

Backpack the Peaks, Lakes and Glaciers of Aysén, Patagonia

Main Itinerary

Tentative Date March 4-12, 2019



In the often-overlooked northern end of Patagonia lies Aysén, Chile's least-populated region, with only 1.2 humans per square mile. While there aren't many people, it is well blessed with ice. Sandwiched between the Northern and Southern Patagonian Ice Fields (together the world's third-largest source of fresh water), Aysén is the heart of Chilean glacier country. Half of its land is protected in public and private parks (including the newly opened Patagonia Park, created by the late North Face founder Doug Tompkins), and is home to a significant percentage of Chile's 24,133 glaciers, as well as hundreds of large and small glacial lakes, shimmering blue caverns, and steaming temperate rainforests. At its heart are The Marble Caves of General Carrera Lake where waves have sculpted the calcium carbonate rock formations along the shoreline, producing brilliant multicolored swirls which create a dazzling light show as colors shift in the sunlight against the lake water. The nearby Laguna San Rafael National Park encompasses most of the North Patagonian Icefield, and our backpack route reaches well into its wilderness, crossing high passes from lake to lake and valley to valley, sometimes visiting otherwise unreachable glacier fronts by zodiac, and ending with a high panorama toward Cerro San Valentín (4058m)

from Mount Putagonia. Our base for all of these explorations is the luxurious Terra Luna Lodge at the southeastern reach of General Carrera Lake.

Monday March 4, 2019: Balmaceda Airport -Pto Guadal

Reception at Balmaceda airport. Transfer to Puerto Guadal including navigation on Lake General Carrera to see the marble chapel & caves. Lodging at Terra Luna Lodge with full board. (L,D)

Tues March 5, 2019: Day trek out of Terra Luna (3h, +/- 600m). Day of trekking up to the "Veranada's fossil deposits". Breathtaking view over the landscape and the mountains San Valentin (4.058m) and San Lorenzo (3.706m) Lodging at Terra Luna Lodge with full board (CB,L,D).

Weds, March 6, 2019: TERRA LUNA –RIO LEONES-LAGUNAS MELLIZAS (6h, 15kms, + 1000m).

Jet boat transfer to Rio Leones. Trekking begins with the climb to Lagunas Mellizas. Fully supported camp. (CB,L,D)

Thurs, March 7, 2019: LAGUNAS MELLIZAS-VALLE OLVIDADO (8h, 19kms, +100m, -900m).

Trekking follows upwards to reach "La Picada" pass before descending into the "forgotten valley". Fully supported camp. (CB,L,D)

Fri, March 8, 2019: VALLE OLVIDADO-LAKE FIERO-GLACIER FIERO-LAKE LEONES (6h, 15kms, -

100m). We reach Lake Fiero where a zodiac waits to get us to the front of the glacier. Then we trek down to Lake Leones and our fully supported camp.. (CB,L,D)

Sat, March 9, 2019: LAKE LEONES – LEONES GLACIER-LAKE LEONES.

Navigation with a zodiac to reach Glacier Leones. Walk on the glacier. Possible trekking (45mn) to Cachorro Lake where we can enjoy an afternoon of optional guided kayaking in its waters. Back to camp. (Security day.) (CB,L,D)

Sun, March 10, 2019: LEONES-PUTAGONIA (4h, 10kms, +1000m).

We cross by boat Leones Lake to have a look at its glacier. Then we start a long climb (+ 1.000m) amongst rain forest, and then rocky ridges to get to the top of Mount Putagonia (1.320m) from where we can appreciate a 360-degree view on several glaciers, peaks and lakes as well as Mt San Valentin (4.058m). Fully supported camp at the top surrounded by this gorgeous panorama (CB,L,D)

Mon, March 11, 2019: PUTAGONIA-Terra Luna (4h, 10kms, -1000m).

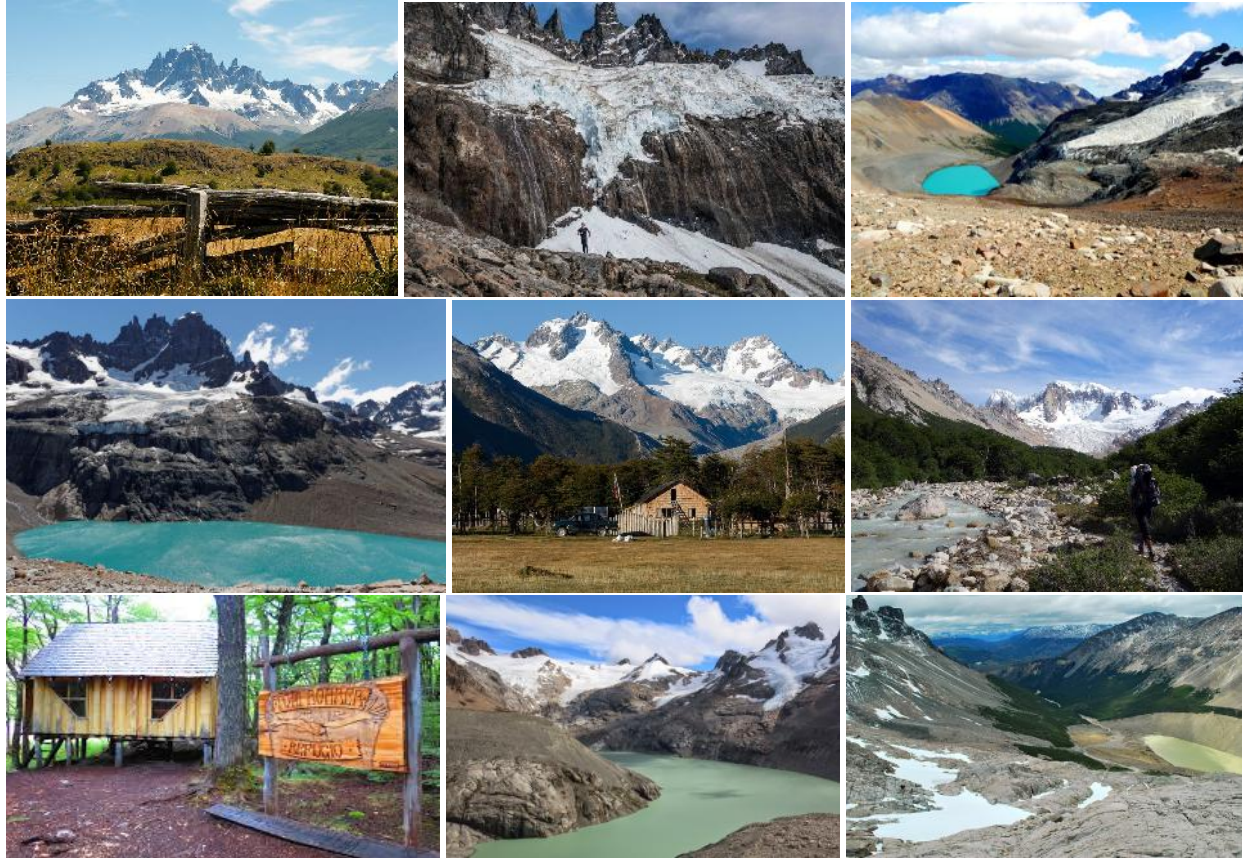
Sunset on the most beautiful mountains surrounding our camp. Walk down to the lake and cross back to first camp before trekking back down the valley and being transferred by jet boat or car to Terra Luna lodge. Lodging at Terra Luna Lodge with full board (CB,L,D)

Tues, March 12, 2019: Terra Luna to Balmaceda airport. Drive back to Balmaceda airport. End of services (CB,L)

Main Itinerary Price Estimate: \$2800

Pre-Trip Extension – Backpack the Cerro Castillo Circuit and San Lorenzo Basecamp

Tentative Date February 23-March 4, 2019



These two colossal mountain massifs of rugged towers and hanging glaciers, Cerro Castillo (2675m) and San Lorenzo (3706m), attract international climbers and adventurous trekkers but in far fewer numbers than the popular parks to the south. Still, the peaks and glaciers are no less spectacular and we'll have them mostly to ourselves! The four-day 62km circuit trek around the formidable Cerro Castillo increasingly attracts solitude-seekers put off by the more crowded backpacking trails in Torres Del Paine further south. The route passes three major glaciers, turquoise lagoons and high alpine passes favored by Chile's endangered huemul deer. Then, our San Lorenzo basecamp route samples the climbers' route to the summit with a hike into the remote Toni Rohrer refugio at 1000m, and dayhikes from there to a high pass at 1900m on the climbers' route, and to a starkly lovely lake in a deep trough ringed by half a dozen glaciers and resounding with icefall.

Fri, February 23, 2019: Balmaceda Airport-Las Horquetas-El Puesto (6km, no gain). Reception at Balmaceda airport. Transfer to Las Horquetas and trek to El Puesto Camp. (L,D)

Sun, February 24, 2019: El Puesto-Peñon camp (16km, 700m gain). Trekking continues to Peñon camp. (CB,L,D)

Mon, February 25, 2019: Peñon camp-Laguna Castillo (12km, 600m gain). Full day trekking to Laguna Castillo camp. (CB,L,D).

Tues, February 26, 2019: Peñon camp-Laguna Castillo-Campamento NZ (9km, 550m gain). Full day trekking to Campamento Neozelandes. (CB,L,D).

Weds, February 27, 2019: Campamento neozelandes- Cerro Castillo – Pto Guadal (19km, 870m descent), Trek down to Cerro Castillo and transfer to Pto Guadal. Lodging at Terra Luna (CB,L,D)

Thurs, February 28, 2019: Terra Luna Lodge-FUNDO SAN LORENZO. Drive to Fundo San lorenzo. Camp. (CB,L,D)

Fri, March 1, 2019: FUNDO SAN LORENZO- LAGUNA TRANQUILO-FUNDO SAN LORENZO (5h, 13km, +/- 300m). Trek up to Laguna Tranquilo and back to Fundo San Lorenzo. 13km, 475m gain/descent (CB,L,D)

Sat, March 2, 2019: FUNDO SAN LORENZO- AGOSTINI CAMP (3h, 9.5km, + 500m). Trekking up to Agostini camp. Overnight in Toni Rohrer refuge. (CB,L,D)

Sun, March 3, 2019: AGOSTINI CAMP-PASO COMEDOR-AGOSTINI CAMP (6h, 15km, +/- 900m). Trekking up to Paso Comedor at 1900' to have a taste of San Lorenzo climb. Overnight in Toni Rohrer refuge. (CB,L,D)

Mon, March 4, 2019: AGOSTINI CAMP-TERRA LUNA (3h, 9.5km, -500m). Trek down to Fundo San Lorenzo and drive back to Terra Luna Lodge where we meet the group. (CB,L,D)

Extension Price estimate: \$2200pp