

Patagonia Adventure



Duration: 11 days

This challenging trek in Patagonia is sure to make you feel like a pioneer!

We travel to Aysen, the most sparsely populated region of Patagonia, dominated by spectacular icefields, snow-capped peaks, and impossibly-blue glacial lakes. Our adventure starts on the shores of Chile's largest lake, Lago General Carrera, and takes us on remote gaucho trails between lakes and glaciers, climbing to passes with spectacular views of Patagonia's highest peaks, and getting up close to rushing rivers and tranquil lakes, while on the shores of Lake Leones we witness icebergs breaking away and bobbing on the water.

To appreciate the sheer force of nature, look no further than this panorama-packed gem of a trek in remote Patagonia.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London for Santiago

Day 2: Arrive Santiago

We arrive in Santiago and transfer to our central hotel in this cosmopolitan city. You're free to meet again for dinner, or do your own thing. Time to explore independently depends on flight schedules.

(Dinner not included)

Day 3: Santiago – Balmaceda – Lago General Carrera

We transfer back to the airport, and take an internal flight south to Balmaceda in Northern Patagonia (approx 2.5

hours). As we make our way to Lago General Carrera, we should have time to break our journey at the stunning water-sculpted rock formations of the Marble Cathedral, a beautiful series of caverns eroded over thousands of years by the glacial waters of the lake. After enjoying the incredible shapes, and their photogenic reflections in the blue waters, we continue our journey, through landscapes that whet our appetite for the days to come. We finally arrive at our wonderful purpose-built lodge overlooking Lago General Carrera, and relax! Night lodge.

Drive approx. 5 hours

Day 4: Veranada Warm-up Hike

Today's trek is a superb leg-stretcher and serves as a great way to recover from the travelling and orientating ourselves with our new surroundings. We set off from the lodge and walk steadily uphill through forest towards the Veranada, a small mountain that dominates the lake and provides wonderful panoramic views over the region. We can see across to the Northern Patagonia Icecap, including the Leones Glacier which we will see in close-up later this week; Mount San Valentin (4058m), Patagonia's highest peak, looms in the distance. On the way we look out for the sea fossils, which testify to the origins of the Andes mountain range. Returning to the lodge the same way, we relax for the rest of the day. Night lodge.

Trek approx. 3-4 hours

Day 5: Lago General Carrera – Estancia Meliquina

A short transfer takes us to our trek start point, where we set off for Lago Meliquina. The walking is relatively gentle at start, but soon climbs steadily to a pass, where we get our first glimpse of the lake. Its deep blue waters contrast richly with the hanging glaciers of the mountains surrounding it. We then descend into this remote, adventurous and beautiful landscape, where the remote paths are trodden mainly by local gauchos. We follow the spectacular Leones Valley into camp, part of a gaucho estancia (ranch). Night camp.

Trek approx. 7-8 hours

Day 6: Estancia Meliquina – Lago Leones

A stunning route awaits us today, on rough paths undulating deeper into the mountains, to the stunning situated Lago Leones. This lake is considerably larger than Meliquina, its waters a stunning blue-green from the dramatic glacier that carves its way down from the ice cap, splitting into three rivers of ice that spill into the lake. After soaking up this impossibly scenic setting, we head to our camp, where if time permits, we will explore our local surroundings. Night camp.

Trek approx. 6-7 hours

Day 7: Leones Glacier & Lago Fiero

An easier morning, as we cross the lake by boat for a close-up look at the Leones glacier, hopefully witnessing the impressive sights and sounds as chunks of ice are calved into the waters of the lake. It's an unforgettable experience. After lunch back at camp, we enjoy an afternoon trek through Rio Fiero valley to Lago Fiero, where

there are wonderful views of ice bergs floating on the glacier lake; after plenty of time to savour the views we head back to camp. Night camp.

Trek approx. 4-5 hours

Day 8: Punta Camello Hike

The scenery has been incredible so far, but today's final hike ramps it up even further! Consequently, we have two options for trekking today, one of which is especially demanding and weather conditions can make it unfeasible; with more demanding and exposed terrain, individual ability is also a factor and the group may split. This tougher route is a very challenging day on foot, with a height gain of almost 1000m, as we climb up through the forests of the valley, out of the treeline and into the stark world of the glaciers. Punta Camello (1320m) is our small summit, dominated by the world of ice surrounding it, and we are treated to unparalleled panoramic views of the vast icefield, mighty glaciers and jagged mountain peaks including Mount San Valentin. The alternative option takes us up to the glaciers beside Lago Leones, before we set out to explore the valley leading to Lago Cachorro, a narrow jewel of a lake snaking between the mountains. Night camp.

Trek approx. 7-10 hours

Day 9: Lago Leones – Lago General Carrera

We leave camp behind and walk out of the Leones valley to meet our waiting vehicles. Back at the lodge, the hot tub and sauna will make short work of any aching muscles! After time relaxing, we enjoy dinner looking out over the views for our last evening in Patagonia. Night lodge

Trek approx. 3-4 hrs; Drive approx 3 hours

Day 10: Lago General Carrera – Balmaceda – Santiago; flight departs

Leaving the lodge behind, we head to the airport at Balmaceda, for the flight to Santiago. Once in Santiago we connect onto our international flight home.

(Dinner not included if not in-flight)

Drive approx. 5 hours

Day 11: Arrive UK

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Flights from London to Balmaceda via Santiago
- All transfers as part of the itinerary
- All meals except where specified
- Accommodation & group camping equipment (twin share)
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)

- Local support and back-up equipment

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Personal spending money, souvenirs, drinks and tips for local crew
- Sleeping bag & sleeping mat
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- A contribution to airline taxes of £250.00
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your

group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

When trekking we camp in two-man expedition-style tents (ie sleeping-room only!) Campsites are generally quiet, remote and quite basic; expect the water to be invigoratingly cold! The views are wonderful everywhere. Our lodge at the

start and end of trip is very comfortable and hospitable with great facilities.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis, usually twin-share. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that both people complete the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

Sustainable Travel

We are committed to an ethos of responsible travel here at Discover Adventure; this means sustainable tourism, ethical

travel, community engagement, cultural respect, wildlife protection, fair trade practices, carbon footprint reduction and more. We have been on a 30-year journey with this as one of our core principles, and it continues to evolve; you can keep up to date with what we are up to and what all of this translates into on a DA trip [here](#).

From 2024, we will offset our entire carbon footprint, including the flights, via a carbon credit scheme ([see more here](#)).

We must do all we can to be on the right side of history. Our offsetting brings peace of mind to many of our customers, but we think it is essential that our customers are aware of their impact; with this in mind, we encourage our participants to donate to World Land Trust's Buy an Acre project when they book an adventure.

Group Dynamic

Our brilliant group dynamic is fundamental to us. We have become synonymous with it over our 30 years of adventure: the supportive nature and group camaraderie are always listed as one of the trip highlights in our feedback. You'll meet people of widely varying backgrounds, motivations and experiences. Under these unique circumstances, you are more likely to open up about your story and form lifelong friendships. You'll likely find something that resonates with everyone in the group. This is a unique way of travelling, after all, and that's what brings you all together.

We have travellers from 18 – 80 across all of our challenges, with the average age of our participants being in the mid-40s.

Inclusive Travel

Over the years, people of all abilities have achieved personal goals on our adventures that they may have previously assumed were out of their reach.

We must be aware of any circumstances that may affect your ability to take on the trip, whether you have concerns about fitness, health conditions or disability. This way, we can ensure we are providing the best advice and support. You will be asked to sign a medical declaration upon booking. Whilst we will always try our best for you, by the nature of adventure, not all of our challenges are accessible, and we are not an operator specifically offering adapted adventures. If you would like to have a confidential chat with the team about anything before booking, please give us a call or an email; we will be more than happy to help.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cultural Differences

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for!

We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow participants and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).



Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 27 Jul 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.