

# Spires and Ice - Trekking Patagonia

Trip Code: PAT

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the vast Perito Moreno Glacier
- Take on the stunning W-trek in the UNESCO-protected Torres del Paine National Park
- Walk in the shadow of the towering Monte Fitz Roy and breath-taking Cerro Torre
- Stay in incredibly scenic refugios and estancias
- Explore a land of rock towers, glaciers, cascading waterfalls and calving icebergs

- EARLY BOOKING ESSENTIAL to confirm National park accommodation.

## AT A GLANCE

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

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

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

# Introduction

This superb walking holiday in Patagonia introduces you to one of the world's last, great wildernesses and takes you on an incredible voyage through two of the most beautiful landscapes on the planet: Torres Del Paine National Park in Chile and Argentina's Los Glaciares National Park. Home to gigantic glaciers, cascading waterfalls, magnificent peaks and crystal clear lakes; nothing can prepare you for the beauty of Patagonia, with its wild and rugged glacial landscape. The adventure includes the sought-after 'W Trek', staying in wonderfully situated refugios and campsites. After the beauty of the Grey Valley, we take on the incredible French Valley trail before one of our absolutely favourite highlights: the trek up to the base of the majestic, soaring Paine towers in the Valle Ascencio. Just when you thought this experience couldn't be topped, we enter Argentina's Los Glaciares National Park and explore the photogenic Perito Moreno Glacier before enjoying splendid walks around the stunning peaks of Monte Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre.

## Is this holiday for you?

On this excellent adventure which includes the W trek, we make use of mountain refuges and campsites (whilst on trek) with hotels and estancias to see the very best of the Patagonian landscape. Walking days range in duration from 3 to 9/10 hours with plenty of stops along the way for wildlife spotting and photographs. The walking is on well-defined paths and the real bonus of trekking in Patagonia is that altitude is not a factor. 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 extremely limited (almost non-existent) which means evenings are much more of a social affair and days are for enjoying the magnificent scenery.

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. Whether staying in the refugios or camping, 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 14kg (so this could potentially be shared by 2 people), this needs to be booked in advanced with us.

# Itinerary

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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.



## "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.



## 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!

# Holiday Information

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## What's Included

- A professional local leader
- A single timed airport transfer on Day 1 and 13 (to meet the preferred flight)
- Meals as per the Meal Plan
- National park fees
- On trek a full service including food and equipment (excluding personal equipment)
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described in the trip notes

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for trek staff
- Airport transfers (other than for the group preferred flights)
- Some meals as per the Meal Plan
- Transfers between Buenos Aires Airports
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

On day 1 there will be a single timed group transfer from El Calafate Airport to the group hotel which will be timed to meet the arrival of the recommended group flight. At the end of the trip a single group transfer is provided to coincide with the departure of the recommended group flight. Please note there are a number of airlines arriving and departing from El Calafate and we have no control over schedule changes, so please contact the KE office to discuss flights and transfer times. It is very easy and budget friendly to organise a taxi transfer on arrival as El Calafate is approximately 10 miles from the airport. A taxi will cost around US \$30 - \$40 and is easy to pick up on arrival. KE are also happy to arrange a private transfer for you. Please advise the KE office if you would like us to book transfers and/or any additional hotel nights. Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All meals except 3 dinners and 1 lunch are included in the holiday price.

## Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. 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

During this holiday, the group will spend 3 nights in a tourist hotel (en-suite rooms) in El Calafate. In El Chalten, we use a traditional hosteria with en-suite rooms. In the Torres del Paine National Park, we spend our first night (day 3) in a hotel/lodge on the edge of the national park. Once we start the trek we use a mixture of the mountain refuges and adjacent campsites. Shared bathroom facilities and dining are in the refuges. Each refuge has a small shop and a restaurant and are part of the fantastic trekking culture in Patagonia. In the event of the refuges being fully booked we will camp on the adjacent campsites. They are all in the most incredible locations and our comfortable camps allow us some extra space and privacy. On day 7, we will stay at a wonderfully remote, rustic estancia.

Accommodation is based on twin sharing. If you are a solo traveller, you will be paired up with another solo traveller of the same gender. For the 3 nights in El Calafate, 3 nights in El Chalten, night 2 at Torres del Paine and night 7 at the Estancia single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If camping, single tents are available (single supplement applies) but are 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).

It is possible to book additional hotel nights in El Calafate and Buenos Aires. 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.

## Spending Money

We estimate that US\$300-400 should cover all of your expenditures whilst in Chile/Argentina, including the above meals, soft drinks, tips for the trek crew, local tips and airport taxes. If you intend to purchase expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly. ATM's are available at airports and in cities but are limited in smaller towns and should not be relied on. We recommend bringing credit cards and cash for purchases and tipping. The local currency in Chile is the Chilean Peso and you can withdraw these at the airport in Santiago. We also bring some cash in US dollars as these are accepted at some shops but they can also be more easily exchanged for local currency.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides and porters. 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. As a rough guide we suggest you allow a total of \$100 for tipping for your crews.

## 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

The internal flights to Patagonia allow one piece of checked baggage of 15kg and one hand luggage of 8kg.

Any items that are not required during your trek can be left in your main kitbag at the hotel in Torres del Paine, arranged with your tour leader.

Any items that you will require on trek will be carried by yourself. We recommend that you carry at least a 40 litre rucksack that will contain spare clothes, minimal wash kit and personal items, water proofs and any other items you will require on trek.

If you are camping, rather than staying in the refugios (see accommodation notes), and wish to use your own sleeping bag you will need to carry this yourself and may require a larger rucksack.

## 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.

## Flight payment

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in El Calafate. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Calafate airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements & transfers' section in the trip dossier for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the trip is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.



# General Information

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## 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.

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 sense getting additional exercise before coming on a walking or trekking holiday. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise routine. Running, cycling and swimming are good for developing aerobic fitness and better stamina. You should gradually increase your exercise leading up to departure, and we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks before departure.

## 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](http://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](http://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

- 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.

## Maps

### Torres del Paine Trekking Map. Zagier y Urruty. 1:80,000

Torres del Paine at 1:80,000 on a waterproof and tear-resistant map from Zagier & Urruty covering the main part of the park and showing trekking trails, routes recommended only with a guide, campsites and refuges, etc. The map covers the main, most visited part of the national park, extending from Lago Dickson and Lago Paine in the north - across the peaks of the Cordillera Paine and the lakes south of it - to Puerto Toro on the northern tip of the Seno Ultima Esperanza, the arrival point by boat from Puerto Natales.

## 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

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## 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 baggage to a minimum. The maximum weight of your trek-bag should be 15kg.

### You should bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Gaiters
- Trainers or similar for travelling and camp use
- Socks
- Underwear
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Long johns (thermal underwear)
- Thermal base-layer shirts
- Casual shirts and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm jacket (down)
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses

- Daypack 30 litre
- Sleeping bag liner or sheet sleeping bag
- Selection of dry bags
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-fillable water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Small towel
- Lightweight thermal gloves
- Warm and waterproof outer gloves or mittens
- Washbag and toiletries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Antibacterial handwash

Basic First Aid Kit, including the following: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment

- (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent (DEET), and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea.

◆ **The following items are optional:**

- Spare laces
- Travel clothes
- Trekking poles
- 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)

## Notes:

Sleeping bags or suitable bedding, together with sleeping mattresses are provided at the refuges. You should bring a sheet sleeping bag or liner.

## 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 in El Calafate. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Calafate airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements & transfers' for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

For Flight Inclusive Package information please select 'With Flights' above the dates and prices table.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE package services include international flights from London (Heathrow) to Buenos Aires, an overnight stop in Buenos Aires on both the outbound and inbound legs, and return internal flights onto El Calafate. 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).

The return flight will depart from 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

Combining the very best of the Los Glaciers and Torres del Paine National Parks in Argentina and Chile, this itinerary is for those who want to immerse themselves into the incredible glacial landscape of Patagonia. With a handpicked selection of estancias, refugios and campsites, all picked for their incredibly stunning location, we trek in comfort and style. 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