Tour Code
XPZ

ADVENTURESABROAD

PATAGONIAN EXPLORER

with Iguazu Falls Extension

18 days

Created on: 29 Mar, 2024

Day 1 Arrival in Buenos Aires

Arrival in Buenos Aires.

Nearly 40% of the country's 33 million citizens live in Gran Buenos Aires (Greater Buenos Aires), which at first makes the city almost as imposing as New York or London. However, after a brief orientation you will find that the compact city centre is accessible and easily explored on foot, by bus, taxi and underground.

NOTE: This trip has been upgraded from a LEVEL 3 to a LEVEL 4 physicality since the printing of our general catalogue. For further information on our rating system, please go to www.adventuresabroad.travel. Your time in Buenos Aires will be managed by a local agent. You will meet your mountain guide and camp staff upon arrival in Patagonia.

** Please note that this tour is an exception to our general policies pertaining to gratuities, which are NOT included for this tour. You should put aside USD 50-60 per person for tips for local guides, camp staff, porters, and restaurant staff.

Overnight in Buenos Aires.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Buenos Aires - Iguazu Falls

This morning we transfer to the airport for our two hour flight to Iguazu Falls.* After transferring to our hotel we have time to relax and have lunch. This afternoon we have a guided tour of the falls on the Argentine side.

Here we are at the confluence of the River Iguazu and the deep flowing Parana. This place is known as the "Hito de las Tres Fronteras" because at this point Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay converge. The national park here is home to more than 21,000 plant species and 400 bird species. The waterfalls disgorge 1700 m^3 (1,853 cubic yards) of water per second from a height of 70 m (230 feet) in 275 different falls, most of which are in Argentina. On the frontier with Brazil there is a gully--La Garganta del Diablo (The Devil's Throat) which is 150 m (490 feet) wide and 700 m (2,290 feet) long.

* PLEASE NOTE: You will be escorted by a local guide for the Iguazu portion of your tour.

Overnight at Iguazu Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Iguazu Falls - Buenos Aires

You have a half day free for you to wander the paths which go along the upper and lower parts of the falls and the paths which go along the river from the observation point of the Bosetti falls to the quay. The plunging falls throw a fine drizzle up to 30 m (98 feet) into the air, weaving countless rainbows in the sun. Be sure to take rain-proof clothing. The United Nations has declared Iguazu Falls a protected area of worldwide importance.

You will need to be back in the hotel this afternoon to be ready for your transfer to the airport; please verify the check-out time from your hotel reception desk.

Later this afternoon we fly to Buenos Aires and transfer to our hotel.

Overnight in Buenos Aires.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Buenos Aires - El Calafate

Early this morning you fly south to El Calafate, a resort town on Lake Argentino situated at the entrance to the Glacier National Park. You are met on arrival and transfer to town to check in at the hostel. At 7 pm the group meets in the lobby of our hotel to meet your guide, discuss details of your program and enjoy your welcome dinner together with your fellow travellers.

Lodging in a hostel room with shared bathroom.

NOTE: Ever-changing air schedules may dictate an afternoon vs a morning flight to Calafate. In the event that it is an afternoon flight, we may accomplish our Buenos Aires sightseeing tour this morning instead of at the end of our trip.

Overnight in El Calafate. Hostel accommodation.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 El Calafate - El Chalten - Laguna Capri

Alter breakfast we take our bus for the 220 km (137 mi) drive to El Chalten, a small and picturesque village at the foot of Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre massif. We make a stop half way to enjoy local pastries and hot coffee. We carry in our packs only the necessary items for this 3 nights and 4 days in which we'll overnight in our Full Camps inside the National Park (the camp is already set up for you. Excess baggage is stored in Chalten).

We hike up a gentle slope on Fitz Roy trail to gain height over the River de las Vueltas up to the first viewpoints over Fitz Roy massif. Our hike to Laguna Capri will take us no more than 2 hours and a half, on a clear and easy trail. Once at our Laguna Capri Full Camp, we leave our things in our tent and enjoy an afternoon walk to the sightseeing points around the lagoon.

Full Camps are pitched early in the season so we find the camp ready upon arrival. It offers comfortable 3 people-sized "igloo" tents (2 hikers each), with mattress pads and sleeping bags. A personal cotton sheet liner is provided for the sleeping bag. The camp also features a spacious dining tent, a kitchen tent, tables, benches or chairs and a full set of table service and kitchenware. The sanitary services are latrine-type.

NOTE: All walks on this programme are at lower altitudes (below 1200m / 3,960 feet) and will not negatively affect reasonably fit hikers. Our itinerary is flexible to accommodate group desires, abilities, and weather conditions. Different hikes may be substituted to take advantage of appropriate conditions.

Overnight at Laguna Capri Full Camp.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6 Laguna Capri - Laguna de los Tres - Laguna Capri

This is the best close-up view of the Fitz Roy group than one can have, a 6-8 hour round trip from Capri Camp. The first 2 hours are mainly flat, through forest and open glade and bog areas (with diverse bird life) to Fitz Roy base camp. From here it is a one hour / 400 m (1,320 foot) climb to the lagoon on a steep trail. This walk is one of the highlights in the National Park Los Glaciares; the views of Cerro Poincenot, Monte Fitz Roy and the other peaks surrounding these are superb. Fitz Roy is considered the "King of Patagonia" and one of the three most beautiful mountains on Earth (together with Alpamayo in Peru and K2 in the Karakoram). Elevations reached on this day are the second highest on the tour, approx 1100 m / 3,630 feet. Be prepared with layers today as the elevation change means considerable temperature ranges can be encountered.

We return to camp with time to read and relax lakeside before dinner.

Overnight at Laguna Capri Camp.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 7 Laguna Capri - Laguna Torre

This morning we hike down to Rio (River) Fitz Roy and follow it to glacier-fed Laguna Torre at 656 m (2,164 feet) at the base of Cerro Torre, one of the most difficult mountains in the world to climb because of its overhanging mushroom icecap. With some luck it will be clear; the Cerro Torre spire is truly dramatic, featuring a 1500 m (4,950 ft) high vertical wall looming high above Glaciar Torre. Walking time 3 to 4 hs.

Overnight at Cerro Torre Full Camp.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8 Laguna Torre - El Chalten

This morning we visit Laguna Torre again to reach the old Maestri basecamp, located in a high site up along the north morraine of the lagoon.

For keen hikers, we offer an optional excursion, the so called "Holiday on Ice" (approx additional cost, 100 USD per person, payable locally).* The approach to the glacier involves an exciting river crossing by rope and pulley, and then a STRENUOUS, very steep walk up the valley's lateral moraine and a steep descent onto the glacier itself. Here we don our crampons (provided) and scramble over the contorted and broken surface of the glacier. While we break for lunch, our expert mountain guide will rig up a rope with which we can test our ice climbing skills (harness and ice axes provided).

Late in the afternoon we walk back to Chalten along Fitz Roy River valley. Total estimated time of the standard day: 4 to 5 hs. If you go on the "Holiday on Ice", it is 7 hours plus the trail back to Chalten which is 2 and a half hours more.

* The Holiday on Ice option may be suspended on short notice due to safety conditions on the glacier which change constantly.

Overnight in El Chalten. Hostel room with shared bathroom.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9 El Chalten - El Calafate

The morning is yours to visit the picturesque village or to make optional excursions, such as Lago del Desierto (in spite of its name, its a beautiful, beech forest surrounded lake, with hanging glaciers in its west side), or to take in the very interesting information at the National Park Visitor Centre.

In the afternoon we take our bus to our next destination, El Calafate, gateway for the glaciers area of the Park.

Overnight in Calafate. Hosteria El Calafate (shared bathrooms).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 El Calafate - Perito Moreno Glacier - El Calafate

Today's bus excursion takes us from the shores of Lake Argentino and across the lowlands to the sub-Antarctic forest which marks the gateway to Parque Nacional Los Glaciares. Its centrepiece is the Perito Moreno Glacier that, because of unusually favourable local conditions, is one of the world's few advancing glaciers. Huge icebergs on the glacier's 60 m (180 foot) high face calve and collapse into the Canal de los Tempanos as it advances about 100 m (300 feet) a year. The roar of the gigantic ice wall as it crashes into the surrounding channel is an unforgettable experience.

We disembark our bus just before the glacier and approach on foot, along the shore of the lake, and then climbing a rise to the main viewing area directly opposite the massive wall of ice. After about 2 hours to explore and view the glacier from the various viewpoints, we return to El Calafate.

Overnight in Calafate. Hosteria El Calafate (shared bathrooms).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 El Calafate, Argentina - Torres del Paine National Park, Chile

We have an early start for a 6 hour drive to our camp in Paine. We drive across the steppe, following parts the legendary Route 40, to get around Sierra de los Baguales, an impressive range in between Calafate and Paine. We cross the Argentinean Chilean border at Cancha Carrera/ Cerro Castillo.

Once in Chile, we will drive to Torres del Paine National Park. The Torres del Paine (Towers of Paine) are spectacular granite pillars which soar almost vertically more than 2000 m (6,000 feet) above the Patagonian landscape. The park in which the high peaks sit may be considered the finest national park in all of South America. With turquoise lakes, roaring waterfalls, rivers and creeks, dense forests and sprawling glaciers this is an unequalled destination.

We'll stop in the Lake Nordenskjold and in Salto Grande viewpoints for short walks.

Lake Pehoe Full Camp mimics the style of Laguna Capri and Cerro Torre Full Camps, but feature good, clean bathrooms and hot water showers, water and electricity in each camping site.

Overnight at Pehoe Full Camp (with sanitary services).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Paine Towers Hike

We drive an hour to get to Estancia Cerro Paine, trailhead for the world famous Paine Towers (Los Torres). We "warm up" hiking a steep one hour slope, to get inside the Ascensio River valley, a narrow "V" shape alpine valley coming from inside the Paine massif. A gentle downhill leads us to Refugio Chileno, a cozy and comfortable mountain lodge that can act as a turnaround point for those not willing to make a full day hike.

We then walk in a gentle slope along the river side and inside beech forest. A final steep climb on moraine and boulders (similar to our hike up to Laguna de los Tres in Argentina) takes us to Las Torres viewpoint: a glacier origin lagoon and the three towers rising vertically 1000 m from the glacier (weather permitting). The famous Torres del Paine (2900 m / 9,400 feet) consist of three gigantic granite monoliths, remains of a great cirque that has been sheared away by the forces of glacial ice.

Total 10 km / 6 miles, 8 hrs round-trip (full hike).

Overnight at Pehoe Full Camp (with sanitary services).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 13 French Valley

Early in the morning a short drive takes us to Port Pudeto to board the catamaran that crosses Lake Pehoe twice a day. We carry only the necessary items for 2 days and 1 night away from our Camping Pehoe Full Camp where the rest of our luggage will stay.

One in the far side of the lake, we leave unnecessary items in our tents and we set out to the French Valley trail. The trail skirts Paine Grande south slopes and lake Skottberg, to take us after 2 hours and a half of continuous ups and downs, to the hanging bridge over the French River.

This breathtaking location is at the foot of both the 2700 m southeast face of Paine Grande (to the west), and the Horns with their characteristic black sedimentary topping. Keen hikers can go on and reach the upper viewpoints of the valley from where you see the whole group of spires that feature the high valley: Hoja (Blade), Mascara (Mask), Espada (Sword), Catedral (Cathedral), Aleta de Tiburon (Shark Fin) and the magnificent Fortaleza (The Fortress).

Walking time for those who reach the upper viewpoints: 8 to 9 hs. For those reaching the lower viewpoints: 5 to 6.

We retrace our steps back to Refugio Pehoe Full Camp.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 14 Lago Grey - Puerto Natales

Lake Grey trail leads from Pehoe Valley across ridges to reach Grey Valley. This magnificent valley flows down 60 km (37 mi) from the Patagonian Icefield, featuring a huge glacier calving into the grey colour lake. Our trail skirts the lake, going up and down the western slopes of Paine Grande, offering some of the most impressive sights of the park. From the high sections of the trail, many different viewpoints allow us to see the south end of the lake where the blue icebergs gather, the mountains rising far in the distance above glaciers Grey and Tyndall. The trail reaches a close up point to the front of the glacier. We come back along the same trail, crossing bogs, shrublands and forest.

Later we take the boat across lake Pehoe and travel by road to Puerto Natales where we spend the night in a lodge. Pto Natales is a picturesque fishing town located on the shores of the Ultima Esperanza (Last Hope) fiord.

Overnight in Puerto Natales (lodge accommodation).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 15 Puerto Natales - Rio Grande

Today we continue south to reach the legendary Magellan Strait and Primera Angostura where we board the ferry to cross the strait. This pass, discovered by Hernando de Magallanes in 1520, was the natural and logical way to all vessels until de Panama Canal opened at the beginning of the XXth century.

Once in Tierra del Fuego (literally, 'Land of Fire,' due to the indigenous people's fires seen by the first white sailors) we re-enter Argentina through Paso San Sebastian. A couple more of hours to reach Estancia Las Hijas, where our full camp will be waiting for us, as well as a lamb cooked in the classical Patagonian barbecue style. A dining salon, toilets and showers are available tonight.

Lodging at Full Camp.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 16 Rio Grande - Tierra Mayor Valley

This morning we learn about ranch activities and how dogs deal with the sheep. By mid morning we continue south to Solar del Bosque, a small and cozy mountain refuge located in the Tierra Mayor Valley, where we'll spend the rest of the day. After lunch we go hiking to Laguna Esmeralda, a beautiful lagoon with Glacier Ojos del Albino in the background. We walk back to our lodge across terrain that has been modified by the beavers, introduced in the area from Canada in the middle of the last century.

Lodging in Mountain Lodge with shared bedrooms and bathrooms.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 17 Ushuaia - Tierra del Fuego National Park - Beagle Channel boat trip

We leave behind the valley and a half an hour drive leads us to Ushuaia, the southernmost city of the world. We leave our luggage in our hostel or hotel (we will not check in as it is still early in the morning) and continue to Tierra del Fuego National Park. This National Park is in the southwest corner of the Argentinean side of the island. The main attraction of the park and the whole island are the mountains that come down to the sea. We make a short hike in this area.

In the afternoon, a boat trip in the Beagle Channel allows us to see the different species of sea birds and mammals that leave in this corner of earth.

Overnight in Ushuaia. Lodging in a hostel room with shared bathroom.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 18 Ushuaia - Buenos Aires - Depart

Today we fly from Ushuaia to Buenos Aires. On arrival we have a tour of Buenos Aires with a local guide.*

With the entire Metropolitan area spanning a gigantic 2915 sq km (1121 sq miles) and having a population of approximately 10 million people -- a third of Argentina's total, there is much to see in order to get a feel of this vibrant city. Buenos Aires began with the Plaza de Mayo, today a strikingly beautiful plaza with tall palm trees, flower gardens and a central monument set off by the surrounding colonial buildings. The most eye-catching structure is the Casa Rosada (the Pink House), the seat of the Argentinean government with a small museum in the basement that contains antiques and objects identified with different Argentinean heroes.

The other historic buildings on the Plaza are the Cabildo (the Town Council) which has been on this site since the founding of the city in 1580 and the Metropolitan Cathedral completed in 1827. Browsing amongst these buildings and exploring the lively streets that lead off from the plaza will occupy the morning hours with the afternoon free to visit the barrio (district) of La Boca on the southern part of Buenos Aires. The barrio is famous for sheet-iron houses, some built from material taken from the interiors of abandoned ships now painted in bright colours and for its history as a residential area for Genoese sailors and dock workers in the 19th century.

* NOTE: Ever-changing flight schedules may dictate that we achieve this sightseeing during our first visit to Buenos Aires.

This evening you transfer to the airport for your overnight flight homeward.

BUEN VIAJE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast