

Walking in Patagonia: from Bariloche to Ushuaia

<https://www.kudutravel.com/tours/patagonia-walking-tour>

16 November – 3 December 2020

With 12,000 years of continuous history, Patagonia still holds a fascination few travellers have encountered. 90% of its vast steppe-like land is in Argentina and the remaining 10% in Chile; this unique territory borders three oceans and is inhabited by barely 2 million people, occupying an area more than four times larger than the United Kingdom.

Over 18 days, Kudu Travel's sixth South American itinerary takes in the vastness of Patagonia. On ten of those days, we have opportunities to walk in Patagonian national parks, both in Argentina and Chile.

From the vibrant Argentine capital of Buenos Aires, we travel 1,000 miles to the heart of the Nahuel Huapi National Park in the Argentine Lake District. After a flight 900 miles further south, we explore the Los Glaciares National Park. With half its 600,000 hectares covered in giant icefields and glaciers flowing off the edge to feed the lakes below, visiting the park is travelling back in time to the Ice Age.

Crossing the border to Chile, we visit the Torres del Paine National Park with its eponymous soaring granite towers; lakes; glaciers and a relatively high concentration of the elusive large predator, the puma. Our last stop is the southernmost city of Ushuaia in the Argentine Tierra del Fuego province.

Itinerary

DAY 1

L, D included

After meeting at Buenos Aires airport in the morning, we have a road transfer (1 hour) to our 5-star central hotel. We walk in the renovated waterfront area and see the iconic Calatrava bridge and the historic Corvette 'Uruguay'. Buenos Aires was founded in the 16th century as Holy Mary of the Fair Winds, the latter part of which is represented by its current name.

DAY 2

B, L, D included

We continue our exploration of Buenos Aires by walking to the Plaza San Martin through the embassy district and visiting the famous Recoleta cemetery, the burial place of numerous Argentine presidents and notables including 'Evita' Peron, before reaching the state-of-the-art Modern Arts Museum (MALBA).

DAY 3

B, L, D included

We take a 2-hour flight from Buenos Aires to Bariloche, the gateway to the Nahuel Huapi National Park in the Argentine Lake District at the foot of the Andes. We stay for two nights in a 4-star hotel on the southern shore of Lake Nahuel Huapi. During our orientation walk, we discover the characteristic Andean-Swiss architectural style, built in the 1940s using cypress and larch wood and locally quarried tufa, with examples such as the lake front Cathedral of Our Lady of Nahuel Huapi and the nearby Centro Civico, the left wing of which houses the informative Patagonia Museum in its impressive complex.

DAY 4

B, L, D included

We walk on trails in the native forest and enjoy views of the lake with its meandering lagoons and the snow-covered peaks of the surrounding mountains rising straight from the water. The gastronomic highlights of Bariloche, a city which grew from a German-Chilean shop opened in 1895, include chocolate, trout, lamb and craft beers.

DAY 5

B, L, D included

A midday flight to El Calafate brings us to Southern Patagonia and the Los Glaciares National Park. The park was established in 1937 to preserve the 47 glaciers within its area and awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 1981. From the airport, we head for El Chaltén in the northern sector of the park. We drive for 3.5 hrs, partly along the scenic National Route 40, which runs through Argentina, parallel the Andes for more than 5,000 km. Approaching El Chaltén, we have views of the Lago Viedma with the Viedma Glacier in the distance and, weather permitting, Cerro Fitz Roy, the iconic 3,405 m mountain named in honour of HMS Beagle's captain, Robert Fitzroy. Our 3-star *hosteria* makes a charming and comfortable base for our three nights' stay.

DAYS 6 & 7

B, L, D included

We spend two days walking on trails in the Los Glaciares National Park. We are rewarded by outstanding alpine scenery with lakes, rugged peaks and glaciers.

DAY 8

B, L, D included

Our destination today is the Perito Moreno Glacier, named after the prominent Argentine explorer, Francisco Moreno. Rare amongst the glaciers around the world, it is considered stable by glaciologists. The glacier is 30 km long, 5 km wide and on average, over 70 m deep. We spend the afternoon accessing different viewpoints on foot using dedicated trails, hoping to witness the glacier calving, the process of ice sheets breaking off the edge of the glacier. We spend the night in a stylish 4-star hotel in El Calafate, a small administrative town on the shore of Lago Argentina.

DAY 9

B, L, D included

We board a catamaran for a scenic three-hour journey into a northern branch of the enormous Lago Argentina. We make a detour into the Upsala Channel to see the terminus of the Upsala Glacier and by lunchtime we are at the remote Estancia Cristina, established in 1914 by an English sheep farming couple, Joseph and Jessie Masters. After settling into our exclusive accommodation, we have an option to stretch our legs on an easy walk to a waterfall (5 km round trip).

DAY 10

B, L, D included

Our programme today starts with a 4WD drive to a viewpoint with spectacular views of the Upsala Glacier, Lago Argentina and the Cerro Norte Peak (2,730 m/9,000 ft). We continue on foot as our walk (13 km/8 miles) descends through a valley of multi-coloured seabed deposits with many fossils.

DAY 11

B, L, D included

Following a leisurely breakfast, we have some free time to enjoy the unique setting and to visit the estancia museum in the old sheep shearing shed, before, perhaps reluctantly, we rejoin civilisation by boat and minibus and return to our stylish 4-star hotel in El Calafate.

DAY 12

B, L, D included

We travel across the border to Chile to the famously scenically beautiful Torres del Paine National Park and settle in our riverfront 4-star hotel for 3 nights.

DAYS 13 & 14

B, L, D included

Using vehicles and ferries, we explore different areas of the national park, a featured part of the End of the World Route. On our walks we look out for guanacos, condors, the ostrich-like rheas and the elusive pumas. This is also a good time for spring wildflowers including an early orchid, *Gavilea Auracana*.

DAY 15

B, L, D included

We return to El Calafate for an afternoon flight to Ushuaia, the capital of the Argentine province of Tierra del Fuego on the shore of the Beagle Channel. Our base for 2 nights will be a modern 4-star hotel in the city centre, with views of the Channel in front and mountains behind.

DAY 16

B, L, D included

We spend the morning walking in the Tierra del Fuego National Park on trails in the native sub Antarctic forest. In the afternoon, we take a 3-hour boat trip on the Beagle Channel looking out for sea lions and sea birds, such as albatross and petrel.

DAY 17

B, L, D included

The Maritime Museum, housed in one of the buildings of the original penal colony established in 1902 and now within Ushuaia's naval base, has displays on the extinct indigenous Yamana and Ona population; the history of the penitentiary and Antarctic explorations. We take an afternoon flight to Buenos Aires and transfer to our original 5-star central hotel. Following our farewell dinner, we may proceed to a *milonga* to watch or even take part in genuine tango dancing.

DAY 18

B included

There is some free time for shopping or individual pursuits before an airport transfer ends our journey.

Activity Level Standard

10 walking days (1 – 5 hours daily). Waterproof boots with good ankle support and robust vibram soles are essential as the terrain is generally rugged. Walking poles are also highly recommended.

This itinerary will be adapted according to group fitness and local weather conditions: the final choice of walks, based on group comfort and security, rests with the tour leader.

Temperatures

November is the beginning of the southern hemisphere summer. Average high/low temperatures are 20°C/4°C in Buenos Aires, 17°C/0°C in Bariloche, 22°C/8°C in el Calafate and 25°C/16°C in Ushuaia.

Trip Price, per person sharing:

£8,223.25 until 15th February 2020

£8,667.75 until 15th August 2020

£8,445.50 until 15th May 2020

£8,890 after 15th August 2020

<https://www.kudutravel.com/faq#discounts>

£1,500 deposit per person

£1,660 double for single supplement

Please note that the single use supplement is imposed by the hotels and not by Kudu Travel. If you are willing to share, but no other suitable guest books on the trip, we regret that the supplement will be payable.

Price Includes

- accommodation for Days 1 through 18, on a twin shared basis
- meals with wine at dinners and restaurant lunches, as listed in the daily notation
- land and water transportation, as described
- 4 scheduled internal flights, as described
- Entrance, sightseeing and National Park fees, except during free periods
- services of specialist local guides and drivers, plus Kudu Travel tour leader
- gratuities for local guides, drivers, hotel and restaurant staff (appreciation for your Kudu tour leader is at your discretion)

Price does not Include

- flights to and from Buenos Aires
- trip cancellation, medical or other insurance
- immunisations, prescriptions or other medical requirements
- passport, visa and health documentation
- personal expenses (laundry, alcohol, other than wine with dinners, free time activities, etc.)
- transport and transfer of excess baggage
- Argentina and Chile departure tax, if any

VALUE FOR MONEY - SO MUCH IS INCLUDED

On Kudu trips, you will only need money for postcards, presents to take home, the odd G & T or an irresistible ice cream. Festival and opera tickets, museum and gallery entrances, National Park fees, all meals (with a very few exceptions specified in individual itineraries), wine with lunch and dinner, access to specialist books carried by the guides, gratuities for porters and hotel and restaurant staff, boat rides, train trips, internal flights, wine tastings, 4WDs with drivers, the services of skilled local guides and trackers etc. are ALL INCLUDED in the cost of your holiday.

We are confident that, like previous very satisfied guests, you will discover that our tours give you excellent value for money.

Tour Leader

Neill van den Berg was born in Hackney to a Scottish mother and Dutch father and has lived in Holland since the age of 6. His 11 years in the Dutch Marines took him to many places and

during the past 7 years as a tour leader, he has travelled on every continent. He regularly guides extended tours to South America, including Patagonia and Peru. In his free time, he enjoys star photography, hiking and ancient history.

Off the beaten track

Please be aware that electricity and water supplies may occasionally be erratic and travel arrangements may be disrupted. Kudu Travel will endeavour to do everything possible to ensure a smooth-running tour, but please be ready with your sense of humour and tolerance when travelling in Patagonia.

Visa and Health Requirements

Visitors from the UK and USA currently require a valid passport, but not a visa, for entry to Chile and Argentina. Please note that US citizens are charged an entry fee for Chile. Tourist Cards are issued on entry and it is important to retain your half until you leave. If you are a national of any other country, please check visa regulations with your nearest Embassies of Chile and Argentina.

At present, there are no specific and/or compulsory health requirements for entry to Chile and Argentina, but you are advised to **consult your doctor at least 6 weeks before you travel** about updating your immunisation against Hepatitis A, polio, tetanus and typhoid, or anything else they may consider advisable. You may also wish to check the advice given to travellers by the Department of Health (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/healthcare-when-travelling-abroad/>) and the FCO (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>).

Insurance

It is essential, and a condition of booking, that you protect yourself with a suitable travel insurance policy as soon as you book a trip. We can arrange comprehensive cover for UK residents. For further details, please see our website or ask our office.

Size of Party

This trip will run with a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 14 guests.