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## PATAGONIA PHOTO SAFARI

Thursday, December 5th - Tuesday, December 17th, 2024



### **Highlights:**

- A unique trip combining all the dramatic landscapes and culture of both southern (the mountains of Patagonia) and northern (Atacama Desert) Chile.
- Capture the vast ice fields, glaciers and towering mountains of Torres del Paine National Park along with local fauna, while staying in award-winning lodging (in sustainable geodesic domes) in the heart of the park.
- Go in search of the untamed horses that roam the park, stopping at a puesto to chat with the gauchos caring for their livestock.
- Photograph the blue walls of Grey Glacier, Salto Grande waterfalls, Rainbow Valley's colorful cliffs and hills, vast salt flats, and spouting geysers.

- Visit the hidden Lagoons of Baltinache, their turquoise waters surrounded by salt, and experience the sand dunes of colorful Moon Valley.
- And throughout, enjoy private photography instruction by Reed Hoffmann paired with an itinerary specifically tailored to offer you the stunning beauty and rich culture of Chile.

***Trip style:***

This is a true photographic adventure trip, but with comfortable and unique lodgings. Chile has an amazing diversity of landscapes, from the mountains and glaciers of Torres del Paine to the hidden turquoise lagoons and the desert dunes of the Atacama Desert. You'll also experience a variety of cultures, from the bustle of Santiago to small villages and remote ranches. Several days include easy but long walking (maximum distance in 1 day, 6 miles over 5 hours). All ground transport is by private van. Some locations are very limited in the number of rooms available, so please register early to ensure lodging. See itinerary for more details.

Trip starts and ends in Santiago, Chile



*Photo courtesy of Casalia Expediciones*

**Itinerary- These dates may change depending on international flight schedules and flight times within Chile!**

**DAY 1 - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 DEPART U.S.**

**DAY 2 - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 SANTIAGO, CHILE**

Arrive in Santiago and spend the day relaxing or exploring the city. Stay in a hotel near the airport for easy transfer for the next morning's flight. (-, -, -)

**DAY 3 - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 SAN PEDRO & RAINBOW VALLEY**

Transfer to the airport in time for our flight to Calama. After arriving we're driven straight to San Pedro de Atacama, past the impressive rock formations of the Cordillera de la Sal (Salt Mountains). Upon arrival, you'll receive the itinerary for the upcoming days and enjoy a welcome lunch with a briefing. The Atacama desert is home to some of Chile's most fascinating history and culture, left behind by the indigenous tribes who called this arid high desert home. Let the raw beauty of the Atacama Desert entrance you with its salt plains, geysers, volcanoes, and cultural history on this superb exploration. Our first photo adventure in the driest desert of the world will be to the archaeological site of Yervas Buenas, home to ancient petroglyphs which date back approximately 10,000 years. These petroglyphs are an amazing relic of the Atacameño people. We'll then leave San Pedro and drive for about an hour until we reach Yervas Buenas - here we will walk around the site before heading to Valle del Arcoiris (Rainbow Valley). Rainbow Valley is aptly named, as the mineral-rich rocks create shades of green, blue and red across the valley's cliffs and hills. Stay at [Hotel Kimal](#) (or similar) during your time in San Pedro de Atacama. (B, L,D)



*Photo courtesy of Cascada Expediciones*

**DAY 4 - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8 ATACAMA SALT FLAT, LAGOONS, & PIEDRAS ROJAS**

After breakfast, we begin today's adventure by driving to Toconao, a beautiful Andean village. Toconao's lands are an oasis in the desert and are apt for growing fruits and vegetables nourished by water brought in through small channels. We visit its main streets and San Lucas church. After that we'll continue to Quebrada de Jerez, a large canyon channeling the waters entering Toconao. Our next stop will be Laguna Chaxa, a lagoon in the middle of the Atacama Salt Flat, home to beautiful Chilean and Andean flamingos. After that we continue driving towards Miscanti and Miñiques Lagoons - undisputed highlights of the region - full of turquoise water that contrasts with the autumnal colors of the Altiplanic lands. On our way back, we'll make a stop at Piedras Rojas (which is only possible to be seen from a lookout point). Finally, we'll visit Laguna Chaxa, the best place in Chile to see flamingos. (B, L, -)



**DAY 5 - MONDAY, DECEMBER 9 TATIO GEYSERS, PUTANA WETLANDS, MACHUCA VILLAGE**

The early wake-up call from the hotel will be well worth it when we arrive at the amazing Geysers of Tatio and see them in action. From almost 900 meters below the earth, boiling steam explodes up to 40 meters high. A scrumptious breakfast will be served upon arrival before we walk through the geothermal fields, with geysers erupting nearby. As we drive

back, there is a magnificent view of the Tocopurri and Sairecabur volcanoes. Very close to Rio Grande and the geysers, we'll find Machuca, a small town of no more than 20 houses and a church, located about 4,000 meters above sea level. Although its main economic activity is the llamas, the few inhabitants of Machuca are beginning to participate in tourism, already having a hostel and offering some crafts. Wildlife includes llamas, alpacas, ducks, Andean gulls and flamingos. Many of these animals live in a lush green bog near the village. We'll arrive back in town in time for a late lunch. The afternoon will be free to rest or explore San Pedro after the early start, high altitude and low temperature we faced in the morning. (B, -, -)



#### **DAY 6 - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10 SALT MOUNTAINS & BALTINACHE LAGOONS**

We'll visit the Cordillera de la Sal (Salt Mountains). This mountain range was formed millions of years ago. It was an old lake, whose bottom was raised by the same movements along the coast which created the Andes Mountains. Molded through time by rain, wind and the sun of the Atacama Desert, its final form that we know today is composed of a great variety of natural sculptures, different types of stratifications and varied colorations through the rich mineral diversity. The name "Cordillera de la Sal" derives from the fact that its rocks possess a great quantity of calcium sulphate, which gives them the aspect of being splashed with salt. We then continue towards the best kept secret of Atacama: the hidden Lagoons of Baltinache. These are 7 spectacular turquoise lagoons surrounded by a large layer of salt that were born after the Salar de Atacama

dried up millions of years ago. You can bathe in the first lagoon and float thanks to the high concentration of salinity of its waters (towels are included). (B, L, -)

**DAY 7 - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11**  
**MOON VALLEY, RETURN TO**  
**SANTIAGO & DEPART**

An early morning departure, this time towards the beautiful Moon Valley. Our first stop will be at "Llanos del Salar", an area located between San Pedro and Cejar Lagoon. From the road towards Cejar we take a detour, arriving at an area with trees that are semi-buried in the sand due to the wind. This place is of special interest for photographers, as its

landscape is similar to an African savannah. Afterwards we continue to the vast and amazing Moon Valley. We'll walk over sand dunes until we reach a viewpoint from which we can witness one of the world's most beautiful landscapes, intensified by the warm colors throughout the Valley. We'll then transfer to Calama Airport in time to take our flight back to Santiago. Upon arrival in Santiago, a transfer will take us to the hotel (with reception guide). Hotel Director 45 or similar (B, L, -)



**DAY 8 - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12 TORRES DEL PAINE**

You'll be picked up at the hotel, transferred to the airport for your flight to Punta Arenas or Puerto Natales (depending on flight times), and driven to EcoCamp Patagonia, located in the world-famous Torres del Paine National Park. We'll plan to have lunch in Puerto Natales, a small, lively town on the shores of "Seno de Ultima Esperanza" (lunch depending on arrival time). The journey is scenic and highly atmospheric, featuring many wild birds and wonderful Patagonian landscapes. The day ends with our arrival and overnight stay at [EcoCamp Patagonia](#), nestled in the heart of Torres del Paine National Park and with a prime view of the majestic Torres. (B, L, D)



### **DAY 9 - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13 GREY GLACIER**

We begin the day by driving across the park, admiring the view of Paine Grande and its snowy peaks and Los Cuernos with its black, granite, horn-like spires. We'll stop at Pudeto Dock, observing and photographing guanacos, Andean condors and interesting flora. As we walk along the shores of the stunning Lake Pehoe, we'll see the furious Salto Grande waterfalls where the water from Lake Nordenskjold cascades down into Pehoe. From here, we drive up to Grey Lake and wander along the beach. We'll enjoy a tasty box-lunch by the lake before embarking on a boat ride across the icy waters to the towering blue walls of Glacier Grey. After this incredible up-close look at the glacier, we drive back to EcoCamp. (B, L, D)



### **DAY 10 - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 SARMIENTO LAKE & FAUNA TRAIL**

This predominantly flat trek boasts stunningly diverse natural scenery and offers the chance to feast your eyes on a startlingly blue lake, which is secluded from all the other water systems of the area. There will be ample opportunity to spot many graceful guanacos and great grebes along the way. First we'll examine the geology of the area's turbidite rock folds before descending the isthmus which separates Lake Sarmiento from Lake Sarmiento Chico (the two lakes were once a single mass of water). Walking along a slight slope, we'll amble beside the eastern edge of Lake Sarmiento Chico. That will lead us to an impressive bay on the western side of Lake Sarmiento, with a breathtaking view. From there we'll begin our ascent back to the van, and along the way we'll enjoy the awe-inspiring, panoramic vista of Lake Sarmiento from its western shore, looking towards its eastern coast glimmering on the horizon. From here we drive back along the northern shore of Sarmiento Lake until we reach the starting point of the Fauna Trail. As we walk northwards along the trail we'll see park fauna on the





Patagonian plains including guanacos, ostrich-like ñandús and maybe the occasional puma print! We'll pass by Goic lagoon and after an approximate 5 km relaxed walk reach the Laguna Amarga ranger station where we're picked up and driven back to EcoCamp. (B, L, D)



### **DAY 11 - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15**

#### **WILD HORSE TRACKING**

After enjoying the buffet breakfast at EcoCamp, we'll head towards the Laguna Azul sector. From there, we'll begin our journey by 4x4 through the folds of the Cordillera Masle, from which we'll be able to appreciate the Cordillera Baguales, Salto Las Chinas, and Barranca de Los Toros pass. After about 40 minutes, we'll arrive at a typical "puesto" where Patagonian "gauchos" would take refuge while caring for their livestock. Here, we'll hear a short but interesting introduction to the area's history and the evolution and characteristics of its wild horses. With the help of satellite tracking equipment, coupled with our guide's experience and knowledge, we'll begin our trek, searching for the 100 untamed horses that remain isolated in this sector surrounded by mountains, lakes, and plains, in the most pristine and untouched terrain of Torres del Paine. Depending on the location of the horses, we'll choose a place to have lunch and share our stories and experiences. The experience of tracking, observing, and photographing the horses in such natural surroundings is incomparable. Additionally, we'll be privy to fantastic views of Lago Stokes, the Cordillera Dickson, and the imposing Towers. After 7-8 hours, we'll return to EcoCamp, ready to enjoy an aperitif before settling down to a warm meal. (B, L, D)

### **DAY 12 - MONDAY, DECEMBER 16 RETURN TO SANTIAGO**

After breakfast, transfer to Punta Arenas or Puerto Natales airport with a box lunch in time to take our flight back to Santiago and connect with our international flights. (B, L, -)

\*\*Please note: depending on international flight times, an additional night in Santiago may be required, with departure on December 17th and possible arrival in the US on December 18th.

### **DAY 13 - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17 ARRIVE IN US**

## **Detailed Services**

### **Included Services**

- All accommodation (double occupancy)
- All ground transportation except for airport transfers in Santiago at the start of the trip
- Meals as noted in itinerary
- Personal photography coaching by Reed Hoffmann
- Guides and entrance fees as stated

### **Not Included Services**

- Gratuities and items of a personal nature
- Airport transfers in Santiago at the start of the trip
- Lodging in Santiago if departing on December 17th
- Drinks
- Meal not shown as included
- Entrance fees not shown and optional excursions
- International and internal airfare
- Services not shown or detailed in the program.

**Passports/Visas:** It is the client's sole responsibility to ensure that they hold a valid passport and all necessary visas. Your passport should be valid for 6 months after completion of the trip. A visa is not required at this time for US citizens visiting Chile. You'll be issued a Tourist Card upon arrival.

**Travel Insurance:** Comprehensive travel insurance is highly recommended, as sometimes people have to cancel their trip because of unforeseen circumstances. With trip insurance, your investment is protected. Please see our refund policy below. Details in the registration packet.

**Level of Difficulty:** This trip is for the photographer who likes to be active and photograph a variety of subjects. Several easy, relaxed walks are part of the itinerary, ranging from .5 to 6 miles.

**Travel Information:** We suggest that you coordinate your travel with us. We'll let you know when it's time to book flights and give you advice on how to do so. If you would like to meet Reed at the destination, try to arrange a time close to his flights. These may change, as the ones listed here are from a schedule as of this printing. We suggest that you wait to book your flight until we let you know Reed's plans, so as to coordinate the flights as much as possible. If you do land at a different time there is a small additional charge for your airport

shuttle. We plan to begin looking at airfare about 9 months in advance. We will be making all arrangements for local flights.

**Group Size:** maximum of 12 people + Reed Hoffmann

**Cost:** \$8,490/person based on double occupancy. International airfare and internal flights (estimated at approximately \$400 total) not included. If 10+ people register, we will cover the cost of the Santiago-Punta Arenas/Puerto Natales. \$1,500 nonrefundable deposit due to register, with final balance due by September 1, 2024. Single supplement: \$2,700. Local flight costs will be due at the time of booking (we will take care of this).

**When is more information coming out?** We will mail you an airfare letter approximately 9 months before the trip. A final letter with balance due will be sent 4 months prior to departure and we will call each person prior to departure. Once you register you will receive more information on packing and planning.

### **PPS Refund Policy**

We understand that you may have registered well in advance of your trip. We appreciate that work schedules and plans may change and unforeseen emergencies do occur. Therefore, we have established the refund policy below to try to fairly accommodate such eventualities and yet maintain quality programs. Please realize that once you have registered for a course, we immediately incur expenses on your behalf. Because many people start planning longer trips a year or more in advance, it can be difficult to fill an empty spot at the last minute.

In order to receive a refund for a course, we require you to submit a written notice of cancellation. Your refund comes from your travel insurance. If you elected not to take travel insurance there is no refund. Rev. 1/09

### ***What Next?***

For questions, email Reed Hoffmann at [reed@reedhoffmann.com](mailto:reed@reedhoffmann.com). If you'd like to register, contact Pack Paddle Ski, [info@packpaddleski.com](mailto:info@packpaddleski.com).