THE ESSENTIAL PATAGONIA TRAVEL GUIDE


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A WORD FROM THE FOUNDERS

SouthAmerica.travel is proud of its energetic Team of travel experts. Our Travel Consultants come from around the world, have traveled extensively throughout South America and work “at the source” from our operations headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, Lima and Buenos Aires, and at our flagship office in Seattle.

We are passionate about South America Travel, and we’re happy to share with you our favorite Buenos Aires restaurants, our insider’s tips for Machu Picchu, or our secret colonial gems of Brazil, and anything else you’re eager to know.

The idea to create SouthAmerica.travel first came to Co-Founders Juergen Keller and Bradley Nehring while traveling through Brazil’s Amazon Rainforest. The two noticed few international travelers, and those they did meet had struggled to arrange the trip by themselves. Expertise in custom travel planning to Brazil was scarce to nonexistent. This inspired the duo to start their own travel business to fill this void and help travelers plan great trips to Brazil, and later all South America.

With five offices on three continents, as well as local telephone numbers in 88 countries worldwide, the SouthAmerica.travel Team has helped thousands of travelers fulfill their unique dream of discovering the marvelous and diverse continent of South America. Where will your dreams take you? Let’s start planning now...

“Our goal is to create memories that will last our clients a lifetime.”

Juergen Keller

Juergen Keller  
President

Bradley Nehring  
C.O.O
THE ESSENTIAL
PATAGONIA TRAVEL GUIDE

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Patagonia is a vast expanse of natural beauty.

Patagonia is a region in Argentina and Chile, famous for its glaciers, wide open landscapes and mountain peaks beckoning outdoor enthusiasts. A trip to Patagonia is the perfect place for travelers to disconnect from their busy lives and reconnect with nature. The highlights include: El Calafate and the world-famous Perito Moreno Glacier, hiking in Torres del Paine National Park, the Lake Crossing from Bariloche to Puerto Varas or a cruise in South Patagonia.

Best Times to Visit Patagonia

Summer: November - March. This is high season because the days are longer and the climate is relatively dry. The hiking conditions at this time are most favorable to backpackers.

Spring & Fall: September - October & April - May, also called the "Shoulder Season". This time of the year can be equally as pleasant as the summer months, however, there is a higher chance of harsh conditions. During the shoulder season, travel to the northernmost part of Patagonia, the beautiful lake region.

Winter: June - August. Those interested in snow sports, consider visiting Bariloche. Located 2 miles from Bariloche, is Cerro Catedral, a mountain boasting over 50 downhill runs, uniting skiers and snowboarders from around the world.

Read More: Best Times to Travel to Patagonia

Packing List for Patagonia

It is not uncommon to experience all four seasons in one day in Patagonia, so it is important to pack for all types of weather.

- Hiking gear - boots, waterproof shell, down jacket or fleece.
- Day pack to hold extra belongings
- GoPro or camera with extra battery life
- Sun glasses
- Beanie, baseball cap or hat
- Reusable water bottle
- You must have 6 months validity on your passport to enter Chilean or Argentine Patagonia.

Recommended Foods & Drinks

Patagonia's traditional dish and a must-try for meat lovers is the cordero al palo (roasted lamb). The lamb is slowly cooked over an open log fire for several hours, adding a delicious smoky flavor. Pair the lamb with a glass of red wine or a calafate sour on the side. The calafate sour is similar to a Pisco Sour, made with calafate berry juice. If you’re not in the mood for red meat, try the Patagonian King Crab Chupe, a thick Chilean stew, similar to chowder.
ARGENTINA'S PATAGONIA

Los Glaciares National Park

Los Glaciares National Park sits in Argentina's Patagonia region, the Austral Andes. Declared a UNESCO Site in 1981, it is known for its turquoise lakes, jagged mountains, hiking trails and glaciers. This park intrigues outdoor enthusiasts and trekkers from around the world. The main highlights in Los Glaciares National Park include Glacier Perito Moreno near El Calafate, Mount Fitz Roy in El Chaltén and the famous Route 40 road.

El Chaltén

El Chaltén is considered Argentina's trekking capital. There are fewer deluxe accommodations, leaving simple hosterias to dot the town. Backpackers, trekkers and climbers venture to El Chaltén to test their luck climbing Mount Fitz Roy, one of the most technically difficult mountains in the world to summit. For less experienced hikers, many of the best trails in El Chaltén can be done as day hikes. For thrill seekers, sign up for a full day glacier trekking excursion to Viedma Glacier.

View More: Los Glaciares National Park Tours
Perito Moreno Glacier

Perito Moreno is not only the world's largest advancing glacier, but it is also the most popular glacier in Los Glaciares National Park. Jutting up against the waters of Lago Argentino, its sheer size and color leave visitors awe-struck. It is not uncommon to hear and see large ice chunks break off from the glacial wall and plunge into the lake.

Getting there: El Calafate is the best starting point for a day excursion to Perito Moreno. Group tours can be arranged but for the best experience visiting the famous glacier consider taking a private tour from El Calafate to Perito Moreno. For the adventure seeker, sign up for a half day glacier trekking tour. There is also an option to take a short boat ride towards the glacier; this allows visitors to get within 200 feet of the glacial wall, ideal for photography buffs.

Nibepo Aike

Venture off the beaten path and go on a Patagonia Estancias Eco Tour in Nibepo Aike and visit cattle ranches in the heart of Patagonia. Patagonia is, after all, still the land of gauchos, where cowboys rule and the highest-quality livestock is produced.
**Ushuaia**

Known as the southernmost city in the world, Ushuaia overlooks the edge of the continent. The picturesque city is backed by glacier peaks at the tip of the Andes Mountains, and surrounded by the windswept landscape of Tierra del Fuego. The Beagle Channel meets the Andes and makes way towards the city, just before reaching a sea of currents. While you’re in the area, Tierra del Fuego National Park is a must-see for its fire bush flowers, lenga beech trees and box-leaf barberries spread out over 55,000 acres.

**Read more:** [Ushuaia Travel Guide](#)

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In Ushuaia, there are many activities to choose from. Take the End of the World Train through Tierra del Fuego to see the southernmost extreme of the Americas. Or board a Beagle Channel Cruise to see the Les Eclaireurs Lighthouse. For an active day outside, sign up for a day of skiing in the winter season, or hike the Martial Glacier in the summer. For history enthusiasts, visit Estancia Harberton, once the home of an English pioneer and missionary. Today, it’s the perfect place to meet the penguins at the penguin rookery. Or continue your adventure towards Chile aboard a Patagonia cruise.

**View our:** [Recommended Hotels in Ushuaia](#)
The Lake District, Argentina & Chile

In northern Patagonia rests the Lake District, a region connecting both parts of Chile and Argentina. The Lake District in Argentina is a popular tourist destination, gathering skiers, fishers, and trekkers to its home of beautiful forests and blue lakes. Chile’s Lake District stretches from Puerto Montt and Puerto Varas and inland towards the Andes Mountains. Cruise by catamaran along emerald green waters of Lago Todos Los Santos, Puerto Peulla, Puerto Blest along Lake Nahuel Huapi past the alpine forests of Vicente Perez Rosales National Park and Mount Tronador.

San Carlos de Bariloche

Bariloche, nicknamed “The Switzerland of the South,” sits on the Argentine side of the Lake District and overlooks Lake Nahuel Huapi, part of Argentina’s oldest national park. This charming town is an explorer’s dream, with outdoor activities year-round. In the spring, summer and fall, enjoy pleasant horseback riding, hiking and trekking near Mt. Tronador, (an ancient strato volcano) and spot wildlife in the lush Lanín National Park near San Martín de los Andes. In the winter, visit world class ski resorts like Cerro Catedral.

Read more: Chile & Argentina Lake Crossing
CHILE'S PATAGONIA

Torres del Paine National Park

Torres del Paine has over 1 million acres of national wilderness. The glacial lakes, snow-capped peaks, guanacos and Andean gray foxes are just a few of the reasons why nature lovers add this classic Patagonia park to their trip. For the luxury and adventure traveler, there are plenty of 4-star and 5-star all inclusive lodges in the park. Some of our favorites include the Explora, Hotel Las Torres and Patagonia’s EcoCamp.

All of the lodges in the park offer a variety of excursions with various levels of physical activity, designed to accommodate all passengers. Choose between half day or full day trips, some of which include: hiking, horseback riding, a photo safari or sailing to Glacier Gray. Staying at a lodge in Torres del Paine is an excellent way to combine adventure and comfort.

When is the best time to visit? We recommend traveling during the summer months, from November to March. Some lodges close during the winter months from May to September.

View our: Torres del Paine National Park Tours
Chiloé Island

When thinking of Chiloé Island, one pictures its wooden churches, colorful houses, welcoming locals and the myths and legends of witchcraft. This enchanting and magical island attracts tourists from around the world. There are over 150 beautifully crafted colonial-era wooden churches, many of which are now UNESCO World Heritage Sites. One church you cannot skip is the 18th-century Jesuit church, Iglesia Santa María de Loreta, Chiloé's oldest church. Chiloé is also known for its beautiful landscapes, with its green lakes, lagoons, beaches and canals.

Read more: Chiloe Tours from Puerto Varas

Marble Caves

The Marble Caves of Patagonia are an incredible geological formation. It took thousands of years of strong currents and erosion to form the Marble Caves. The water and light reflect against the marble creating an illusion that the color is changing. For best viewing visit the Marble Caves at sunrise or sunset.

Getting there: Getting to the caves is not an easy feat. You can fly from Santiago to Balmaceda and then travel roughly 120 miles by road (sometimes by dirt road) until you reach the lake.
CRUISES IN PATAGONIA

Most of the spectacular scenery in Patagonia is best viewed from the water. These 4-star and 5-star luxury cruises take you past Chilean Fjords and venture either towards the end of the world Ushuaia or all the way across the Drake Passage to Antarctica. Sail past some of the most spectacular sights in the world, including massive glaciers, ice fields and adorable penguin colonies. For the adventure seeker, we highly recommend our Patagonia cruises, ideal for covering vast distances and experiencing all the highlights of the region.

Australis Cruise

The end of the world is waiting for you and Australis will take you on a journey through it. The Australis Cruise travels from Ushuaia to Punta Arenas and vice versa. Enjoy the grandeur, beauty and landscapes, aboard a vessel built with comfort and luxury in mind. Each day, depart the boat for exciting land excursions, such as a guided trip to the Marinelli Glacier, Pia Glacier and a guided visit to the Magellanic Penguin Colony. Journey through the Strait of Magellan to Cape Horn and disembark from the vessel to see the last territory before Antarctica.

View more: Australis & Skorpios Patagonia Cruises
MarPatag Cruise

The elegant M/V Santa Cruz vessel was specially designed for cruising past glaciers found in the Patagonian ice field. The combines high-end comfort and spectacular cuisine. With only 20 cabins and a maximum of 40 people, this cruise becomes an intimate Patagonia experience. Gourmet meals and alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages with meals are included. Go on daily shore excursions with bilingual expert guides. Embark on MarPatag’s The Spirit of Glaciers Cruise, a three-day expedition that takes you to parts of the Patagonian region that are unexplored and only accessible on this cruise.

Skorpios Cruise

Skorpios Cruises combine comfort, adventure and exploration. Choose between two routes based on travel preferences. The Chonos Route, departs from Puerto Montt and cruises past Northern ice fields, glaciers, archipelagos, channels and guls. Disembark from the ship and explore towns like Castro and the quaint fishing village of Puerto Aguirre. On the Kaweskar Route, depart from Puerto Natales and venture towards southern ice fields. Cruise past glaciers and go on the expedition vessel to spot Patagonia’s flora and fauna.

View more: The Spirit of the Glaciers MarPatag Cruise
PATAGONIA TRAVEL PACKAGES

Torres del Paine and El Calafate Tour
8 Days — Puerto Natales, Perito Moreno, Buenos Aires
This 8-day Patagonia & Buenos Aires Tango Tour begins in Puerto Natales, 63 mi from Chile's most beautiful national park, Torres del Paine. Visit a penguin colony, take a city tour or spend a full day exploring the national park. Then cross into Argentine to visit the Perito Moreno glacier, the world's largest advancing glacier. Finish in Buenos Aires with a city tour, tango show & delicious dinner.

Patagonia Deluxe Tour
14 Days — Torres del Paine, Tierra del Fuego, Los Glaciares
The Patagonia Deluxe Tour combines the Stella Australis Cruise, Explora Lodge, MarPatag Cruise and the Eolo Lodge for one unforgettable adventure. Visit some of the most beautiful national parks in South America including Torres del Paine, Tierra del Fuego & Los Glaciares. Combine luxury cruises with 5-star lodges on this 14-day journey through Patagonia.

Patagonia Glaciers & Estancias Adventure Tour
5 Days — El Calafate, Estancia Nibepo Aike, Perito Moreno
Spend 5 blissful days trekking, horseback riding and taking in the tranquility of Patagonia. This Patagonia Glaciers and Estancias Tour takes visitors from El Chalten, the charming town near Mt. Fitz Roy, to the Estancia Nibepo Aike lodge. Enjoy daily guided excursions to Cerro Torre (Tower Hill), Laguna Capri, and Laguna de los Tres, as well as a visit to the Perito Moreno Glacier. This tour is only available between November and March of each year.
Santiago and Torres del Paine Tour

14 Days — Santiago de Chile, Torres del Paine
Discover Chile's natural wonders: Santiago, rolling hills, volcanoes and the highest mountain range in the Western Hemisphere. Explore the glacial lakes of Patagonia and learn about Chilean wine. See the wonders of Southern Chile, the other end of the world.

El Chalten and El Calafate Trekking Tour

4 Days — El Chaltén, El Calafate, Los Glaciares National Park
Only a bus ride away from El Calafate is El Chaltén, a popular trekking town located near the Los Glaciares National Park. It is here that the massive Mount Fitz Roy looms above the glaciers and Patagonian steppe. Discover Patagonia’s glacial lakes, moraines and immense beauty on this 4 day Patagonia tour that includes trekking to Laguna Torre and Laguna de los Tres.

Patagonia: Australis Cruises across Fuegian Fjords

4 Days — Ushuaia
The end of the world is waiting for you and Australis Cruises will take you there. The Ushuaia to Ushuaia route shows the breathtaking beauty found in Patagonia. Enjoy the grandeur and beauty, combined with comfortable accommodations on board the expedition ship.

Patagonia: Skorpios Cruises across Chilean Fjords

5 Days — Chronos Route, Northern Ice Field
M/V Skorpios II sails from the Skorpios Terminal in Puerto Natales, a town located 1,000km south of Santiago, which can be reached by road or air. This cruise covers 800 miles and sets sail every Saturday to return on Thursday between the months of September and May. Cruise past age-old ice formations of Glaciar San Rafael, past archipelagos, channels and gulfs.
CREATE A CUSTOM PATAGONIA TOUR

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Give us your ideas - destinations, type of travel, the level of comfort - we’ll spice it up with hidden gems, personal tips, and unique ideas to create your perfect trip!

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You can choose between private tours or group tours. We always recommend a private tour so that you have the freedom to ensure the tour covers exactly what you would like to see.

Superior Hotel Accommodations.
We work with the best 4-star and 5-star hotels in South America and we partner with the best lodges - from the Amazon to Patagonia. Our accommodations will exceed your expectations.

24/7 Phone Support - Travel worry free.
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