

ANDES ADVENTURES

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PATAGONIA RUNNING ADVENTURE

NATIONAL PARKS: TORRES DEL PAINE, LOS GLACIARES, TIERRA DEL FUEGO

December 19, 2011 to January 4, 2012

Day 1 Monday - December 19: Departure to Santiago

Day 2 Tuesday - December 20: Santiago/Punta Arenas

Early morning arrival in Santiago, where you will be met by your trip leader outside the customs area at the airport and continue together on your flight to Punta Arenas, located on the northern shore of the Strait of Magellan (S 53° 9.6', W 70° 54.5')..

Overnight in Punta Arenas, Los Navegantes Hotel. Meals: D.

Today's run: None scheduled.

Day 3 Wednesday - December 21: Punta Arenas/Torres del Paine

After a nice overnight rest, we drive north through the Patagonian rolling plains. Weather permitting, we plan a detour to visit a colony of Magellanic penguins in Otway Sound. We stop for lunch at the quaint town of Puerto Natales, situated on the shores of Seno Ultima Esperanza (Last Hope Sound). Afterwards we continue our drive to Torres del Paine National Park, on the way we will see large herds of sheep and baqueanos (cowboys). As we approach the park along Laguna Amarga, we will have our first views of the spectacular granite Towers of Paine. It is likely we will also enjoy sightings of herds of guanacos, condors, flocks of pink flamingos, a variety of foxes, geese, ñandus (wild ostriches) and other wildlife. After entering the park, we get settled at refugio Torres.

Overnight: Refugio Torres. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: Optional distances around the refugio in Torres del Paine.

Driving distance: About 240 miles plus additional 40 miles to the rookery.

Day 4 Thursday - December 22: Torres del Paine - Hike to the towers

This morning we run up the Ascencio Valley. We cross the river and continue uphill along a lenga and cypress trail. As we pass by campamento Chileno and the foot of Mt. Almirante Nieto, the trail follows a southern beech forest, finally reaching a moraine that takes us to the cirque below the famous Towers of Paine; Torre Sur (9,350'), Torre Central (9,186') and Torre Norte (8,530'). Downhill run back to the refugio. Additional sightseeing and optional running will be scheduled for the afternoon.

Overnight: Refugio Torres. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's hike: 10.5 miles or about 6 to 8 hours, including the out-and-back hike to the towers. A shorter hike is optional.

Day 5 Friday - December 23: Torres del Paine - Run to Dickson

We begin our counterclockwise circuit along the eastern side of the park. We will run along the Paine River valley through easy rolling meadows, fields of daisies, lupines and beech forests. We should have sightings of foxes and with some luck we may see the Magellanic woodpecker and other wildlife. Overnight at refugio Dickson near the southern shore of Lago Dickson.

Overnight: Refugio Dickson. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: 18.5 miles.

Day 6 Saturday - December 24: Torres del Paine - Run to Grey

The trail climbs out of camp through a lenga forest. We will have excellent views of the surrounding glaciated mountains. We run by Glacier Los Perros, where we will see chunks of blue ice floating on the lake. As we pass the campground, we climb up a short very muddy section and continue the climb to the Gardner pass. From the top we will have close view of an immense sea of ice "Grey Glacier"; this 4 mile wide glacier is part of the Continental Ice Cap. We will follow a trail down through a forest parallel and above the glacier to the refugio.

Overnight: Refugio Grey. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: 19 miles.

Day 7 Sunday - December 25: Torres del Paine - Run to Cuernos

As we run down along Lago Grey we will see the turquoise icebergs blown to the opposite side of the lake by the strong winds. We arrive at Pehoé, where we can see the Cuernos del Paine and continue on the west side of Lago Scottsberg. We follow a trail along rolling foothills, passing by campamento Italiano, before heading up the French valley. You will have views of the Cuernos (7,217', 7,874' and 8,530') on the east side and the glaciated Cerro Paine Grande (10,006') on the west. A run downhill followed by a run along Lago Nordenskjold takes us to our nice shelter at Los Cuernos.

Overnight: Refugio Cuernos. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: 15 miles, plus Optional out-and-back side trip up the French valley (up to 5 miles or less) to beautiful vistas of the Cuernos del Paine.

Day 8 Monday - December 26: Torres del Paine/El Calafate

This morning we complete the circuit around the park finishing in Las Torres. Our car is waiting to drive us across the Argentine border to the town of Calafate, on the shore of Lago Argentino.

Overnight: Tehuel Plaza. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: 9.5 miles.

This is a long day of driving (about 5 1/2 hours), partly over dirt roads across the pampas. There is no other alternative way to travel, however there is always something to see along the way. Grazing sheep, wildlife and the unusual open range Patagonian steppes scenery.

Day 9 Tuesday - December 27: Parque los Glaciares - El Chaltén

We drive along Lago Argentino to the spectacular Perito Moreno Glacier - the world's only glacier outside the polar region that is still advancing. Afterward we continue our drive north crossing Río (river) Santa Cruz and along Río La Leona to the shores of Lago Viedma till we reach the village of El Chaltén at 800 feet. As we approach El Chaltén we can see our first view of Mount Fitz Roy (11,171') and Cerro Torre (10,177')..

Overnight in El Chaltén, Hosteria Kalenshen. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: None scheduled - will have a short hike in Perito Moreno.

Day 10 Wednesday - December 28: Parque los Glaciares - Laguna de los Tres

We hike along a ridge below Cerro Leon (2,840'). We have fabulous views of Mount Fitz Roy, Poincenot and other granite peaks and glaciers. We follow the Chorillo del Salto stream and cross lenga forest until we reach the base camp of Río Blanco. We run to Laguna de los Tres, where we have outstanding views of Mount Fitz Roy (11,171'), the adjacent Poincenot Needle (9,849') and other granite peaks and glaciers.

Overnight in El Chaltén, Hosteria Kalenshen. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: 12 miles, with an optional run along Río Blanco (up to additional 8 miles) with great vistas of the east side of the park.

Day 11 Thursday - December 29: Parque los Glaciares - Laguna Torre

This morning we run to Laguna Torre at 2,164', with some luck it will be clear to see Cerro Torre (10,177'). Note that the vertical east granite face of Cerro Torre is 7,000 feet (twice as high as Yosemite's El Capitan), the run continues through Laguna Madre e Hija and descends to El Chaltén. Overnight in El Chaltén

Overnight in El Chaltén, Hosteria Kalenshen. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: 12 miles, plus optional out-and-back side trips.

Day 12 Friday - December 30: Flight to Ushuaia

We drive to El Calafate and fly to Ushuaia the "Southernmost City in the World" on the island of Tierra del Fuego.

After lunch we board a boat or catamaran for a 3 hour cruise along the Beagle Channel. We cruise south to Isla de Los Pájaros (Birds' Island) and Isla de los Lobos (Sea Lion Island) where you can observe the Sea Lions and Imperial Cormorants. You will also see brown hooded Gulls, South American Terns, Black-browed Albatross, Giant Petrels, Great Skuas and other marine wildlife. After circling the Eclaireurs Light House, we return to Ushuaia sailing along the northern shore of the channel.

Overnight: Ushuaia, Hotel Tierra del Fuego. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: None scheduled.

Driving time: About 3 1/2 hours. Flight: About an hour.

Day 13 Saturday - December 31: Parque Nacional Tierra del Fuego

After breakfast we drive to Tierra del Fuego National Park west of Ushuaia where we run a circuit in Tierra del Fuego National Park. We start our run at the Pampa Alta Trail leading us through lovely sub-Antarctic forests of beech, ñire, lenga, coihue and an abundance of moss and ferns. After reaching the top (about 1,000') we enjoy a panoramic view of the Beagle Channel, Isla Redonda and Ensenada Bay. We descend and connect with Sendero de La Costa (Coastal Trail) and continue along the rocky shores of the bay finishing at Roca Lake or the round trip option to Bahía Lapataia.

The park offers great opportunities for bird-watching. Some of the species that you will see are the Black-browed Albatross, Giant Petrels, Steamer Ducks, Magellanic Woodpecker, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, Chimango Caracaras, Black-Chested Buzzard Eagles and others. Overnight in Ushuaia.

Overnight: Ushuaia, Hotel Tierra del Fuego. Meals: B, L, D.

Today's run: 11.5 miles with an optional out-and-back run to Lapataia Bay (extra 5 miles). Shorter options are also available.

Additional options: Hito XXIV Trail along the north east coast of the Roca Lake to the border between Argentina and Chile or the trail up Cerro Guanaco.

Day 14 Sunday - January 1: Ushuaia/Buenos Aires

Morning flight to Buenos Aires, Argentina's cosmopolitan capital. We arrive at Aeroparque Jorge Newberry Airport and transfer to our centrally located hotel, a few blocks from the city's landmark, the Obelisco.

Overnight: Buenos Aires, Park Central Unique. Meals: B, L, D.

Flight time: About 3 hours 20 minutes.

Day 15 Monday - January 2: Buenos Aires

We start our walking city tour of Buenos Aires from the hotel. This tour shows you the city's highlights, looking through its history and culture, the historic development, the immigration process, the architectural heritage, Peronismo era and other features of the Argentinean society. You'll learn about cultural topics like tango music and soccer.

Starting from Plaza de Mayo we will enjoy a tour of the most remarkable highlights of this unique metropolis. Our itinerary will focus on the main places of interest of the southern and northern region of Buenos Aires: major plazas, colonial churches, old-time cafes, bohemian artist's quarter, colorfully painted metal houses, grand avenues, palatial mansions and spacious parks. We arrive in the neighborhood of San Telmo and complete our tour by bus, visiting the neighborhoods of La Boca, Puerto Madero, Palermo and Recoleta.

After a late lunch, time on your own for shopping and sightseeing in Buenos Aires.

Optional tango show and dinner. (See note below.)

Overnight: Buenos Aires, Park Central Unique. Meals: B, L, D.*

Today's run: Optional distances. Walking tour in the city of Buenos Aires.

**A popular tango show and dinner is offered at a special discounted price, otherwise dinner is on your own and not included.*

Day 16 Tuesday - January 3: Buenos Aires

Free day to enjoy Buenos Aires on your own.

Afternoon transfer to the Ezeiza International Airport for our evening flight home.

Meals: B.

Day 17 Wednesday - January 4: Arrival Home