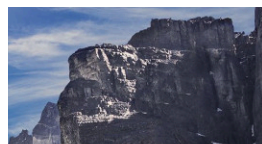


Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust Patagonia Adventure



Duration: 10 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: Santiago – Balmaceda – Lago General Carrera

We arrive in Santiago and take an internal flight south to Balmaceda in Northern Patagonia (approx 2.5 hours). We then drive the Carretera Austral, Patagonia's well-known long-distance road, 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 3: 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 4: 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 5: 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 6: 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 7: 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 8: Lago Leones – Lago General Carrera

We leave camp behind and walk out of the Leones valley to meet our waiting vehicles. 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 to the lodge, where 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 9: Lago General Carrera – Balmaceda – Santiago; flight departs

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

(Dinner not included if not in-flight)

Drive approx. 5 hours

Day 10: Arrive UK

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Havana
- Hotel accommodation (twin share), one night Eco-lodge in dorm-style rooms.
- Bike Hire
- All meals except as detailed in itinerary
- Discover Adventure leader
- Doctor - local Doctor provided,
- UK Doctor provided upon reaching 15 participants
- Local guides, cooks, drivers etc
- Fuel supplements

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Visa
- Meals as detailed in itinerary
- Alcoholic drinks
- Personal travel insurance (to cover personal injury, cancellation/curtailment, lost items etc)
- Cycle Helmet

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](#)



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 19 Jan 2021, and the challenge is subject to change.