

# DOUGLAS TOMPKINS NATIONAL PARK

Northern Patagonia, Chile

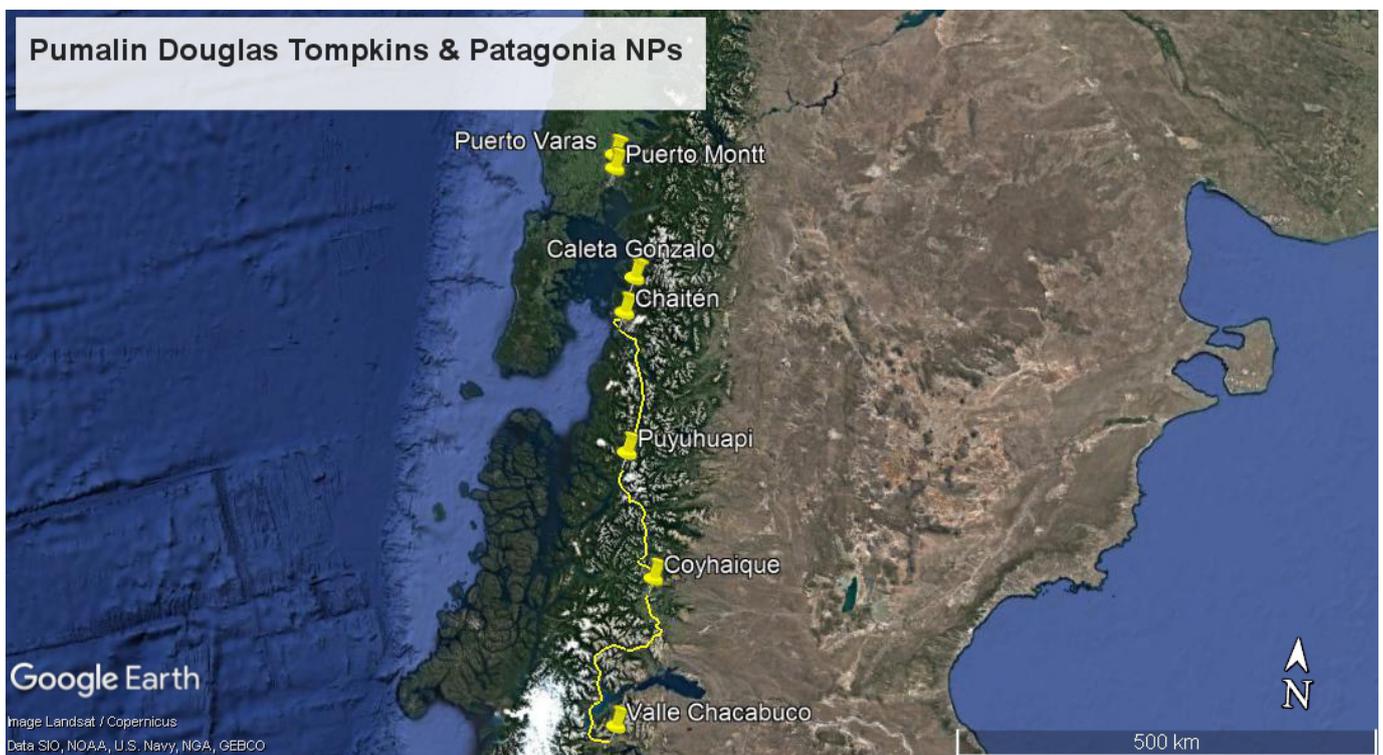
- Duration** 12 days / 11 nights
- Difficulty** Moderate + ●●●○
- Departure** November to April

## OVERVIEW

This trip visits two newer national parks in Chile: Pumalín Douglas Tompkins National Park in the northern area of Patagonia and to the south, Patagonia National Park. The parks were private reserves donated by the Tompkins Foundation to Chile to promote sustainable agriculture, assist local communities and promote conservation. Pumalín is primarily a humid, cold temperate forest ecosystem punctuated by the soaring Michimahuida and Chaiten volcanoes, the latter of which erupted in 2008. Rustic hot springs are within a short drive for soaking after long hikes. Patagonia National Park to the south protects grassland ecosystems, as well forests, mountains, and glaciers. The heart of the park is the Chacabuco Valley, an east-west valley that forms a pass over the Andes and a transition zone between the Patagonia steppe grasslands on the Argentina side and the southern beech forests farther west. The valley is a natural corridor for wildlife like Guanacos, Andean Deer, Rheas and Pumas and the park offers many easy hikes and wildlife options. The accommodation is the beautiful Lodge Chacabuco with a high standard of comfort and service and built with sustainability in mind.

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Plenty of hiking trail options with very little driving.
- ★ Nights spent lodging in rustic chic cabins that border on luxury.
- ★ Immerse yourself in Jurassic Park-like temperate rainforest, populated with grand alerce trees, the second oldest in the world and known as the South American sequoia.
- ★ Contrasting landscapes fascinate with rugged volcanoes, fjords, glaciers, rushing rivers and natural hot springs.



## DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

### Day 1. Puerto Montt

Arrive at airport in Puerto Montt, the gateway to Patagonia and a major port town in Chile. Transfer to your hotel for a welcome dinner and trip briefing.

**Accommodations:** Radisson Hotel Puerto Varas or similar

**Meals:** D

**Transport:** 15 min. drive

### Day 2. Pumalin National Park

Early flight from Puerto Montt to Chaiten, then drive north to arrive at Pumalín National Park. Around midday, we will begin our hike to Laguna Tronador, where we have the opportunity to wander through a forest of majestic, towering alerce trees, some of which are nearly 3,000 years old. A second option is a 2-hour hike on the Las Cascades Trail to visit waterfalls, followed by a 40-minute hike to the alerce forest.

**Accommodations:** Cabañas Caleta Gonzalo

**Meals:** B, L, D

**Activity:** 4 hours hike /4.98 km-3.1 miles

**Transport:** 40 min. drive/ 40 min. flight

*Note: Flight to Chaiten allows maximum weight is 20k/44lb check-in plus a small carry on.*

### Day 3. Volcano Chaitén

Today we take a short but steep hike up the flank of the Volcano Chaitén to a viewpoint affording a look at the volcano's recent 2008 eruption, which caused significant damage to the surrounding forest and can be fully appreciated from this point. As a bonus, the views from the summit are electrifying, stretching out to the Pacific Ocean and with vistas of the surrounding fumaroles.

**Accommodations:** Cabañas Caleta Gonzalo

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** 5-6 hours hike - 3.1 Miles /5 km; about 2,000 ft/ 560m elevation gain

**Transport:** 45 min. drive

### Day 4. Michimahuida

The Michimahuida trail is one of the least transited in the country, and it is a primordial, almost impenetrable forest and wetland of beech, twisted arrayán, and cypress dripping in moss,

lichens, and billowy ferns. We'll keep an eye out for hard-to-see wildlife such as the Magellanic woodpecker or the pudú, the smallest deer in the world. The trail ends with a lovely view of the Michimahuida Volcano's west face, before returning on the same trail.

**Accommodations:** Cabañas Caleta Gonzalo

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** 9 hours hike – 15 Miles/ 24 km; 2,300 ft / 700 m elevation gain

**Transport:** 40 min. drive

### **Day 5. Puyuhuapi**

We'll spend half the day hiking the Las Cascadas trail, followed by a 3-hour van ride south to the Puyuhuapi Lodge & Spa for the evening. "The Waterfalls" trail is very scenic as it winds through an exceptionally dense, mossy rainforest, crossing rivers, climbing over rocks, and ending at a crashing waterfall. Once back at camp, we'll jump in the van for the stunning drive south along the narrow, winding Southern Highway, until it unfolds into a grand ocean sound at Puyuhuapi, where we'll board a boat for a quick ride to the lodge, well-known for its collection of hot springs overlooking the sound.

**Accommodations:** Hotel Puyuhuapi

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** 3 hours hike – 2 Miles/ 3 km

**Transport:** 3.5 hours' drive – 149 Miles/ 240 km – 5 minutes boat

### **Day 6. Queulat National Park and Coyhaique**

Today we'll visit a little-known national park, Queulat, for a short, leisurely hike along a river and through temperate rainforest until reaching a lookout platform with picture-perfect views of a hanging glacier and its cascading rivers. After lunch, we'll continue to south through changing Patagonian scenery to Coyhaique, the region's largest city in the Aysén region, where we'll spend the night and get a taste of local culture and cuisine.

**Accommodations:** Hotel Dreams Coyhaique

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** 2 hours hike – 4 Miles/ 6,5 km; 1,200 ft/ 350 m elevation gain

**Transport:** 4.5 hours' drive – 145 Miles/ 230 km

### **Day 7. Patagonia National Park**

We'll hop in the van early and drive to Patagonia National Park, with views along the way of Cerro Castillo National Park and the emerald Lake General Carrera, the second largest in South America. Before arriving to Chacabuco Valley, we will stop at the roaring confluence of the electric blue waters of the mighty Baker River and the milkier, glacier-fed Neff River. We'll enjoy an early night at the cozy, attractive Lodge Chacabuco, in preparation for tomorrow's hike.

**Accommodations:** Lodge Chacabuco

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** 30 min. walk

**Transport:** 6-7 hours' drive – 195 Miles/ 315 km

### **Day 8. Lagunas Atlas Trail**

Today's day hike is a long one at 23 miles, but it will take us to the top of a mountain range that offers dramatic views of the Chacabuco Valley and the Jeinimeni Range and the northern Patagonia ice field. As the trail zigzags across the hillside to gain elevation, we will cross numerous small streams and then enter a thick beech forest. Here, the trek grows challenging for 4 miles, looping around gemstone lakes until descending back to the park's administration center.

**Accommodations:** Lodge Chacabuco

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** 7 hours hike – 14 Miles/ 22.5 km; 3,900 ft/ 1,200m gain elevation

### **Day 9. Lago Chico Trail**

Today we will drive east on a bumpy road towards the border with Argentina to reach the Lago Chico Trail. The trail is lightly transited, and will take about half a day, looping around the eastern section of the park through a section of once-burned forest, then through grasslands and beech forest. The trail borders part of Chico and Cochrane lakes, and the reward is a stunning view of Mt. San Lorenzo, the second highest in Patagonia, and the Cochrane Range in the distance.

**Accommodations:** Lodge Chacabuco

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** 4 hours hike – 7.5 Miles/ 12 km

**Transport:** 1-hour drive

**Day 10. Valle Chacabuco**

We'll spend the day in Valle Chacabuco, on a more leisurely walk/hike around lagoons and grassland ecosystems looking for wildlife and enjoying scenic views of the park. We will have opportunities to see guanacos, flamingos, black-necked swans, and perhaps the elusive austral pigmy owl or puma.

**Accommodations:** Lodge Chacabuco

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** Full day mixture of hiking, walking, and driving

**Day 11. Aviles Valley**

Today's trek will take us to one of the park's most remote and dramatic trails, the Aviles Valley Loop. The hike covers grassland, groves, and rivers, and offers beautiful views of the valley with mountains as a backdrop. Halfway through the hike we will cross a hanging footbridge that swings 100 feet above the Aviles River, continuing the hike and looping back to our point of origination.

**Accommodations:** Lodge Chacabuco

**Meals:** B, BL, D

**Activity:** 5 hours hike - 10 Miles/ 16 km; about 1,000 ft/ 230m gain elevation

**Transport:** 1-hour drive

**Day 12. Balmaceda Airport**

After breakfast, we return to the Balmaceda Airport and bid farewell. End of Services.

**Meal:** B

**Transport:** 6-7-hour drive - 95 Miles/ 315 km

## **INCLUDED**

- Local knowledgeable English-speaking guide (1:6 clients)
- Park Entrances
- Private transfer throughout program
- Meals as stated 11 B(reakfast), 10 L/ BL (Lunch/ packed lunch), 11 D(inner)
- 1 night in Hostel/ Hotel in Puerto Varas
- 3 nights in Cabañas Caleta Gonzalo
- 1 night in Hostel/ Hotel in Puyuhuapi
- 1 night in Hostel/ Hotel in Coyhaique
- 5 nights in Patagonia NP (lodge/ camping)
- Group bio security equipment (according to international standards)
- Emergency kit: Wilderness First aid kit, VHF/ UHF radio and Satellite phone

## **NOT INCLUDED**

- Beverage
- Tips to local guides & other personnel
- International and national airfare to/ from Santiago de Chile, Puerto Montt and Balmaceda
- Personal bio security kit (mask, gloves etc)
- Personal medical and evacuation insurance (obligatory)