



## Patagonian Highlights

IP-TREK – 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2005

The southern region of Argentina and Chile offers travellers some of the most spectacular scenery on the South American continent. The Patagonian Andes consist of towering granite peaks, pristine lakes and massive glaciers whose advances interrupt the haunting silence of an unspoiled and untamed land. The town of El Chalten lies at the base of the Fitzroy Massif and is our base for some great day hikes to Fitzroy base camp, Laguna de los Tres and magnificent Cerro Torre towering above the surrounding peaks. The sight and sound of the Moreno Glacier as it makes its slow and torturous advance from the mountains to the sea across a five-kilometre front will leave you with an unforgettable impression.

Across the border in Chile we have some great day treks through the Paine National Park with its magnificent wildlife and the incredible "Towers of Paine" that thrust skyward over 3000 metres above the Patagonian steppe. Finally, at the tip of the continent, is the world's southernmost city - Ushuaia, on the island of Tierra del Fuego. Here we explore the Beagle Channel by boat, with the rare opportunity of viewing the many species of sub-Antarctic birds, seals and sea lions that inhabit this most remote of regions. Our final stop is the great metropolis of Buenos Aires, over 3,300 kilometres to the north.

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### Itinerary

#### **DAYS 1 & 2/BUENOS AIRES**

On arrival in Buenos Aires you will be transferred to your hotel in the downtown area of this huge metropolis. In the evening you will meet your tour leader and the other members of your group for a pre-tour briefing. Please check the notice board at reception to confirm the time and place of your meeting. The briefing is generally followed by an optional group dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Following breakfast on Day 2 we start our exploration of the Argentinean capital. Our tour will be a combination of bus transportation and walking and will take us to the districts of Recoleta; with its famous cemetery often referred to as a "miniature city-within-a-city" due to its size. We'll also visit Palermo, Plaza San Martin, Plaza De Mayo and the colourful neighbourhood of La Boca. In the afternoon there may be an opportunity (this will be at an additional cost) to visit the Costanera Sur Bird Sanctuary, Tigre Delta or Madero Harbour. (B)

#### **DAY 3/EL CALAFATE & EL CHALTEN**

Today we will be transferred to the domestic airport for our flight to El Calafate. On arrival we will travel to the town of El Chalten at the foot of Fitzroy Massif. (B)

#### **DAYS 4 & 5/FITZROY CAMP & MT. PLIGUE TUMBADO**

El Chalten is our base for three days of trekking in the Glaciers National Park where the Fitzroy Massif (3,375m) towers above the surrounding peaks. Our trek today leads us to the beautiful Laguna de los Tres and the Fitzroy base camp. The following day we have a full day trek to Mount Pligue Tumbado where there are fantastic views over the whole Fitzroy Massif. (2B,2L)

#### **DAY 6/CERRO TORRE BASE CAMP & EL CALAFATE**

Today we trek to the base camp of well-known Cerro Torre (3102m). In the late afternoon we travel by local bus to the town of El Calafate situated on the southern shore of Argentino Lake. (BL)

#### **DAY 7/MORENO GLACIER**

UNESCO declared the Glaciers National Park a World Heritage Site in 1981. 13 glaciers descend and flow into the Viedma and Argentino Lakes to form the Patagonian Continental Ice Field. During our visit to the park we will witness the most impressive of the glaciers, the Perito Moreno Glacier, which descends to the surface of the water across a five-kilometre frontage and reaches a height of sixty metres. The vivid hues of the ice floes and the dull roar of huge chunks of ice breaking away from the glacier, is unforgettable. (B)

#### **DAYS 8 & 9/PAINE NATIONAL PARK & TORRES DEL PAINE**

A full morning's drive takes us across the border to one of the most spectacular national parks in Chile, "Torres del Paine National Park". A UNESCO declared world biosphere reserve; it is a unique combination of huge, craggy mountains including the famous Cuernos del Paine (Paine Horns), glaciers, waterfalls and lakes, plant and animal species. There are excellent chances to spot guanacos, rheas, Andean condors, Chilean flamingos and many other birds and animals. The "Towers of Paine" (Torres del Paine) rise over 3000 metres above the Patagonian steppe. A full day trek, takes us to the base of these amazing towers. We return in the evenings to our lodge located in the National Park where accommodation is provided in 4-bedded rooms with shared facilities. (2B, 1L)

#### **DAY 10/PAINE NATIONAL PARK TO PUERTO NATALES**

Today we have a full day visiting the different areas of this beautiful national park. Short walks will lead us to the Waterfall Salto Grande and the iceberg landscape of the Grey Lake. In the late afternoon we transfer to Puerto Natales, a picturesque fishing village on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. (BL)

#### **DAY 11/PUERTO NATALES TO EL CALAFATE**

Today we take the local bus to El Calafate. There will be free time this afternoon to explore the town or your tour guide will suggest optional activities such as bike riding or a bird-watching walk to Nimes Lagoon. (B)

#### **DAYS 12 & 13/USHUAIA & THE BEAGLE CHANNEL**

A short flight brings us to the Argentinean town of Ushuaia on the island at the "end of the world", Tierra del Fuego. This scenic flight takes us high over the Andes, the snow-capped peaks of Tierra del Fuego and the Magellan Strait. The following day we join an excursion to the Tierra del Fuego National Park and in the afternoon we explore the Beagle Channel. A catamaran trip will give us a chance to explore the tiny islands and rookeries in the Channel, where sub-Antarctic wildlife such as seals, sea lions, dolphins and cormorants provide us with a great opportunity for some close range photography. (2B)

**Note: In the event of a shortage of flights from El Calafate to Ushuaia it may sometimes be necessary to travel by local bus from el Calafate to Rio Gallegos airport located some 4 hours drive away. Here**

## **DAYS 14/BUENOS AIRES**

Many of you may choose to combine this trip with an Antarctic cruise on board the "Peregrine Mariner". For those who do so, you will be transferred to the ship for an extraordinary experience to the frozen continent.

For those returning to Buenos Aires, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to the nation's capital where your trip finishes upon arrival at the domestic airport. Extra accommodation is available in Buenos Aires and can be requested at the time of booking. (B)

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## **INCLUDED**

An experienced English speaking Argentinean leader and specialised trekking guides on most full day treks, arrival transfer, meals as indicated in the itinerary, 11 nights accommodation in hotels and lodges plus 2 nights in a quad share lodge, air conditioned buses and vans, plane, and boat transportation and entrance fees for sightseeing and national parks as described in the itinerary. Meals as indicated: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner.

## **NOT INCLUDED**

Local domestic airport departure taxes, visas where required, meals not included in the itinerary, insurance, laundry, any optional tours or activities during free time, tips and items of a personal nature.

## **Domestic flights**

The domestic flights within Argentina are not included in the cost of the trip. These are usually best issued in conjunction with your own international ticket. Please contact Peregrine or your travel agent for full details of the domestic flight sectors required for your tour.

## **WHAT TO CARRY**

Please remember that Peregrine operate small group "adventure" holidays. Our style of travelling means that it is more desirable to carry a backpack or duffle bag on our tours. It is possible to bring suitcases however they can be cumbersome and portage is sometimes not available. You will need to bring a daypack to hold your camera, a water bottle and other items you will need while sightseeing.

You will also need to bring good walking shoes or boots; a rain jacket; as well as a warm jacket and other warm clothing (for evenings); personal first-aid kit, sun screen, cap, sunglasses and lip-balm, sufficient clothing and toiletries.

## **SPENDING MONEY**

You will need to take money with you to cover additional expenses not included in your tour cost. These include snacks and drinks, sightseeing not included in the itinerary, tips, laundry, and souvenirs. It is difficult to give an accurate recommendation as we all have different shopping, eating and drinking habits so we remind you that this is a guideline only. We suggest that where you need to purchase lunch and dinner that you allow approximately US \$15 per day for these meals. This does not include snacks and drinks. Allow approximately US \$15 per day for souvenirs and shopping, more if you are a big spender.

**Tipping**

Although tipping is not compulsory in this area of the world it is none the less considered appropriate if you are happy with the service you have received in a restaurant or from a local guide. Your Tour leader will be able to advise you in this area; however, as a guideline we would recommend 10% in restaurants and US \$2 per person per day for your Peregrine Tour Leader and the same for a local guide where provided. The same would be applicable for the driver of any private transportation that we use.

Please remember, if you are unhappy with any service, you are under no obligation whatsoever to leave a tip.

**Fitness**

A reasonable level of fitness is required to fully appreciate the trekking portion of this tour. Any physical preparation will be a definite advantage.

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

Occasionally it may be necessary to amend or change the order of this itinerary for reasons beyond our control such as weather and road conditions or changes to transport schedules. These can often occur with little notice.

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