

Patagonia - The Classic Paine Circuit

Trip Code: PPC

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP

MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore one of the most remote and untamed regions in South America
- Undertake the coveted 'O Trek' - the complete circumnavigation of the Paine massif
- Trek over the spectacular John Gardner Pass and hike along the serene Lake Nordenskjold
- Trek along Grey Glacier, explore the French Valley and marvel at the impressive Los Cuernos Massif
- View the spectacular 'Torres del Paine' towers from one of South America's most iconic viewpoints

- EARLY BOOKING ESSENTIAL to confirm national park accommodation.

AT A GLANCE

- 8 days trekking
- Max altitude - 1200 metres
- Join at El Calafate

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

Home to jaw dropping scenery of granite towers, incredible lakes, cascading waterfalls and beautiful glaciers; Patagonia is one of the world's last great wildernesses and peerless as a destination for a South American trekking holiday. Winding its way through the UNESCO protected Torres del Paine National Park, you will find what is considered to be one of the very best treks in the world: the classic 'O Trek'. This is the ultimate adventure, completing a full circumnavigation of the Paine massif. Following trails snaking their way through the majestic landscape, we can hope to spot guanaco, Andean grey fox, condor, deer and even the elusive puma. The adventure starts in El Calafate, gateway to Patagonia, before heading off on the trail whilst staying at incredibly scenic campsites in remote locations. Prepare to be truly awe-inspired, as you trek over the impressive John Gardner Pass, walk up the dramatic Frances Valley and hike along the shores of Lake Nordenskjold. However, the icing on the Patagonian cake is the grand finale as you head up to the base of the famed Paine Towers. If you're looking to trek the very best trails in Patagonia and immerse yourself into the most incredible scenery on the planet, accept no substitute

Is this holiday for you?

During this fantastic trekking holiday, you'll walk an amazing 130kms, which includes exploring the Frances and Ascencio valleys. As you'd expect from one of the world's top 10 treks, there are a couple of long walking days, but the pace is steady and the views more than make up for tired legs! The journey around the Torres del Paine Massif has good trails whilst on the north side of the range, however, when crossing the John Garner Pass there are some sections of rugged pathway, forested terrain and marshland. Getting to this incredibly wild and remote destination involves a long journey, but this is one of the reasons it remains such a special place to visit. We'd recommend arriving a day early in El Calafate and relaxing, so you feel rested and ready for the trek. Please note that WiFi and phone communication in the park is available but this can not be guaranteed.

While trekking you will just need to carry a day pack with a packed lunch and personal items such as spare clothing, waterproofs, wash kit etc. You do not need to carry your own camping gear or sleeping bag, unless you opt to bring your own. If required, porters can be hired at additional cost and carry up to a maximum of 15kg (so this could potentially be shared by 2 people), this needs to be booked in

advanced with us.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Chalten Extension

El Chaltén is the top rated hiking destination in Argentina. This charming little village sits at the foot of Mt. Fitz Roy, it's surrounded by glaciers, lakes, rivers and forests. With endless options for exploration, we have hand-picked two of the best day walks from this hiker's paradise. We first hike to Laguna de los Tres with magnificent views of the formidable Mt. Fitz Roy - one of the most impressive vistas in all of Patagonia. Our second day walk takes us through forests and canyons on our way to Laguna Torre, again providing incredible views of the rocky high peaks of Patagonia's Southern Ice Field. From Laguna Torre we have views of the stunning Cerro Torre, once thought to be the hardest mountain to climb in the world. After 3 nights to explore the food and delights of El Chaltén we transfer back to El Calafate.

This extension fits in perfectly, post-tour, with KE's Patagonia Paine Circuit and is a wonderful way to see the very best of this magnificent area.

4 days from
US\$1,175 per person



Iguazu Falls

Straddling the border between Argentina and Brazil, the Iguazu Falls are the largest of their kind in the world. Tumbling over the 3km-wide edge of the Parana Plateau, the falls consist of between 150-300 waterfalls, dominated by the long, narrow chasm that is known as the Devil's Throat. One of the world's true natural wonders, the sheer force and power of these falls can be felt on our extension which allows us to visit from both sides of the border. On the Argentinian side, we are able to wonder in, out and between the falls, whereas on the Brazilian side it is possible experience and observe the falls from a step back, which enables a true sense of perspective. What a wonderful way to cap your experience in Patagonia!



"Land of Fire" - Tierra Del Fuego

The "Land of Fire" or Tierra del Fuego is a breath taking island divided between Argentina and Chile and a must see destination for anyone travelling to Patagonia. It contains one of the most famous stretches of water in the world - The Beagle Channel. KE's excellent extension explores this beautiful part of the world with inflatable canoes, boat and on foot. As the most relaxing way to travel you'll motor and paddle down wonderful waterways, hike secret trails, visit the famed Gable Island with its beaver dams, look for exciting birdlife including seals and meet the penguins on Martillo Island! Staying where the Andes meet the ocean, Ushuaia is the world's most southern town and the perfect place to enjoy, pre- or post-trek.



Calafate Extension

One of South America's top highlights, Perito Moreno Glacier is a "must-see" for any Patagonia traveller! Set in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Los Glaciares National Park, it is one of the innumerable glaciers that make up the Southern Patagonian Ice Field, the third largest mass of ice after Antarctica and Greenland.

Starting in El Calafate, we transfer to Los Glaciares National Park where we explore the walkways and viewpoints that give us a unique panorama of the 5km ice wall at the head of the glacier. As an active glacier, one of the few in the world that is not receding, we may see dramatic icefalls as the ice carves off and plummets into Lago Argentino (Argentina's biggest lake).

After exploring on foot, we take to the water on our Nautical Safari Tour. Here we cruise across Lake Rico, passing between icebergs that have calved off the glacier. As we reach 'Icebergs Channel', at a safe distance, we sail down the headwall of the glacier, allowing for spectacular close-up views of nature at work!

This extension fits in perfectly, pre tour, with KE's Patagonia Paine Circuit and is a wonderful way to see this impressive natural wonder.

2 days from
US\$505 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional local leader
- A single timed airport transfer on Day 1 and 11 (to meet the preferred flight) National park fees
- All accommodation as described in the trip notes
- All meals as per the trip notes
- On trek a full service including food and all camping equipment (except personal equipment)
- All land transport required by the itinerary

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for trek staff and drivers
- Airport transfers (except group transfers)
- Airport departure taxes (if applicable)
- Transfers between Buenos Aires Airports
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in El Calafate.

Single timed transfers from / to El Calafate Airport are provided.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals except 2 dinners and one lunch in El Calafate are included in the holiday cost.

Food & Water

Water from the taps may not be drinkable in all locations on this trip - please check with your guide. We recommend taking water purification tablets and a reusable bottle with a filter such as [Water-to-Go](#), which can both be used to help make safe other water sources. Please note that we do not encourage the purchase of single use plastic bottles.

Patagonia's rich and fertile land, combined with a fascinating human history of waves of European immigration ensures a rich and diverse cuisine. The glacial waters of the national parks mean an abundance of fresh trout and salmon which are grilled, pan-fried or roasted. It is hard to imagine being able to source fresher and wilder freshwater fish than here! For those seeking a seafood hit, king crab chowder would be hard to beat! An incredibly indulgent dish of crab, cheese and cream, topped with breadcrumbs. Patagonia is also rightly famed for its lamb, often spit-roasted over a wood fire, served with a sauce made from the local calafate berry. Wild deer and boar roam the rugged landscape here, and can often be found on the menu too. Empanadas are very similar to Cornish pasties and are stuffed with lamb, vegetables or cheese. The influence in the highlands is alpine, and happily this also means chocolate of the very highest quality. For those seeking refreshment, Patagonia (like much of Latin America) is experiencing a boom in micro-breweries and are well worth seeking out. The calafate berry also makes it in to the local version of the Pisco Sour, which locals will tell you is far superior to any other! Finally, wine lovers will be utterly spoiled with the very best Malbec, Pinot noir and Torrentes wines.

Accommodation

Accommodation at the El Calafate hotel and Estancia is based on twin sharing rooms and if you are a solo traveller you will be paired up with another solo traveller of the same sex. The refugio fixed campsites offer comfortable facilities and dining and shared bathrooms are to be found in the refugio. They are all in the most incredible locations and the tents offer more privacy and space than staying in the shared mixed-gender bunkrooms. Each refuge has a small shop and a restaurant and are part of the fantastic trekking culture in Patagonia.

The single supplement includes the two nights hotel in El Calafate, the one night in an Estancia and a single tent whilst camping, although the tents are strictly subject to availability.

For Flight Inclusive Passengers, we also stay 1 night at the start and 1 night at the end of the trip in Buenos Aires in a comfortable city centre hotel in the Palermo District close to the airport. Single rooms for these nights are available at additional cost (not included in the land only single supplement price).

Additional hotel nights in El Calafate and Buenos Aires are also available. For hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website. Hotels are subject to availability and prices may vary.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

Spending Money

We estimate that \$500 will cover all of your expenditures whilst in Argentina and Chile, including the aforementioned meals, soft drinks, staff tips (allow \$300). If you intend to purchase expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly. You can withdraw local currency (Chilean and Argentina pesos) using most credit and debit cards from ATM's in El Calafate. Credit cards are also accepted in almost all restaurants and shops. If you are taking your money in cash we recommend you do this in US dollars including some small denomination notes as this will make changing money easy, you may get a better exchange rate changing dollars than withdrawing from an ATM. We do not recommend taking travellers cheques as these can be time consuming to exchange and often attract a poorer rate.

Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides. They do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. For your trek crews we recommend that you give a tip if you feel that their services have met your satisfaction. We recommend that you give any tips from the group as a whole rather than from individuals and that the whole group agree on a level of tipping that everyone is happy with. As a rough guide we suggest you allow a total of \$80 - \$100 per person, per guide (usually 3) to put into a tipping pool, and a smaller additional tip for the driver.

Additional Information

Due to the nature of the Torres del Paine National Park reservation system for the refugios and campsites, it is essential to book early on this trip. Trips often reach their capacity and we cannot accept more travellers beyond this for a given departure. In addition, final accommodation listings are submitted to the National Park sites around 2 months in advance of the trip and can often not be added to after this due to the very high demand in the National Park. Any bookings received after this point will be subject to availability of these accommodations.

Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

Baggage Allowance

During the trek, your baggage will split into 2 parts:

Any items that are not required during your trek can be left in your main kitbag in a secure location in El Calafate, arranged with your tour leader.

Any items that you will require on trek will be carried by yourself. We recommend that you carry a 55 litre rucksack that will contain spare clothes, minimal wash kit and personal items, water proofs and any other items you will require on trek.

You will not have to carry a sleeping bag or mat.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH THE USA

You will require an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any US-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is USD\$21 and you should apply for it at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>. With the ESTA complete, the majority of British Citizen passport holders can enter the US under the Visa Waiver Programme, VWP. You will be required to have a passport with an integrated chip. Note that if you have travelled to Cuba, Iran, Syria or North Korea since March 2011* you will have to apply for a visa rather than the Visa Waiver Programme (* a full and up to date list of countries can be found on the US government website [here](#).)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH CANADA

All citizens (except for USA citizens) will require an eTA (Electronic Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any Canada-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is CAD\$7 and you should apply for it at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp>

Visa Argentina

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

Visa Chile

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. USA passport holders will be issued with a tourist card on arrival.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking or climbing trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. Our treks can be physically demanding, but more as a result of altitude and terrain than distances walked. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime. Jogging and swimming are good for developing aerobic fitness and better stamina. You should gradually increase your exercise leading up to departure, and in the month before setting off, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country, carrying a rucksack.

Climate

The vast unbroken stretch of ocean to the west and south of the South American continent leaves the Patagonian Andes exposed to a variety of weather. As you'd expect when travelling to any mountain region you need to be prepared for all conditions. We operate our holidays to Patagonia during the optimum time for trekking when the days are longer and warmer days. During this time the temperatures in El Calafate are around 22°C and in El Chalten around 19°C. These are maximum figures and night temperatures in Patagonia will be colder than this, and occasionally freezing. Patagonia is a wilderness and at times can be windy and it's not unusual to experience all four seasons in a day.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Chile & Easter Island - Lonely Planet.
- The Rough Guide to Chile.
- Chile & Easter Island - DK Eyewitness Travel Guide.
- Trekking and Climbing in the Andes (Globetrotter Adventure) - Val Pitkethly and Kate Harper.
- The Andes A Trekking Guide - John & Cathy Biggar.
- The Old Patagonian Express. Land of Tempest - Paul Theroux.
- Mischief in Patagonia - Eric Shipton.
- Travels in a Thin Country - Sarah Wheeler.
- The Motorcycle Diaries - Ernesto "Che" Guevara.
- The House of the Spirits - Isabel Allende.
- In Patagonia - Bruce Chatwin.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. Please refer to the trip notes 'Baggage Allowance' section for details of the strict and important baggage limits.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Gaiters
- Sandals / Trainers or similar for camp use
- Socks
- Underwear
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Thermal baselayer - leggings
- Thermal baselayer shirts
- Casual shirts and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm jacket (down)
- Sunhat
- Warm hat

- Sunglasses
- Lightweight thermal gloves
- Warm and waterproof outer gloves or mittens
- Rucksack 45-55 litres
- Large kit bag (to leave behind travel clothes etc)
- Selection of dry bags (to keep trek bag & rucksack contents dry)
- Additional small bag (dry bag for example). Used to leave small overnight bag before the trek.
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 2 x1 Litre (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent (DEET), and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

❖ **The following items are optional:**

- Sleeping bag liner (recommended)
- Spare laces

- Travel clothes
- Trekking poles (recommended)
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Small padlock
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Sleeping bag and mattress:

- Sleeping bag and mattress are provided at each of the fixed camps

Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary, joining at the hotel in El Calafate. Single timed transfers are included from/to El Calafate Airport.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London (Heathrow) to El Calafate airport via Buenos Aires, including an overnight stop in Buenos Aires on both the outbound and inbound legs. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the evening, arriving to Buenos Aires the following morning. Following a night in a Buenos Aires hotel (airport transfers included to/from the hotel) we will fly the following morning to El Calafate, arriving early afternoon (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart Calafate to Buenos Aires in the afternoon of the last day of the itinerary, staying a night in Buenos Aires (Airport transfers included). We will fly the following day from Buenos Aires to the UK. Direct flights from London to Buenos Aires with British Airways are available, please contact the office for a quote.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

This is the classic O Trek, a complete circuit of the stunning Paine massif and the ultimate adventure in one of the most wild and ruggedly beautiful trekking destinations in the world. One of few UK companies to offer the full circuit, KE will take you on this iconic trek underneath the instantly recognisable towering rock spires, stunning azure lakes and mighty calving glaciers. We stay in a range of stunningly located refugios and campsites which allow us to experience total immersion into the Patagonian landscape. We have increased our itinerary to 12 days to give you longer to savour this incredible region and give you even better value for money! Our flight inclusive package includes an overnight stopover in Buenos Aires at the start and end of your holiday, allowing us to split the journey and sample this vibrant city, arriving to Patagonia refreshed and ready to explore. Extra nights in Buenos Aires can be arranged either before or after your trip.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 21/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change