



CHILE

PAINE TOWERS LODGE ADVENTURE

Paine Park, acclaimed as one of "50 Places of a Lifetime" by National Geographic Traveler

DURATION	:	10 days/9 nights	
SEASON	:	November through March	
DEPARTURE	:	Guaranteed with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 12 participants	
TRIP RATING	:	Moderate/Strenuous Walking Adventure, Grade (III) - This active trip includes 6 days of lodge or hostería-based hiking that average 8.5 miles per day at elevations below 2,500' plus scenic overland travel on some dirt roads.	
2012/13 DATES	:	NOV 30 – DEC 09	JAN 18 - 27
			FEB 15 - 24

Also on request any week throughout the season for a minimum of 4 travelers.

INTRODUCTION:

Patagonia . . . the name conjures up images of gauchos riding vast, windswept expanses and recalls the era of the cowboy and westward expansion in the American West. True to this vision, the sparsely populated plains and peaks of southern Chile are scattered with enormous *estancias*, or sheep and cattle ranches, and contain some of the continent's most impressive and dramatic wilderness areas. Torres del Paine National Park, one of the most spectacular destinations in the Western Hemisphere, compares favorably to world-renowned destinations like Yosemite or Glacier National Park in the USA, and should be on every hiker's list! The highlight of this rewarding adventure is 6 exciting days of hiking beneath the park's towering granite walls and icy peaks, considered by many to be South America's best hiking experience. Author William Leitch comments, in his book *South America's National Parks*, "if fate gave you an opportunity to experience one and only one of South America's panoply of national parks, it would have to be Parque Nacional Torres del Paine. It is one of the best scenic walking tours in South America!"

Following an overnight flight to Santiago, we connect south to Punta Arenas where we tour the historic streets of one of the southernmost cities in the world. The next day, we drive through the rolling countryside of southern Patagonia with our expert local guide to the quaint fishing town of Puerto Natales, overlooking Last Hope Sound. We continue north to Paine Park and start with a short hike and wildlife viewing, then continue to our hostería near the Ascencio River. From this base we take a warm-up hike along the banks of Nordenskjold Lake. A nontechnical ascent to the base of the towers provides outstanding, close-up views of the mountain's rock walls and hanging glaciers. Our next highlight is a boat ride and hike along Grey Lake, where we see the snout of 4-mile-wide Grey Glacier and its impressive ice walls. In addition to incredible natural beauty, throughout this trip we observe wildlife such as ñandús, foxes, hares and guanacos, as well as Andean condors, ducks, flamingos, caracaras, ibises, eagles and more! The imposing walls of the Cuernos, or horns, dominate the horizon and tower ahead of us as we walk from Pehoé Lake to the remarkable French Valley, one of the Park's most beautiful areas. We spend the last two nights in Paine in a new hostería, offering superb views of the region and a hike along the secluded Pingo River valley. On our return to Punta Arenas we may have the opportunity to visit a penguin rookery before catching our flight to Santiago and connecting homeward.

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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01 (FRI): HOME/SANTIAGO

We leave home on an overnight flight to Chile's lively capital, Santiago, located at a comfortable 1,800' elevation at the base of the Andes.

DAY 02 (SAT): SANTIAGO/PUNTA ARENAS

Arrive early this morning in **Santiago**. Connect on your own to the 4 hour flight south to **Punta Arenas**. Located on the Strait of Magellan, this is one of Chile's main ports and is considered by many to be the southernmost city in the world. Here we meet our local guide and transfer together to the centrally located **Cabo de Hornos Hotel**. After settling in, enjoy a brief tour of the city, visiting the Salesiano Museum featuring legendary mountaineer priest, Alberto de Agostini and various indigenous groups. In the city's main square, we find a bronze statue of a native Patagonian Indian. A short drive to an overlook offers views of the city and Strait of Magellan. We follow the Costanera Boulevard back to our comfortable hotel and later join the guide for a trip briefing and welcome dinner. (D)

DAY 03 (SUN): PUNTA ARENAS/PAINE NATIONAL PARK

After an early breakfast, we drive northward across the Patagonian expanses to **Puerto Natales**. We may observe local *ovejeros* (herders) and their dogs, directing large herds of sheep and cattle to other pastures. The western slopes of the Andes are lush and green from bountiful rain, making for a scenic drive. After lunch in one of the finest restaurants in Natales, we continue toward **Paine National Park** (whose name, pronounced *pie-knee*, translates as "blue" in the Mapuche Indian language). After passing through a Chilean village near the Argentine border named Cerro Castillo, we get our first views of the Paine massif towering above the plains in the distance. As we draw closer to the deep blue waters of Sarmiento Lake, the impressive granite *Torres*, or Towers are distinguished. The park was established in 1970 and given World Heritage status in 1978. We are greeted by small herds of guanacos, a wild relative of the llama. At the Sarmiento Park Station we can take a short hike, following a trail over the steppe-covered foothills, past small ponds and meadows to the **Laguna Amarga** guard station. Possible wildlife sightings include the buff-necked ibis, red-fox, hare, flamingo, rheas and upland goose. From this point, a short drive takes us to the Cascada Paine for some panoramic views; then, we drive along a dirt road to reach the comfortable **Hotel Las Torres Patagonia**, set beneath the Paine Towers, near the Ascencio River. **Driving distance:** 235 miles or 7.5 hours; **Hiking distance:** 4.5 miles or 2.5 hours; **Hostería elevation:** 650' (B,L,D)

DAY 04 (MON): NORDENSKJOLD LAKE HIKE

Our warm-up route begins with an easy/moderate hike, past a few small lakes including Laguna Inge. We skirt the foot of Mount Almirante Nieto (8,755'), then continue along the base of the Paine peaks, following a rolling trail along the northern shores of turquoise-colored Lake Nordenskjold. We pass through brushy areas, negotiate boggy sections and tackle stream crossings, jumping from boulder to boulder, as we make our way through the foothills up and down to a lookout point where we can get a glimpse of the impressive **Paine Horns**. There are 25 species of mammals recorded in the park including huemul, a type of deer found only in Chile, and puma, both of which are seen on occasion. Following our lunch break we can cool off in the clear waters of the nearby babbling creek, then return to our hotel on the same trail. In December and January, fields of daisies and other wildflowers fill the meadows. Time permitting, this afternoon we might look for flocks of *cachanas*, or Austral parakeets, or simply watch the afternoon light and clouds play across the mountains. Dinner will be served at the **Hotel Las Torres Patagonia**, which features produce grown in their own organic greenhouse. **Hiking distance:** 9 miles or 6.5 hours; **Hostería elevation:** 650' (B,L,D)

DAY 05 (TUE): PAINE TOWERS HIKE

Today we have a demanding, but highly rewarding hike with a 2,600' elevation gain. Those who would rather not participate are welcome to remain in the valley, enjoying short hikes in the immediate vicinity. We take a trail that leads across the **Ascencio River**, then uphill along a steep path paralleling the river's right bank. As we gain altitude, following a lenga and cypress-lined gorge, we have excellent vistas of the Paine River, winding its way through the surrounding countryside below us. We cross a boulder moraine to reach the high cirque where we find the basecamp from which expert climbers from around the world attempt to scale the sheer granite walls of the **Paine Towers**. It is an awe-inspiring experience as we marvel at the scene before us. The impressive granite spires of the near-vertical towers, rocky moraines and hanging glaciers surround a lovely turquoise-colored tarn allowing for superb close-up views and outstanding photo opportunities. After a picnic lunch beneath Torres Norte (8,530'), Central (9,185'), and Sur (9,350'), we descend along the same trail to the comforts of the **Hotel Las Torres Patagonia**, adjacent to one of the only working ranches within the park's limits. After a day of hiking you can retire to the bar or lounge for a drink, or to the spa for a massage. **Hiking distance:** 11.5 miles or 8 hours; **Hostería elevation:** 650' (B,L,D)

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DAY 06 (WED): GREY LAKE

This morning we drive to Laguna Amarga for a brief walk on the lakeshore where we may be able to photograph the Towers reflected on the lake. We continue driving along the scenic dirt road south of the Paine massif and pass by lakes Nordenskjold and Pehoé to cross the Paine River and arrive to the guard station at Lago Grey. We walk along the lakeshore looking for the best views and some small icebergs. At noon we catch the Grey II boat for an hour-long trip around this lovely lake surrounded by peaks. As we get closer to our destination we view the spectacular 4-mile-wide glacier, one of three that originate at the Continental Ice Cap. We may observe the drift of turquoise-colored icebergs, blown to the opposite end of the lake by the unrelenting winds. We disembark at the Refugio Grey and enjoy a picnic lunch in this forested area. In the afternoon we hike to Pehoé Lake, contouring the lower slopes of Cerro Paine Grande (the highest peak in the park at 10,007'). Views of Cerro Zapata (5,020') and several sparkling waterfalls cascading down the mountainsides make this an impressive hike. This area is also excellent for photography and watching for condors, sometimes passing within 100 feet of us as they soar across the ridges. The trail passes a small, secluded lake before reaching a final ridge with fabulous views of Pehoé Lake. We catch the last catamaran at 6:30pm for the picturesque ride to Pudeto. Once at the other side of the lake we visit Salto Grande Falls, formed where Lake Nordenskjold flows into Lake Pehoé. Later, we check-in to the **Hotel Rio Serrano**, a new lodge with a modern design and rustic features, the superb restaurant offers an excellent wine bar. **Hiking distance:** 7 miles or 4 hours; **Hosteria elevation:** 435' (B,L,D)

DAY 07 (THU): PEHOE LAKE/FRENCH VALLEY

Rising early for a full day of activities, we drive through the park to the Pudeto boat docks on Pehoé Lake. At 9:30am, we board the first catamaran for a 20 minute ride across the lake. The vessel is covered, during good weather its nice to stand outside to take in the wonderful views of the impressive peaks above the Caribbean-turquoise waters. A trail then leads us through the rolling foothills at the base of Paine Grande peak. Dotted with scattered scrub forests, in November and December these hillsides are a brilliant red, covered with the blossoms of the firebrush. There are 200 species of plants found in Paine, including calafate bushes and the lovely yellow Lady's Slippers, or *Calceolaria*. We cross the **French River** on a foot bridge to reach the Italiano Camp area and follow a steep trail along the narrow gorge, gaining a total of 1,850' in elevation. Our route takes us through lenga forests on the southeastern slopes of Cerro Paine Grande and crosses a few small creeks. As we gain altitude, we scramble through rocky sections of the mountain's boulder moraines to the first lookout point, located at 2,175'. On a clear day our efforts are well-rewarded, because from this extraordinarily beautiful cirque we have fantastic views of the high peaks all around. The granite walls of the Paine Horns (8,530'), as well as the Máscara (7,545') and Espada spires (8,205') directly to the east, are especially spectacular. We marvel at the geology of these incredible rock formations as we watch patches of snow break loose and thunder down Cerro Paine's rock and ice face in the distance. Returning along the same trail to the Pehoé Lake area, we catch the last catamaran at 6:30pm across the lake where our vehicle brings us to the **Hotel Rio Serrano**. **Hiking distance:** 11 miles or 8 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 08 (FRI): PAINE NATIONAL PARK/PUERTO NATALES

In the morning we drive to a western and more isolated section of the Park to hike along the Pingo River valley. This is a gentle and well-marked forested trail that gives us different scenery and terrain. It is home to the huemul, grey fox and other wildlife. With 105 species of birds in the park, birdwatchers have an opportunity to see the grebe, coot, upland goose, torrent duck, and oyster catcher among others. After a picnic lunch we drive back to the Park's Administration Center for an overview of the region and the geological forces that created the dramatic Paine formations. From this point it is a 2-hour drive following the new dirt road directly to **Puerto Natales**, enjoying some final views of Lago del Toro lake, the horns and towers. Small herds of guanaco roam freely in this area providing nice photo ops with their young, or *chulengos*. We drive back across the Patagonian steppe and stop to stretch our legs with a short visit to the Milodón Cave, named for the mythic prehistoric mammal thought to have lived here. Continuing to Natales we check-in to the town's finest hotel, the **CostAustralis**. On **Last Hope Sound** across from the hotel, Black-necked swans are often seen paddling at sunset. We join our guide for a congenial gourmet farewell dinner at the hotel. **Hiking distance:** 7 miles or 3.5 hours. **Driving distance:** 72 miles or 3 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 09 (SAT): PUERTO NATALES/SANTIAGO

Departing early, we drive south to the Punta Arenas airport. Time and weather permitting, we may stop en route for a side visit to a small penguin rookery at Otway Sound—one of the few in this part of Chile. There are about a thousand birds at this site which can only be seen January through March. During the early season they are in their burrows incubating eggs. At the airport, we check-in for our flight to **Santiago**. Upon arrival, you walk the short distance on your own to the International Terminal and check-in for the overnight flight back home. **Driving distance:** 150 miles or 4 hours (the Otway side trip adds 30 miles and 1 additional hour driving). (B,L)

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DAY 10 (SUN): SANTIAGO/HOME
Arrive home this morning.

NOTES ON THE ITINERARY: A flexible attitude and good physical condition are required to participate in this trip. Due to the extremely changeable nature of the weather in Patagonia, day-to-day activities are subject to modification at any time. Hiking segments may vary according to group and road/river/trail conditions. Hiking and driving distances and altitudes are approximate, and times indicated are NET, not including lunch breaks, rest stops, time to explore the surroundings, etc. Estimated driving times may vary due to high winds or other weather factors, as well as road conditions. This trip is suitable for physically fit participants accustomed to outdoor activities, minimum age is 12. To coincide with the itinerary indicated above, departures should be from November 11, 2012 up to March 08, 2013. We could operate a similar Paine Towers Lodge Adventure with departures earlier than November 11 or later than March 08, but the itinerary must be slightly modified to accommodate the Pehoé Lake catamaran's seasonal schedule.

Most hikes are optional, so participants with a slower hiking pace may choose to cover fewer miles than more enthusiastic group members. Trails are well-marked, but it is recommended that you have intermediate mountain or wilderness hiking experience and remain in visual contact with the group since there will typically be one guide with the group. In addition to changeable weather, another important factor in Patagonia is the tremendous distances that must be covered. This is a vast region comparable to the combined territory of Texas, California and Montana. There are many unpaved roads and no regular local air service (except for flights into Punta Arenas). We have designed this adventure to minimize the amount of driving, but we still cover 500 miles! The Otway Sound visit adds an extra 30 miles of slow going rough road.

2012 LAND COST: \$4,925 p.p.d. (4-5 participants)
 \$4,625 p.p.d. (6-9 participants)
 \$4,325 p.p.d. (10-12 participants)
 \$ 1,045 Single Supplement

p.p.d.=per person based on double or triple occupancy.
2012 Land Costs are valid for departures through March 2013

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- All **in-country transfers** as scheduled (transfers on different days are additional). Ground transportation in spacious & comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers.
- Boat or Catamaran transportation where applicable.
- Local & return flight reconfirmation, in-country check-in & luggage assistance (airport luggage handler tips included).
- All **accommodations in standard-class (4 star) hotels** as listed (or at similar hotels/ hosterías, the best available in Paine) on a shared basis with private bath. Advanced bookings are recommended if you plan to arrive early or extend your stay. Double beds for couples (primarily king or queen-sized) can be requested in advance, but cannot be guaranteed, as the hotels offer few rooms with double beds.
- Single Supplement provides single room accommodations. Due to the small size of the hosterías at Paine, there is a maximum of 2 singles allowed per group. If you require single accommodations, making reservations well in advance is recommended.
- All **meals** indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast; L=lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request (advance notification required).
- All **guided tours & excursions** (as listed) conducted on a private basis by knowledgeable, English-speaking local guides in each region (includes applicable entrance fees). The boat ride on Paine's Grey Lake & the catamaran ride on Pehoé Lake are operated on a seat-in-boat basis, meaning there will be other travelers aboard, although our group will be privately escorted.
- **First-class Hiking service** including:
 - Experienced, knowledgeable, English-speaking, Andean guide & assistant guide (provided for groups with 8 or more participants).
 - Packed or picnic lunch.
 - First-aid kit.
 - Entrance fees.

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NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, International flights, nor local flights within Chile.
- Chilean airport arrival & departure taxes (approx. \$140 per traveler).
- Two (2) meals at about \$20-30 each per person.
- Tours or other services not listed on the itinerary.
- Alcoholic beverages nor items of a personal nature; such as clothing, equipment, laundry & phone calls.
- Tips to the local staff.
- Expenses incurred in preparing for this program such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets or traveler's insurance, nor additional expenses resulting from flight delays, schedule changes, cancellations, or missed connections.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend that you consider a plan to help protect your trip investment. Travel insurance helps to cover: unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates; weather events or local strikes causing interruption or changes to your itinerary; missed connections; delayed arrival; lost/delayed baggage and medical or evacuation coverage. We provide a plan through Travel Insured International (TII), information and application are sent upon receipt of your deposit (sooner if requested). Policies can be purchased securely online at: www.southwindadventures.com/insurance.html. If you or a family member has a pre-existing medical condition, you will want to purchase the TII policy within 14 days of your deposit to qualify for reimbursement of non-refundable costs if a recurrence of the pre-existing condition forces you to cancel your trip (some restrictions apply). Please call our office or visit our website for more information.

GUIDES: Alejandra Olea – a biologist from Santiago and graduate from the University of Chile, a passionate traveler herself that came to Patagonia as a visitor for the first time and stayed. She has experience as a guidebook editor and loves telling stories about the local culture & traditions. Alejandra has been leading tour groups, hiking, horseback riding and exploring Paine and Patagonia for the past 10 years and has also studied the Estancias in this region. She has also worked aboard natural history cruise ships to Tierra del Fuego guiding land/sea excursions and giving lectures about the flora, fauna, geology & history of this region.

Jorge Nuñez & Martin Castrillo - each with a minimum of 5 years experience leading groups in Patagonia, these native bilingual guides are also among the fine professionals working with our groups.

OPTIONAL TRIP EXTENSIONS: Participants with extra days can extend the trip to visit Chile's other impressive destinations. We recommend a 5 day/4 night excursion to Easter Island, a 4 day/3 night pre-extension to the Lake District or a 4 day/3 night visit to the Atacama Desert. Extensions require a minimum of 2 participants. Call our office for the **2012/13 Summary of Trip Extensions** or view them on our website, click *Trips>Paine Towers Lodge Adventure >Extend Your Trip*.

PATAGONIAN WEATHER: Located at the southern tip of the South American continent, the Patagonia region is a land of capricious weather that includes high winds, snow and rain. The best time of the year for hiking in this area are the months of November through early March. Although temperatures seldom reach extremes (average daytime highs range from 58-72°F according to cloud cover and/or sunshine, with nighttime temperatures ranging between 40-45°F), the weather is extremely changeable, varying from warm sunshine, to drizzle, to rain and/or sleet in a matter of minutes and returning to sunshine just as quickly. Wind is a constant factor, ranging from strong breezes of 15-20 mph to gale forces reaching up to 60 mph on some of the saddles. To ensure comfort, clothing must be readily and quickly adaptable to such changing conditions. A detailed pre-departure packet with a complete packing list as well as cross-cultural, health, and travel information plus maps, a suggested reading list and more will be sent to each participant once a departure is guaranteed to operate.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE: The Land Cost for this trip DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY FLIGHTS. Round-trip **international** air to and from Santiago from US gateway cities is approximately \$800-\$1,100 per person. December 15-January 15 is a peak travel time and higher fares may apply. **Local** in-country flights ARE NOT INCLUDED, budget on approx. \$350-\$450 per person for the local air. International carriers offering non-stop service from US gateways include; **American** (Dallas or Miami), **Delta** (Atlanta) and **LAN** (Miami). **United/Continental** (Houston or Washington-Dulles) offer service via a short connection in Buenos Aires. Upon receipt of your deposit, Southwind will send you recommended air arrangements to match your land itinerary. Airfares are subject to change at any time before tickets

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are issued.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Submit Southwind's Trip Reservation Form along with a \$1,000 per person per trip deposit (payable by check or credit card). The form and deposit can be completed securely online at www.southwindadventures.com by clicking on "Book a Trip" at the top of our homepage. If you prefer, you can print the Trip Reservation Form and mail/fax it to our office with your deposit. You can also call us at 1-800-377-9463 to make payment arrangements (**your deposit will be charged and your reservation confirmed once we receive your Trip Reservation Form**).

Due to the popularity of Patagonia, we recommend making reservations 4 to 6 months in advance. Once your trip is guaranteed to operate, you will receive a comprehensive pre-departure planning packet.

Land Balance: Final payment is due at 90 days by Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express or check. You will receive a trip invoice indicating your balance due. Provided services and space are available, reservations can be accepted up to 30 days before departure.

Cancellation Fees and other policies are outlined under the 2012 Terms & Conditions on Southwind's website (click [Book a Trip](#)>2012 Terms & Conditions).

Save! Early Sign-up Discounts

Sign up 10 months in advance for **10% savings** per person*
Save **4% to 9%** for booking 4 to 9 months in advance respectively
Call **1-800-377-9463** for details, questions or to make a reservation

www.southwindadventures.com

*Discounts are calculated on the lowest published 2012 Land Costs

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