



**Argentinian
Explorer**



ARGENTINA TOURS

EL CALAFATE & EL CHALTÉN IN 7 DAYS

An itinerary in El Calafate and El Chaltén where nothing is left to improvisation. We will visit the Perito Moreno Glacier with the option to do a mini-trekking, we sail along the Argentino Lake, we know a Patagonian Estancia, we trek on the Cerro Frías and escape to El Chaltén, trekking capital in Patagonia.

7 DAYS - 6 NIGHTS

- Double Base accommodation with breakfast according to the selected hotel category
- Transfers detailed itinerary
- Regular excursions listed in the itinerary (except optional)
- Air tickets of cabotage
- Bilingual English Spanish Guide
- 24 hour emergency service
- Constant coordination

Day 1 - El Calafate

Reception and transfer from Calafate Airport to the Hotel.

Day 1 - Mini trekking to the Perito Moreno Glacier

To undertake this brief hike we need to cross the Rich Lake and then we arrive to the south east coast after a few minutes of navigation, which is in front of the southern wall of the glacier. Here we disembark and we go to the refuge where we are organized in groups. We begin our short 15 minutes walk going around the lake until we arrive to the glacier. Here we prepare our specialized equipment for trekking on ice. We suggest using hiking boots with thick socks, preferably woolen (it is not possible to use rubber boots because they are too slippery).

The track takes less than two hours to walk at a normal rhythm and we can discover a great variety of types and sizes of crevices, sump holes, small lagoons, and 'seracs' that are great blocks of ice divided by fissures caused by internal movements. We learn about the local flora and wildlife of the place and some other features of the glaciers: for example the continuous and incredible advance of the glacier leaving behind giant pieces of ice. We start our return through an Andean Magellan Forest covered in plants and typical trees of the southern Patagonia.

Note: This tour is available nearly all year round except for June and July. The people suitable for this expedition are those between 10 and 65 years old approximately. It all depends upon the physical condition of the person. It is forbidden for pregnant women, people with illnesses related to heart, movement or coordination. We do not recommend this tour for overweight people. Smoking is not allowed throughout the programme.

Day 2 - Navigation across the Argentino Lake

Today a navigation between giant ice structures in Los Glaciares National Park is waiting for us. We firstly travel to Punta Bandera (Flag point) in order to make an early embarkation to start our trip on the Argentino Lake, the biggest and most southern of all the Patagonian lakes in the argentinean region. It covers an area of 1466 kms² and has a depth ranging from 150 to 500 metres.

We begin our navigation by the north branch of the lake, visiting the Spegazzini, Onelli, Bolado and Agassiz Glaciers, these last ones located in the Onelli Bay, moreover we get closer to the Upsala Glacier. This glacier integrates an area surrounded by other glaciers which covers 850 km² and its walls reach until 80 metres high. Its name comes from the University of the same name in Sweden that was the first one in starting a study about the surrounded area, in the twentieth century. On the other hand, the Spegazzini

Glacier is the highest inside the national park at 135 metres and is located on the homonym branch of the Argentino Lake.

We disembark in the Onelli Bay, only if the ice conditions allow us because the large icebergs can block the entrance to the boat and it is always risky for the crew. Onelli leaves us amazed with the presence of an ancient Patagonian forest populated with different species of trees such as ñires, canelos and lengas. We might be lucky if we watch the giant condors that inhabit the Andean Mountain Chain. Meanwhile, we make a walk to a unique place where the confluence of the Agassiz, Bolados and Heim Glaciers into the Onelli Lagoon takes place. In our return we see the front of the Spegazzini Glacier.

Please note: There could be ice falls from the Upsala Glacier that leave giant icebergs which could block the navigation to the Onelli Bay. This natural hazard could make difficult the landing. When this happens the boat crosses the waters of the Ice floe Channel to go on the northern position of the Perito Moreno Glacier.

Day 3 - Mount Frias 4 x 4

From the way to the Perito Moreno Glacier we get to know the Cerro Frias (Frias Mountain) and its environment on the Patagonian Steppes. It is attractive because it is in the middle of the steppe and is not connected to any mountain range and therefore permits some impressive panoramic views of the Torres del Paine, the Fitz Roy Mountain, the cordon of the Crystals, Brazo Rico, Brazo Norte, Lago Argentino, the Magellan Peninsular, amongst other grand attractions that mix the colours of the forests of lengas y ñires, the lakes, the flora and its fauna. Here we have a beef steak barbecue accompanied by vegetables cooked in a mud oven, together with local bread.

Option: trekking with ropes or a 4x4

We make a trek by a well marked trail, through a forest of lengas and ñires and crossing rivers, guided by a map that shows the heights, viewpoints, rest areas and observation points for the flora and native animals and the panoramic landscapes of the Torres del Paine, Fitz Roy and the Lago Argentino amongst others. We take the time to have lunch and afterwards to continue our way until the summit of the Cerro Frias to obtain the most incredible postcard views. We combine the trekking with a traverse of a rope bridge, shifting between two cables that are joined at fixed points but with a certain height difference so that we can slide by gravity. We walk until the initial point at an altitude of 562 metres on the southern slopes of the Cerro Frías.

The trip is fantastic with the views of the Torres del Paine, Centinela Valley, Lago Roca (Red Lake), etc. Once we make the crossing of nearly 470 metres hanging by the cable we arrive at the point of the trail that takes us back to the Estancia. Another option is to travel over the zone in a 4x4. On the journey we cross over a swamp and climb by the lowest part of the Cerro Frías. Following on we have a tremendous view of the environment. We go close to fields where there are cows, guanacos, maras (Patagonian hares) and horses. It takes close to two hours to reach the summit with its magnificent panoramic views and later we make our return to the Estancia for lunch.

Notes for your consideration: This adventure program is recommended for people between the ages of 10 and 60 and we do not advise for those that are overweight (more than 110 kgs) or expectant ladies or those with heart problems. You need to take hiking boots and suitable clothes for the activity.

Day 4 - The Route of the sleepy India or La Leona Petrified Forest

We depart from the city of El Calafate to go to the Huyliche Estancia, climbing the mountains and arriving at the El Calafate Balcony, a panoramic point from which you can see the city, the Argentino Lake and the reliefs that surround it. Depending on the weather it is possible to observe the El Chaltén massif and the Fitz Roy and Torre Mountains. We continue the journey passing some magnificent views such as the ski run.

After visiting the Labyrinth of Stones, a Cretaceous formation of more than 85 million years, we arrive at the highest terrace at some 1200 metres, a natural viewpoint found behind the India Dormida formation, where we have some postcard views of the Perito Moreno Glacier, the Pietrobelli Mountain, the Torres del Paine, the Baguales Cordon and the Fitz Roy and Torre Mountains. We carry on seeing rock formations that have been there for centuries due to the erosion of each area in order to form unique landscapes, moreover, we have the privilege to see the giant condors gliding over the highest mountains. We descend by the gully of the Portezuelo Stream to see the River Centinela Valley. We return to the hotel later in the afternoon.

Note: The lunch with steaks, vegetables and a drink is included. This excursion is available between the months of October and May.

La Leona Petrified Forest

We leave in the morning in order to spend the whole day in the steppes of Patagonian discovering new places and enjoying the free air and adventure. We take the Route 5 to the east and then join the mythical Route 40 along which we have magnificent views of the Argentino Lake, the Santa Cruz River, La Leona and its attractive valley, and having as a back drop the Mountain Range of the Andes and the Fitz Roy Mountain. We stop for a few minutes in the La Leona Hotel, considered an historic site, and then go west, guided by the edge of the Viedma Lake until we get to the slopes of the Los Hornos Mountain.

Close to midday we arrive to the foot of the Los Hornos Mountain where the Route finishes. Here we find a great depression in the land and that is where we can see the petrified tree trunks and begin our trek to explore them. We take some time to have lunch and during this time we can see many petrified tree trunks, some of them up to 1.20 in diameter, that reveal how different the climatic conditions were for millions of years that supported a flora so abundant and great. Here it is possible to also discover some fossil remains of the dinosaurs. This steppe zone has a very dry climate and generally is very warm. After walking the area we make our return to the hotel.

Note: this program is available from October only when the meteorological conditions permit. The walk is of moderate difficulty and for this a good physical condition is required. Children less than 6 years old cannot undertake this activity.

Day 5 - Navigation of the Viedma Lake and Minitrekking to the Viedma Glacier

We leave from the Túnel Bay Port in the northerly direction to El Chaltén, in Los Glaciares National Park, in order to navigate on the Viedma Lake disembarking at the Viedma Glacier and walking to its interiors. The Viedma Lake is some 78 kms in length and is the largest one caused by glacier abrasion and the second largest in the Park (the Upsala Glacier is the largest). It is fed by its glacier of the same name that is in the west.

The Viedma Glacier has a breadth of some 5.000 metres, a height of 50 metres and an area of circa 1.000 kms² and originates from the Continental Patagonian Ice Fields between the Huemul and Campana Mountains taking their ice and tipping it into the lake. Once we board the vessel we go to the south accompanied by the views of the Fitz Roy and Huemul Massifs and the impressive icebergs. In the middle

of the morning we arrive at the Viedma Glacier and we descend in a rocky area to go and see the ice caverns and other glacier formations that are particular to this zone. Here we are given some information about the glaciers and then we continue our trekking to the erosion zone in front of the glacier.

With the help of crampons we ascend in order to start a walk over the icy structures for about 3 hours where we could see crevices and drainage areas. Once we finish the trekking to the interior of the caves we return to the boat to take a trip along the front of the glacier. We have lunch on board (the box lunch is not included) and in the afternoon we return to Túnel Bay.

Day 6 - Trekking to Piedra del Fraile

We leave from the Río Eléctrico Bridge, some 16 kms from El Chaltén. We need to travel to this point in order to start the trekking to the Fraile Stone. It is an easy walk that is almost totally flat. It takes two hours of hiking through ancient forests of nothofagus, between ñires and lengas, and fording streams until we arrive at the Fraile Stone. Here Agostini made a base for his expeditions and we can appreciate the unique image of the north east face of the Fitz Roy Mountain.

Los Troncos Refuge is a good place to camp because it has good facilities, however there is an entrance charge because it is a private camp site. Those that feel like it can hike for another two hours over 5 kilometres to get to the Pollone Glacier. As we follow the banks of the river we arrive soon to the Eléctrico Lake, in presence of the north face of the Fitz Roy and the ice needles of Mermoz and Guillaumet. We then continue until we are affronted by the Pollone and North Fitz Roy Glaciers.

Day 7 - Return to Buenos Aires

Breakfast in the hotel. Transfer of the hotel to the Airport of The Calafate to take the flight with destination to Buenos Aires. End of our services.

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