



Wild Patagonia

Santiago to Ushuaia – 27 Days

TOUR DOSSIER

The Best of Southern Argentina & Chile

Begin your epic journey in Santiago, the vibrant cosmopolitan capital of Chile before you travel south through the heart of the wine region. En route, take in the natural splendour of the lush green forest and sparkling blue lakes of the Chilean and Argentinean lakes districts. Arriving into the remote Patagonian expanse we explore the southern ice fields, breath-taking glaciers and the magnificent snow-capped Andes mountain range before arriving in Ushuaia, the most southerly city in the world. This is a voyage of intense natural beauty and a chance to be at one with the great outdoors in some of its finest natural states.



ITINERARY

Santiago - Ushuaia

Included Meals: B- Breakfast, L – Lunch, D - Dinner

Day 1: Santiago (D)

Your tour begins in Chile's cosmopolitan capital city, Santiago de Chile. After your predeparture meeting you will enjoy a wonderful dinner with the group.

Day 2: Santiago → Santa Cruz (B,L,D)

An early departure from Santiago towards the south via the Panamerican Highway sees you pass the city of San Fernando onto Santa Cruz (178km/110mi), located at the shores of the Tinguiririca River, nowadays located in the heart of the wine zone.

Once we arrive you will visit the Colchagua Museum, known today as one the most complete Museums in South America. The Colchagua Valley, famous for producing some of Chile's finest wines, in particular Carmenere, a grape that was thought to be extinct until rediscovered in Chile in 1994. Their Cabernet Sauvignon variety also thrives during the grape growing season due to the hot sunny climate in this part of Chile

During this day, you will visit the winery, with wine tasting and wine making included.

Day 3: Santa Cruz → Pucon (B, L, D)

Settle into our comfortable custom built truck as we journey south along the highway. Passing orchards and plantations of fruits and vegetables, as well as a big timber industry. We'll pass picturesque lakes and mountains to arrive into Pucon, located in the heart of Chile's Lakes District. On the way we will stop from lunch at the impressive Salto del Lajas waterfalls.



Day 4: Pucon (B, L)

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. In the afternoon, we visit a traditional Mapuche family and enjoy a traditional meal. 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, musical instruments and enjoy a game of Palin, a game similar to hockey.

Day 5: Pucon (B)

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 smoking 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.



Day 6: Pucon → Bariloche (B, L, D)

Crossing our first border we pass the gigantic Volcano Lanin (3737m) as we make our way through the Lanin National Park. Once we cross into Argentina you'll see the landscape change. After lunch sit back and marvel along the scenic seven lakes drive to Bariloche, Argentina a resort town nestled peacefully on the shores of the Nahuel Huapi Lake.



Day 7: Bariloche (B)

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 view. 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 a hidden lake. We finish off this lovely afternoon at Argentina's most famous resort, Hotel Llao Llao, where we will enjoy High Tea over-looking the lake.

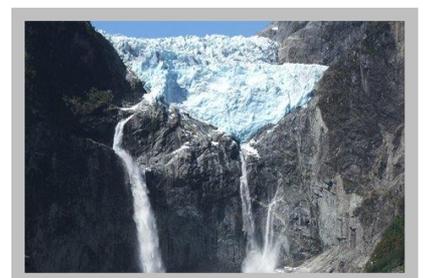


Day 8: Bariloche (B)

A day at leisure here gives you time to pursue interests such as sailing on the massive Nahuel Huapi Lake stopping at Isla Victoria and visiting the Arrayan Forest, horse riding on a local estancia, taking a tour to see the monstrous Tronodor peak, playing golf or hiking one of the many trails available in the area.

Day 9: Bariloche → Futaleufu (B, L, D)

Today we pass through the town of Esquel where the "Old Patagonian Express" still runs. We have a short stop in Trevelin, a small town with links to Welsh immigrants. In the late afternoon, we cross into Chile and the scenery will immediately change as we arrive into the quaint town of Futaleufu.



Day 10: Futaleufu → Queulat National Park (B, L, D)

Today we turn onto the Carretera Austral (Southern Road) a remote, unspoilt region of intense natural beauty and is often referred to as one of South America's best road trips. We 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 lakes.

At lunch time, we arrive at the coastal fishing village of Puyuhuapi, located on the edge of the Chilean Fiords in a setting of incomparable beauty. In the afternoon, we get the rare opportunity to get up close and personal to a spectacular hanging glacier in the Queulat National Park. Enjoy the park's trails while being surrounded by virgin evergreen forests made up by species like coihue, tepa, and Chilean rhubarbs. Tonight we spend the night in cabins located on the edge of the Chilean Fiords.

Day 11: Queulat National Park Region (B, L, D)

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).

Day 12: Queulat National Park Region → Coyhaique (B, L, D)

A morning hike in the remote enchanted forest encompasses a short, steep trail with a variety of ecosystems from subtropical forest to glacial peaks. An afternoon drive along the Simpson River sees us pass lush pastures, mirror lakes and snow-capped mountains. We continue onto Coyhaique (considered the big smoke), where you can walk a viewpoint circuit around the city.



Day 13: Coyhaique → Ruta 40 (B, L, D)

Today we have a wonderful drive through the Cerro Castillo Reserve with a chance to spot the rare Huemul deer. After lunch, we cross into Argentina and on to the famous Ruta 40 (Route 40). Travelling south through the vast Patagonian plains keep your eyes peeled for armadillos, rheas and guanacos. Tonight, we stop overnight at a remote Patagonian guesthouse.



Day 14: Ruta 40 → Gobernador Gregores (B, L, D)

Today we make a special visit to 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 Gobernador Gregores, a small town with links the old caravan trail.



Day 15: Gobernador Gregores → El Chalten (B, D)

A morning drive to enjoy the landscapes of the Patagonian Steppe as we head south. Further on we will arrive in El Chalten, and the Parque Nacional Los Glaciares. This ice field is the world's 3rd largest reserve of fresh water. Enjoy lodgings in our hotel nestled quietly under the imposing peaks of Mount Fitzroy, named after the captain of the *Beagle*, who navigated Darwin's Expedition of the area in 1834.

In the afternoon, you will have time to take on one of the short hikes available in the area. You can climb up to the eagle and condor lookout points, stroll along the river to a wonderful waterfall or head up to the Capri Lake through the forest trail.



Day 16: El Chalten (B, L)

A full day hiking today, we meet our local guides and set off on one of the main hiking trails in the wonderful Los Glaciares National Park, (the Lago Torre* hike is our usual 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 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.

Day 17: El Chalten → El Calafate (B, L, D)

The Viedma Glacier is located at the Southern Patagonian Ice Field and is the largest glacier in Argentina. This half day activity begins by making our way to the Bahia Tunel port. We then head across by boat to the face of the glacier before landing on the rocky shore nearby. We have a 45 minute to one hour trek over the rocky promontory where the glacier use to rest and has now left the exposed polished rock. After spending some time viewing the face of the glacier we'll loop back around to head back to boat landing. During this unique experience, the expert guides will explain and show many glacial features and talk about significant changes that have occurred in recent times.

This activity requires sturdy trekking boots and a medium level of fitness. Passengers with vertigo or poor mobility are not advised to take part in this activity. Please note trekking poles are not allowed.

After this wonderful excursion, in the mid-afternoon, we will continue by road to El Calafate. Enroute we will stop at a historic homestead saloon with some famous outlaw visitors.

Day 18: El Calafate (B, L)

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 set off from town and take the old, unpaved road with no rush and plenty of time for bird and animal spotting. Along the way, we learn about the gauchos (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.

Day 19: El Calafate → Torres Del Paine (B, D)

Head back into Chile to 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 hikes we cover 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 fabulous horse riding or a boat trip to view the Grey Glacier.

However, please note these activities are subject to availability and minimum numbers and will incur an additional cost. Also, weather plays a big part in whether these activities will be on offer.



Day 20: Torres Del Paine (B, L, D)

Greys Glacier Trek (Easy – Moderate) 11km – 22km (7mi – 13mi)

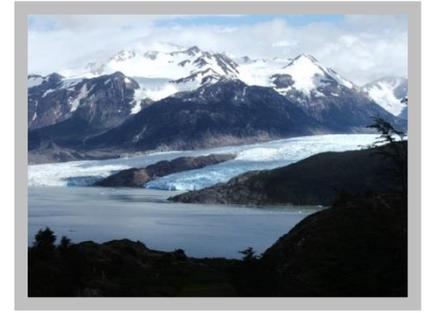
Grey Glacier is one of the principal tourist attractions located in Chile. As soon as you get to this place you will be breath taken with the lakes creamy blue colour dotted with icebergs floating and the Patagonia Icefield at the back.

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.



Day 21: Torres Del Paine (B, L, D)

French Valley Hike (Moderate – Difficult) 15km – 22km (9mi – 13mi)

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. 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.

Day 22: Torres Del Paine (B, L, D)

Las Torres Hike (Difficult) RTN: 19km (9mi – 11.5mi)

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.

NOTE REGARDING HIKING IN TORRES DEL PAINE

You are not obliged to continue to the furthestmost point on each trek but it is preferred that passengers have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy this as a group. There is always the option to take a shorter, unguided hike or non-trekking excursions can be arranged subject to availability and minimum number requirements. Please advise our team if you are interested in finding out more about these options.

Day 23: Torres Del Paine → Punta Arenas (B, L, D)

Making our way out of the Torres Del Paine National Park we drive south to Punta Arenas. 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.

Day 24: Punta Arenas → Cerro Sombrero (B, D)

Enjoy your morning exploring 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, before crossing the Straits of Magellan onto the island of Tierra del Fuego.

Day 25: Cerro Sombrero → Ushuaia (B, L)

In the morning, we visit a King Penguin colony, they are usually only found on sub Antarctic islands, such as the remote and difficult to access South Georgia and Falkland Islands. Observing them here is a unique opportunity!

We cross into Argentina and pass Lago Fagnano before heading over the Garibaldi Pass (500m/1500ft) and into the southernmost city in the world of Ushuaia. Now a major tourist town it is a great base for hiking, winter sports and starting point for many cruises to Antarctica.

Day 26: Ushuaia (B, D)

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 PanAmerican Highway is found more than 17000km/11000mi from where it begins.

Enjoy a special farewell dinner at one of Ushuaia's great restaurants.

Day 27: Ushuaia → Depart (B)

Depart Ushuaia with wonderful memories, and a new respect of our wonderful planet courtesy of Patagonia.

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.



INCLUSIONS

What's Included:

25 nights' accommodation in standard hotels; 1 night in a dorm hiking lodge (shared facilities)
 Transport in our custom built all-terrain expedition vehicles
 Approximately 26 Breakfasts, 18 Lunches, 19 Dinners
 Service of an experienced western tour leader as well as local guides
 Experienced Driver/Mechanic
 All National Park Entrance fees

INCLUDED ACTIVITIES

CHILE	Santa Cruz	Colchagua Valley Vineyard Tour and Wine Making Experience
	Santa Cruz	Colchagua Museum
	Pucon	Hiking Villarrica National Park or Local Reserve
	Pucon	Traditional Mapuche Ruka Experience
	DRIVE	Seven Lakes Scenic Drive between Pucon & Bariloche
ARGENTINA	Bariloche	Circuito Chico Loop
	Bariloche	Cerro Campanario Chairlift & Viewpoint
	Bariloche	High Tea at Llao Llao Resort
CHILE	DRIVE	Carretera Austral – South America's Best Road Trip
	Queulat	Queulat National Park and Hanging Glacier
	Queulat	Waterfall Hike or other another activity
	Queulat	Enchanted Forest Hike
ARGENTINA	Perito Moreno	Cuevas del las Manos (Hand Caves)
	El Chalten	Guided Hike in Los Glaciares National Park
	El Chalen	Guided Viedma Glacier Promontory Walk
	El Calafate	Guided Moreno Glacier Day Trip and Nautical Safari
CHILE	Torres N.Park	Guided Day Hikes (varies)
	Useless Bay	King Penguin Colony
	FERRY	Crossing the Straits of Magellan
ARGENTINA	Ushuaia	Guided Tierra del Fuego National Park Tour
	Ushuaia	Beagle Channel Boat Trip

Please refer to the VIVA EXPEDITIONS GROUP TRAVEL HANDBOOK for more detailed information

ARRIVING INTO SANTIAGO

JOINING YOUR TOUR

The tour officially begins at 18:30 on Day 1 at our hotel in Santiago where we will have a pre-departure meeting in which your Tour Leader / Driver will welcome you to South America and give you a run down on what to expect.

Please bring to this meeting

- 2 photocopies of your passport (details page with your photo)
- A copy of your travel insurance policy (including emergency 24 hour contact number & policy number)
- 1 photocopy of your Argentine Reciprocity Fee with barcode (Canada passport holders only)

TOUR HOTEL

MATILDAS BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Address: Calle Agustinas 2149, Santiago, Region Metropolitan, Chile

Phone: (56-2) 2661 9700

Web: www.matildashotel.com

Please note that due to availability the joining hotel may change. Any changes will be notified to the client.

SANTIAGO AIRPORT TO THE TOUR HOTEL

From the airport to the joining hotel in Santiago is approximately 40 minutes depending on traffic. A taxi should cost you approximately USD\$40.00. Be sure to confirm this with the taxi driver prior to taking the journey or alternatively choose one of the black and yellow metered taxis.

You can pick up a taxi either outside the airport terminal or alternatively you can book your taxi at one of the taxi desks in the baggage reclaim hall before customs.

There is also a shuttle bus (Turtrans or Trans VIP) which is bookable at the airport and should cost approximately USD\$18.00 to the hotel.

Alternatively you can book one of our Santiago pre-tour packages which include an airport transfer, one night pre-tour accommodation at our hotel and a half day city tour to orientate yourself in this wonderful city. Many people choose to spend an extra day or two in Santiago before the tour starts allowing some extra time to explore the city and the surrounding area.

Please ensure you book your pre-tour packages as soon as possible after booking your tour or as soon as you have booked your flights to ensure availability.

All prices listed for pre-trip accommodation and airport transfers are approximate and subject to availability. (For information on city stays and extensions contact us at info@vivaexpeditions.com).

CHANGING MONEY ON ARRIVAL

On arrival into Santiago it is suggested that you change some currency into Chilean Pesos at one of the banks at the airport or withdraw some at one of the ATM's. The rates here should be the same as at the banks in town and are typically better than the rates offered at hotels.

TIPPING KITTY

South America follows closely behind the USA regarding tipping. Although not mandatory, tipping is very much part of the South American culture and we believe good travel etiquette is to follow the culture of the country you visit. On your Viva Expeditions tour you will have a number of local guides, helpers and special moments that will require a tip. We understand that knowing who, how much and when can be confusing so to alleviate this your Tour Leader will talk to you at your pre-departure meeting regarding a Tipping Kitty. This will enable you to pay upfront and not have to worry about each individual tip as this will be done on your behalf.

To give you an idea of tipping costs:

Lake District Discovery (9D)	U\$ 15.00	R40 +Carretera Austral (6D)	U\$ 20.00
Southern Explorer. (13D)	U\$ 55.00	Wild Patagonia (27D)	U\$ 85.00

PLEASE NOTE: Tipping is YOUR MONEY. At anytime you do not feel the tip is warranted the tipping money shall be refunded.

ENDING IN USHUAIA

Your tour ends on Day 27. There are no activities planned for this day so you may depart at whatever time suits you best.

Post tour transfers can be arranged with your tour leader during the trip or directly with the hotel on arrival into Ushuaia. This is not included in the tour price and can be paid locally.

Alternatively we can help you with any post tour arrangements you may require. Many people choose to spend an extra day or two in Ushuaia after the tour finishes allowing some extra time to explore the city and the surrounding area or add on an Antarctica Cruise. For more information simply contact us at info@vivaexpeditions.com.