



# PATAGONIA CONTRASTS



*This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.*



*El Chalten and Fitzroy peaks*

- **An ambitious itinerary with time to absorb the incredible contrasts**
- **Walks in Argentine Patagonia's three great destinations. Bariloche, Fitzroy and Tierra del Fuego.**
- **An exclusive itinerary – most of it away from the crowds.**
- **4 nights camping only, 3 of these in a valley based 'adventure camp' with lodge-based meals and hot showers.**
- **'High Places' have worked with the best mountain company in Patagonia for 15 years**

## **Patagonia**

Although it consists of the southern parts of both Chile and Argentina it is sometimes easier to consider Patagonia as a separate country altogether. Patagonians have a regional identity that transcends national boundaries. On the eastern (Argentinian) side of the Andes, once away from the great lakes and glaciers, the vast landscape is almost flat and sheltered from the moist westerly winds and is surprisingly dry and arid - locally called 'el desierto' – this is the Patagonian 'steppes'. On the Chilean side, the mists and rainclouds roll over an endless glaciated and forested coastline of fjords and innumerable islands and archipelagos sweeping down to Cape Horn – 'the uttermost part of the earth.'

This is a walking and trekking holiday to Argentine Patagonia. Efficient domestic flights allow us to travel the 2500kms from alpine Bariloche via the dramatic granite towers of Fitzroy and Cerro Torre to the deepest south, Tierra del Fuego.

### **High Places in Patagonia**

High Places are well established in Patagonia. We have worked with our longtime colleagues based in El Chalten (Argentina) since way back in 1992.

### **The trip**

For an exciting trip walking trip which is within the grasp of reasonably fit walkers who want something better than the whistle-stop tour. This is it!

Linking flights (included in price) make it possible to cover the vast distance (2500kms between Bariloche and Tierra del Fuego) and also do plenty of walking.

We camp for 4 nights on the Fitzroy section of the trip. Elsewhere accommodation will be comfortable, varied and interesting.

The walking is on good trails throughout. Day packs only. On Day 3 (refuge) and Day 10 (permanent camp) you will carry your overnight essentials but all bedding etc is provided.

### **Climate**

They say that if you stand still in Patagonia "*all four seasons will blow past you in a day – sometimes in an hour*". Literally, expect anything! Argentine Patagonia is on the leeward side of the Andes and receives less rainfall than their Chilean counterparts. It is often the wind that is the main feature of the weather but equally there are plenty of calm days when sunshine can raise temperatures well into the 20°C's.

### **Accommodation**

In towns we stay in middle-range comfortable hotels or lodges, usually with en suite facilities. We also stay in a mountain refuge (1 night) There are four nights camping as follows - at El Chalten we stay in our own attractive wooded camp site (3 nights) with hot showers and a great 'dining' lodge with a roaring fire. We also camp for 1 night on the Fitzroy trek. This is a fixed camp with roomy 2 person lightweight tents with a mess tent for our meals.

### **Transport**

We use our own private buses throughout with luggage trailer where needed.

### **Food**

In Bariloche, El Calafate and Ushuaia hotels we provide bed and breakfast only but on the walking days, also a packed lunch. During travel days you will buy your own al fresco lunch wherever we stop (see daily itinerary for details of meals provided – Breakfast, lunch, dinner - B,L,D). This allows you the option of trying the local foods and restaurants, very much part of the adventure. Our guides will advise on eating in towns and often know the places of character where there are few tourists. Usually the group decides to eat together. A good two course dinner may cost around US\$25 approx. and lunch, US\$12 approx. On trek we eat food prepared to a high standard. Meals are varied and appetising and vegetarians can be catered for.

### **Health and hygiene**

Stomach illnesses have been happily absent on our trips down here. The rivers are clean and unless advised by the local leader/guide there is no need to treat the water.

### **Baggage**

Your trek bags will accompany us each day except on the overnights in the mountain hut at Bariloche and for the 1 night on the Fitzroy trek. Here you will carry your normal daypack kit plus personal overnight items. You usually leave your main luggage in the hotel prior to these nights and a lockable bag is recommended if you are leaving valuable items.

**Safety**

The crime rate in Patagonia is generally low. However common sense and caution should be exercised in towns and airports. Patagonia is not inhabited by any dangerous animals or reptiles apart from pumas – but we've never seen one!

**Language and people**

Castellano (Spanish) is spoken throughout Argentina and Chile. Although it is a different dialect to that spoken in Spain, it is still rewarding to take time to learn some numbers and colloquial phrases, greetings etc., both before and during your visit. Our local guides usually speak excellent English.



*Viedma Glacier*

## DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. Flight times may change slightly with revised schedules. 'B,L,D' refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

***This trip is 17 days ex BARILOCHE. The first and last days here refer to the days of arrival in BARILOCHE and departure from USHUAIA and may not be the days you depart from or arrive back home.***

DAY 1 Bariloche (770m), Argentina's much loved mountain resort is only a two hour flight from Buenos Aires. It has a beautiful lakeside location very reminiscent of Switzerland and our trip begins here. If there is time in the afternoon there are some short walks around town to recover and to give us an idea of the layout of the town. Hotel. (B)

DAY 2 A full day walk above the town will finally clear our heads. We follow good trails to a nearby ridgeline above the tree cover and enjoy some great views. There are several options. 6-7 hours.. (B,L,D)

DAY 3 Cerro Tronador (3554m) is the most distinctive peak in the Bariloche area and today our hike goes up to a Refugio close to the snowline at the base of the mountain. A drive to Pampa Linda and a steepish hike of approx five hours reaches the refuge Otto Meiling (1900m) where we spend the night. (B,L,D)

DAY 4 The Refugio is used as a base for climbing Cerro Tronador and is in a dramatic alpine setting. Before we return to the valley we walk to a nearby ridge, Filo de Motte revealing close views of the glaciers and nearby peaks. Retracing our steps to Pampa Linda we spend the night in its historic hosteria. 3-4 hours. Refuge. (B,L,D),



*Cerro Tronador*

DAY 5 Time to leave Bariloche. A flight south to El Calafate on the south shore of Lago Argentino and we are in Patagonia proper. El Calafate, a small touristy town has a lively main street and some excellent restaurants. Time to catch up on news and an opportunity to buy a few things. (B)

DAY 6 Today we unashamedly join the tourists! Glacier Perito Moreno, 75kms from El Calafate, justifies a whole day by itself. It is one of the few glaciers in the world currently increasing in size rather than receding. And we can stand just a few feet from the snout, 180 feet high, and watch it calving. (B)

DAY 7 Our bus takes us on to El Chalten (4-5 hours), a small town situated amidst the most spectacular mountains of Patagonia. Until you have seen them, it is impossible to imagine the vertical granite towers and buttresses of Cerro Torre, Chalten (FitzRoy) and others soaring into the sky. From the village, their summits tower 2600m above us. After lunch in town, we drive for 17 km up the valley to our own attractive riverside private camping area. There are hot showers and a fine

lodge where we eat and a roaring fire where we can look out of the panoramic window at the enormous buttress of Cerro FitzRoy. We'll spend the next three nights here. Forest Camp. (B,D)

DAY 8 Today we hike up to the ridge of Loma del Diablo (Devil's dome) 750m, which has stunning views of the FitzRoy massif. In good weather we can try and reach the snowy (maybe!) summit (1620m) a steady 2 hours further but it will be quite a tough day. 5 hours return to ridge, 8-9 to summit. (B,L,D)

DAY 9 Our first foray towards the Fitzroy massif as walk a good trail up the wooded Rio Blanco valley to the grassy FitzRoy base camp set pleasantly in the trees. From the camp, the trail climbs steeply (40 mins) up to one of the views of the trip. Laguna de los Tres, often frozen, nestles beneath the snowslopes leading up to the enormous FitzRoy buttresses. Here we hope for good weather. 7 hours. Forest camp. (B,L,D)

DAY 10 An easier day We leave our forest camp and return down the main valley to El Chalten from where another valley heads towards the peaks. It is a short walk to a permanent campsite set pleasantly in the woods but it is the gateway to another spectacular route, this one to the needle-like spires of Cerro Torre, Torre Egger and Torre Stanhardt. Camp. 2 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 11 Standing on the moraine ridge a few minutes walk from our camp we hope to enjoy another of the great views of the trip. Beneath us is Laguna Torre being fed by the glaciers, and piercing the skyline beyond, the awesome pinnacled ridge dominated by Cerro Torre. We walk along the lakeshore to a famous viewpoint, Mirador Maestri over the glacier and the pinnacled skyline. On our return we continue past our camp and following the Rio FitzRoy walk into town and comfortable beds! Hostal. (B,L)



*Cerro Torre view from moraine ridge*

DAY 12 An exciting but less demanding day with a boat trip on Viedma Lake to view the face of the enormous Viedma glacier which flows off the Patagonian Ice Cap right into the lake itself. Crampons are provided for our boots and we have the chance to walk onto the glacier. The ice is coarse and gritty and not at all slippery making it an enjoyable and fascinating experience. The scale is immense and it is hard to imagine the size of the icefield. Covering an area of 13,000sq km, the Southern Patagonian Icecap stretches an astonishing 350km and overflows into over 50 glaciers. There will be time also to spend in town and prepare for the final chapter of the trip. Tierra del Fuego! Hostal. (B,L)

DAY 13 We drive the straight road back to El Calafate and board our plane for the flight to the southernmost town of Ushuaia on the shores of the Beagle Channel. Time in the afternoon to check out the town. Hosteria. (B)

DAY 14 A good trail on the edge of town leads to one of the finest viewpoints of the whole area, Cerro del Medio at 1000m. It is a steady climb through varied terrain until it emerges from the forest at Laguna Margot. From the summit there are fine views inland and also down the Beagle Channel. 6-7 hours. Hosteria. (B,L)



DAY 15 A fine coastal; walk in the National Park at Lapataia west of the town which includes a trip out to the Isla de Redonda in the Beagle Channel. Hosteria. (B,L)

*Ushuaia from the Beagle Channel*

DAY 16 In the afternoon we take the well known boat trip down the Beagle Channel to the historic estancia at Harberton and on our way will pass penguin rookeries and seal colonies. The estancia dates from 1887 when two English missionaries settled on the island calling their new home after their birthplace in Devon, England. With our return up the Channel our Patagonia odyssey comes to an end. Time for a celebratory meal in town! (B,)

DAY 17 Depart Ushuaia or continue with your own arrangements. (B)

BL 12/09