of your day sack between days 4 and 9 when we use porters.** Advice on how to pack will be given at the trek briefing. (Using drybags from local agent. If you wish to bring your own dry bag it should be about 3-5 litres).

Note that this tour is fully supported by horses and porters.

For an exclusively designed Explore Trek Bag, follow the relevant link at www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore

☆ Small Rucksack/Daysac

During the course of a trekking day, you do not have access to your Trek Kit Bag. In any mountain region the weather can change rapidly and you must be equipped for this eventuality. Your daysac should, therefore, be large enough to carry the following: Waterproofs, sweater, long trousers (if walking in shorts), warm hat and gloves, gaiters, sun hat, sun cream, water bottle (at least 1litre bottle), tissues and your packed lunch. Most people normally find that this adds up to about 6kg and they need about a 30-40 litre capacity. It is usually more comfortable to carry a slightly larger pack which is not full than to carry a small pack which is over full or with 'bits' tied on the outside. A shoulder bag is simply not a practical alternative. Camera equipment can be heavy so think carefully when deciding what to take. Other optional items in a day pack might be a diary or a book to read at lunch time. Your rucksack should also have a waterproof cover.

☆ Plastic Bags

If you pack bits and pieces in plastic bags inside your kit bag they will stay dry in case of rain and it will be easier for you to sort through in camp. Remember, the less you have to unpack in the evening, the less you have to repack each morning! A bin liner to pack inside your daysac is also a good idea.

Clothing/Footwear

☆ Walking Boots

Probably the trickiest part of all. We strongly recommend walking in good boots. Trainers, tennis shoes etc simply do not give the ankle support afforded by a decent pair of boots. Many people now trek in the lighter weight Goretex or leather boots sold under the brand names 'Karrimor', 'Berghaus' or similar and these are usually satisfactory. They have the advantage that they take little breaking in. The slightly heavier traditional leather walking boots are also good. Avoid the types often found in high street shoe shops which are simply cheap trainers with a higher canvas side sewn on – they give little support and will probably not last the trek. **Above all your boots must be well broken-in, comfortable and suitable for muddy, wet terrain.** We do not recommend borrowing or renting boots. It is a good idea to wear your boots on international flights – should your luggage be delayed, your well broken-in boots are the one thing which will be irreplaceable.

☆ Trainers or Trekking sandals

Useful around camp, in towns and when travelling.

☆ Thermal underwear

Comfortable around camp and much more practical (and warmer) to sleep in than pyjamas.

☆ Socks

It is best to wear a pair of liner socks under a pair of fairly thick loop stitch socks. This helps to protect your feet against blisters. Avoid nylon socks, they are abrasive, don't breathe well and can cause blisters.

☆ Waterproofs

Breathable waterproofs not only protect against rain and wind but also stop you from overheating. They 'breathe' and avoid condensation which you will experience from nylon waterproofs, and are worth the extra investment (gaiters may prove useful).

☆ Thick sweater/fleece jacket

A thick sweater or fleece jacket is necessary as nights can be cold. Make sure that your waterproof jacket is loose enough to wear over your sweater or fleece.

☆ Shorts

Shorts can be very comfortable to walk in but you must carry long trousers with you in case you get either sunburned or cold!

☆ Gloves & Hat

Especially useful around camp in the morning and in the evening.

☆ T-Shirts

We recommend that T-Shirts and other clothing generally be made from polypropylene or other breathable fabrics: They dry faster and keep you warm even when they are wet. Cotton T-shirts should not be used for strenuous walking.

☆ Sunhat/Suncream/block and Lipsalve

A wide brimmed sunhat and suncream are also recommended as Patagonia is very near the ozone layer hole. A combination sunblock/lipsalve is ideal for facial protection.

Other Equipment

☆ Sleeping Bag

A good quality four season sleeping bag is recommended for this trip. It must be down or synthetic, but it must be **4-season** (temperature -10°C to -5°C). A cotton liner helps to keep your bag clean.

☆ Trekking poles

Trekking poles are recommended.

☆ Water Bottle

The camp staff will provide plenty of water each day with which to fill your own bottle. You need to drink lots of water when trekking, so 1 litre is the minimum size suitable, and it is as well to have two. Metal 'sigg'-type bottles also have the advantage of doubling up as a hot water bottle at night.

☆ Mosquito Repellent

There can sometimes be mosquitoes at dusk so bring repellent and/or long sleeves.

☆ Iodine Tablets/Droplets

Iodine tablets or droplets are recommended as iodine kills amoebae: If you are going to buy a water filtration system, make sure it combats amoebas too. However bottled water is available on the trek and tap water from refugios is considered safe to drink.

☆ Torch/Batteries/Bulb

A small torch is essential for finding things in your tent, going to the 'toilet' in the night etc. Often a head torch is the most practical option as it allows you to have both hands free. Bring spare batteries with you!

☆ Toiletries

Try to keep heavy cosmetics etc to a minimum. Essentials are toothbrush/paste, biological-soap (so not to pollute the natural water reserves) and a small towel. 'Wet Wipes' are great for a quick clean up in your tent, so bring a pack of those (non-perfumed to avoid rashes!). Strong consideration should be given to environmentally sensitive products.

☆ Penknife

A small penknife can come in very handy if you have one.

☆ Personal First Aid Kit

On each trek a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and all personal medication. See the list in our **'General Information Booklet'**.

For an exclusively designed Explore Medical Kit, visit www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore

☆ Travel Washing Line

Useful for hanging up wet clothes in refugio dorms; campsites and refugios make little, if no provision for drying clothes.

☆ A Waterproof Cover for Rucksacks

Can be useful to offer extra protection for your bags against rain.

To book please call 0844 499 0901 • www.explore.co.uk

For bookings outside the UK please contact your local travel agent representing Explore.

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