



Argentinian Explorer



PATAGONIAN CONTINENTAL ICE

The trekking of the Continental Ice Fields is the most intense and impassioned of all the Patagonian walk programs, it is possible to appreciate the Fitz Roy Mountain together with the Torre Mountain, Cordon Moreno, Glacier Base, and the Marconi Pass together with the Laguna de los Toros and the Circo de los Altares, the doorway to the Continental Ice Fields. Our advice is to have had a minimum experience in camping and have good physical fitness. This is the best and most complete crossing of Patagonia.



This is the most hallucinating and magnificent ice trekking expedition in southern Patagonian. The great goal is to get to its entrance, the famous Circo de los Altares, walking over its ice fields until the Paso del Viento (Wind Pass).

Continental Patagonian Ice Fields is a unique expedition and considered the most important of all the southern Patagonian region. It is the trekking most hallucinating, entering the Continental ice fields by the Marconi Glacier. It passes by the west faces of the Fitz Roy and Torre Mountains and the east of the Moreno Cordon, delighting in this dreamy place, the Circo de los Altares. There are four nights planned in expedition camps in the glacier zone without the requirement of experience in the use of crampons or snow shoes but it is imperative to have a good level of fitness and health.

This area was well walked by the Italian padre Agostini who crossed the Río Eléctrico Valley and baptized various mountains such as in the case of Pier Giorgio Mountain. To get to the Circo de los Altares, the entrance door to the ice fields, is a hard and difficult trek. The best time to attempt this trek is between the months of December and February, when the climatic conditions are more benign. In the winter it is possible to make this walk but the climate is much colder, although it is more stable.

The trekking starts at an altitude of 450 metres, following the river bed through the Río Eléctrico Valley, always in the western direction. It goes through a forest of Lengas before arriving at the Piedra (Stone) del Fraile after two hours of going and the altitude rises to above 500 metres. We leave the forest and the vegetation to enter into a rocky zone. Here the trail goes along the edge of the Río Eléctrico. We cross the River Pollone, which is a tributary of the River Eléctrico, arriving in the third hour walking by some beautiful places. We reach La Playita, which is at 600 metres. We go in search of the entrance to the Southern Ice Fields and ascend to more than 1,500 metres in the second day of trekking. When we arrive at the Marconi Glacier we need to start using our snow shoes in order to advance.

The objective is to enter to the Marconi Pass, the natural access to the Southern Continental Ice Fields. To do this we have to tackle some crevices that are in the middle of the trail. Once we enter we begin the days of walking on the southern ice fields. We have 24 kms to walk on the ice at a good rhythm. To the east of our track we have the backdrop of the Marconi Cordon. After 12 kms we enter to the Circo de los Altares and can admire the little seen western granite rocky faces of the mountains of Torre, Egger, Standhart, Bifida, Cuatro Dedos and Fitz Roy etc. Here we reach an altitude of 1,350 metres. We follow the descending way to the south and meet various crevices close to the Viedma Glacier.

We need to evade the crevices and reach the lateral moraines that the glacier leaves. We arrive to 1,100 metres at the Laguna Los Esquies. We then start ascending again to get to the Paso del Viento before descending by the Valle del Río Túnel. The track is very well signaled in the Glacier National Park and we descend by zig sagging down the mountain. After walking for an hour we arrive to the Río Túnel Inferior Glacier. We cross this without the necessity of roping together because there are no crevices. The trail continues zigzagging lower until we arrive at the hanging ropes that we need to help us cross the Río Túnel. Immediately we bump into the Laguna Toro at some 650 metres. Following the path down we meet again the legendary forest and then this leads us back to the pretty town of El Chaltén.

Day 1 - El Calafate

Reception at the Ushuaia Airport. We take advantage of the first day to get to know El Calafate and begin to acclimatise for this great adventure to the continental ice fields.

- » Lodging: Hostel double or triple room with private bathroom
- » Meals we provide: Dinner
- » From / To: Airport Calafate / El Calafate

Day 2 - Visit to the Perito Moreno Glacier and navigating close to its walls

After breakfast we go until the Magellan Peninsula to arrive at the Perito Moreno Glacier. Here we undertake a short trekking gazing from the Canal de los Témpanos (Iceberg Canal) and enjoying magnificent views before having a talk by a glacier expert and then going along the walkways and taking some time watching, with astonishment, the falls of blocks of ice from the front of the glacier. To complete our program we go in a boat to navigate close to the walls of the glacier. We return to El Calafate during the afternoon.

- » Lodging: Hostel double or single room with private bathroom
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast
- » From / To: El Calafate /National Park The Glaciers / El Calafate

- » Duration: 5 hours
- » Difficulty: Mild

Day 3 - Journey to the National Glacier Park

After breakfast we travel 220 kms across the wild Patagonian Plains to El Chaltén, a small, beautiful and dreamy mountainside town at the foot of the Fitz Roy Mountain. Along the way we stop at a pretty farm to eat some delicious artisanal cakes and here we can enjoy the majestic views of the Lake Viedma. El Chaltén, on the edge of the National Glacier Park and on the banks of the Río de las Vueltas, is a place where you can breathe the mystique air of mountaineering together with its preparations and the personal challenges that affront the mountain lovers and is the veritable capital of glacier trekking. It also offers rafting.

- » Lodging: Hostel room with shared bathroom
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast
- » From / To: El Calafate / El Chalten

Day 4 - The start of our crossing to arrive at the base of the Marconi Glacier

After breakfast and during the morning we start our designated trek to the Continental Ice Fields, leaving from El Chaltén with the compass showing west and guided by the bed of the Río Eléctrico. The beginning of the walk takes us through the legendary forest of lengas which we leave together with all types of vegetation to enter a rocky zone that continues to the base of the Marconi Glacier that we find at an altitude of close to 300 metres.

- » Lodging: Expedition Camp
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast, box-lunch and dinner
- » From / To: El Chaltén / Glacier Marconi
- » Duration: 4 hours
- » Difficulty: Mild / Drop: 300m

Day 5 - Trekking by the Marconi Glacier until the arrival at Paso Homónimo

We wake up at the camp site and breakfast well to prepare us for the day's walk, which we are looking forward to, over the Marconi Glacier with the object of reaching the Marconi Pass that we find at an altitude of some 1,500 metres. For this trekking we need to use crampons and depending upon the conditions we may have to rope together and use our snow shoes. The trekking goes until the confluence with the Pier Giorgio valley. After a steep climb we arrive at the beginnings of the Continental Ice, close to the Paso de los Cinco Glaciares (Five Glacier Pass).

The interior views of the ice are magnificent together with the mountain cordon that borders this entire zone.

We follow the way over the Marconi Glacier until the confluence with the Pier Giorgio Valley where there is then a marked change in the slope that leaves us in the first part of the Continental Ice Fields and the Paso de los Cinco Glaciares. We have an impressive panoramic view to the interior of the Continental Ice and the snow covered mountains that border the area.

- » Lodging: Expedition Camp
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast, box-lunch and dinner
- » From / To: Glacier Marconi /In to Continental Patagonian Ice Fields
- » Duration: 8 hours
- » Difficulty: Intenso / Drop: 800m

Day 6 - The arrival to the Circo de los Altares

After our habitual breakfast in the expedition camp and two days of intensive trekking we begin the real goal of the program: the trekking over the Continental Ice Fields. We leave the entrance to the Ice Fields with the proposed objective of reaching the Circo de los Altares, that is at the base of the historical western face of the Torre Mountain. The way that we take is to the west of the Marconi Cordon, enjoying some very inviting views of the Moreno Cordon and the walls of the Marconi Cordon with its classical snow mushrooms. Due to the flatness of this stage of trekking we need to use snow shoes for this crossing.

- » Lodging: Expedition Camp
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast, box-lunch and dinner
- » From / To: In to Continental Patagonian Ice Fields / Circo de los Altares

- » Duration: 6 hours
- » Difficulty: Mild / Drop: No

Day 7 - Circo de los Altares

Breakfast at the camp site. We continue the walk by the Circo de los Altares in the presence of some really unique views of the western sector of the Fitz Roy and Torre Mountains. Finally after the effort of the trekking we find ourselves close to the rocky ice covered walls and, always depending upon whether the climate is in our favour, we can reach them leaving our backpacks behind. It is the goal of all the expeditions to reach this point.

- » Lodging: Expedition Camp
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast, box-lunch and dinner
- » From / To: Circo de los Altares
- » Duration: 6 hours
- » Difficulty: Mild

Day 8 - From the Laguna de los Esquíes arriving to the Paso del Viento

We spend the morning having breakfast in the Expedition Camp and leaving the Circo de los Altares to go to find the Laguna de los Esquíes, a site that is considered the exit of the Continental Ice Fields, which is situated over the lateral moraine of the Viedma Glacier. If the climate is very bad we have the intention of reaching the Paso del Viento Refuge in order to have better protection.

- » Lodging: Expedition Camp
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast, box-lunch and dinner
- » From / To: Circo de los Altares / Laguna de los Esquíes / Paso del Viento
- » Duration: 7 hours
- » Difficulty: Mild to intense

Day 9 - Abandoning the Continental Ice trails and going to the Laguna Toro

We depart early from the Paso del Viento and go to an altitude over 1,500 metres, leaving behind the trails of the Continental Patagonian Ice Fields, accompanied by the marvelous views of the Mariano Moreno cordon, the Grande Mountain and the Huemul Mountain. We begin the descent to reach the Laguna Toro and for this we need to cross high prairies leaving on the way the Túnel Glacier and the Río Homónimo which we have to pass over using hanging ropes in order to get to the camp site.

- » Lodging: Expedition Camp
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast, box-lunch and dinner
- » From / To: Paso del Viento / Laguna del Toro
- » Duration: 7 hours
- » Difficulty: Mild to intense

Day 10 - By the Río Túnel Valley until el Chaltén

We rise in the Expedition Camp of Laguna Toro and continue trekking by the marked tracks of the Río Túnel Valley in the ultimate stage of the Continental Ice Expedition. We climb the slope of the Loma del Pliegue Tumbado to reach the line that divides the Valle del Túnel from the Valle del Río de las Vueltas. We have an ascent followed by the descent through the native forest of lengas and ñires until we arrive at el Chaltén.

- » Lodging: Hostel room with shared bathroom
- » Meals we provide: Breakfast, box-lunch and dinner
- » From / To: Laguna del Toro / El Chaltén
- » Duration: 6 hours
- » Difficulty: Mild

Day 11 to 12 - Provisional days in case the weather forces us to take refuge

We take some provisional days especially to take in account that there could be some adverse weather such as high winds or driving

Expedition Camp			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
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Lodging

Lodging	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
HOSTEL WITH SHARED BATHROOM	X								X
EXPEDITION CAMP		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

General information

Bear in mind.

This trekking is very intensive, at a demanding level, it is fundamental to have a good state of physical fitness and possess a certain level of experience of trekking together with living in tents. You do not have to know how to use crampons or snow shoes because you can be trained in their use during the expedition although previous to the trekking explanations on how to use will be given.

The itinerary is subject to change in its content or suspended.

If the climatic conditions are adverse then we are obliged to take this measure solely to protect the physical integrity of the participants.

Reserve days

There are two days of reserve incorporated in the Southern Ice Fields Expedition in case there are precautionary delays due to the climatic conditions not being appropriate for the walks, especially in respect of high winds or intense rains that may require additional days in the camp sites or refuges.

Porter service

There is a porter service for equipment, such as for tents, food, ropes etc. In the Expedition each person needs to carry their own consigned equipment. Our advice is to take the minimum necessary during the expedition so as to have the least possible weight on the shoulders. The rest of the equipment can be left at el Chaltén.

Recommended gear for the trekking

The following is the suggest equipment and clothing required for the trekking:

- » 50 litre rucksack
- » Synthetic interior garments
- » Long Sleeved T-Shirt and another of cotton
- » Walking trousers
- » Under trousers without feet
- » Polar jumper
- » A pair of leggings and a pair of gloves
- » Two pairs of woolen socks
- » Two pairs of light socks
- » Walking shoes
- » Woolen hat (better woolen than fibre)
- » Sun visor
- » Hand and bath towel
- » Sun glasses
- » Sun cream protector
- » Torch
- » Walking sticks (fundamental)
- » Documents necessary to enter to Chile (Passport etc.)

 CONSULTAR

 RESERVAR

ARGENTINIAN EXPLORER

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