

PATAGONIA OFF THE GRID

Northern Patagonia, Chile

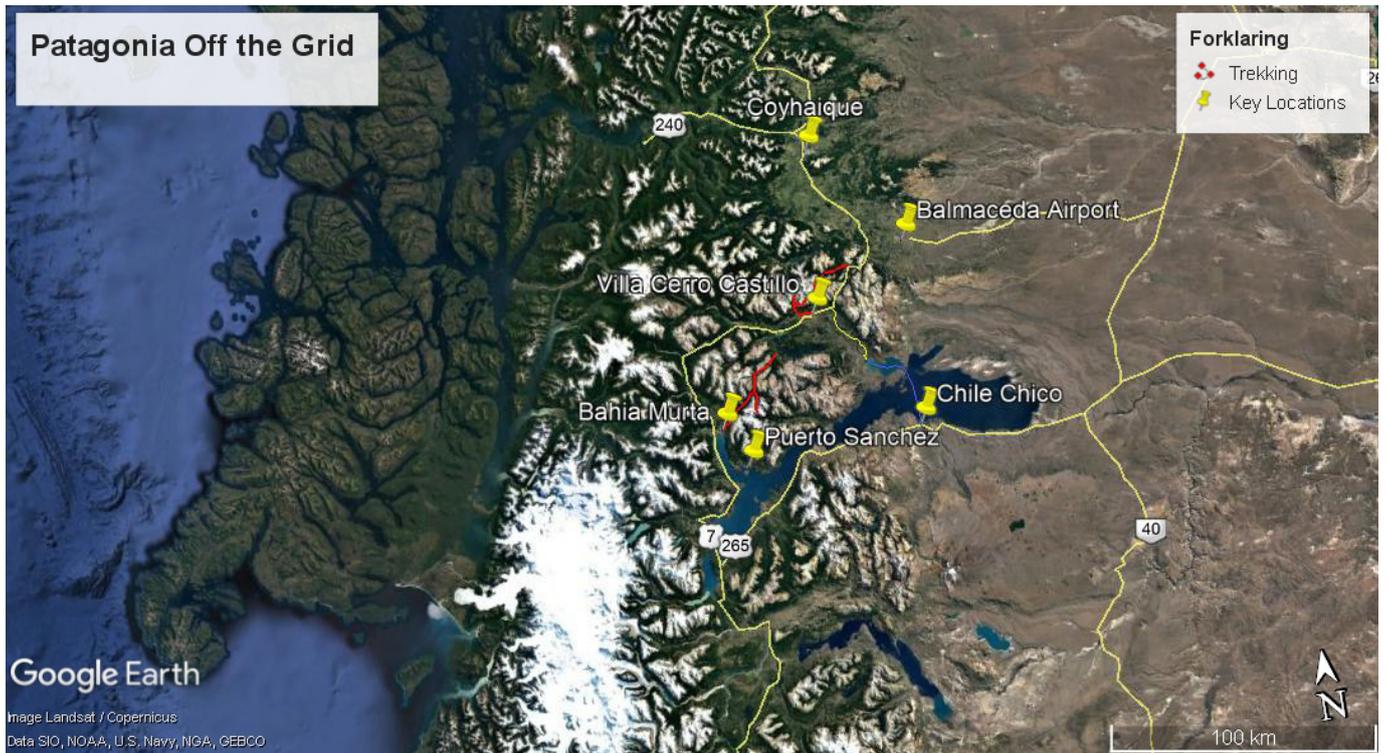
- Duration** 12 days / 11 nights
- Difficulty** Advanced ●●●○
- Departure** November to March

OVERVIEW

Get under the skin of the newly established “Ruta de los Parques” in the heart of Patagonia, introducing you to pristine nature and gaucho culture. A unique trip for the experienced hiker that takes you to two national parks as well as an off-the-grid trek along the route, always with incredible views of the Northern Patagonian Ice Field, the immense pampa, the San Lorenzo and San Valentin; the highest peaks of Patagonia as well as the biggest lake in Chile, Chelanko; we will kayak on its turquoise waters through the marvelous Marble Caves.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Two backcountry trails in the heart of Northern Patagonia that are off the grid.
- ★ Get up-close with the gaucho culture along the Southern Highway route.
- ★ Get close and connect with the biggest lake in Chile, Chelanko.
- ★ Kayak on the second largest lake in South America exploring the ethereal Marble Caves.



DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1. Arrive in Balmaceda and Coyhaique

Arrive at the Balmaceda airport and transfer to hotel in Coyhaique. In the evening, you'll meet your guide who will host a welcome dinner and general briefing.

Accommodation: Hostel or hotel in Coyhaique

Meals: D

Day 2. Cerro Castillo NP and beginning of trek

We will depart early morning by private van to Cerro Castillo with time to stop and observe the surroundings and the fauna (guanacos, lesser rheas and condors). We start the first part of the trek of 55 km at the Las Horquetas sector next to the Ruta 7 Highway (La Carretera Austral). We approach the beautiful mountains along Estero La Lima, crossing several rivers before arriving at our destination, where we'll set up camp in a beautiful beech forest.

Accommodation: Wilderness Camp at Campground "Rio Turbio"

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 6-7 h trek – 9.3 Miles/15 km; start 2,500 ft/ 770 m – end 3,100 ft/ 940 m

Transport: 2 hours in private van

Day 3. Mountain Pass El Peñon

An intensive day of trekking. We ascend through beech forest arriving at a waterfall that marks the end of the forest and the beginning of alpine environment and more exposure to the elements. After approximately two hours we arrive in the El Peñon Mountain Pass, a windy, narrow passage between two mountain peaks, where sweeping views open of the Turbio Valley, Cerro Peñon and its glacier, and Castillo Lake. We then descend on rocky ground until we enter the beech forest, passing several beautiful lookouts before arriving at camp.

Accommodation: Wilderness Camp at Campground “El Bosque”

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 6h trek – 6,2 miles/10 km - start 3,100 ft/ 940 m – end 3,100ft/ 940 m

Day 4. Laguna Castillo & Second Mountain Pass

We pack up camp early to take advantage of the day, first ascending through forest and arriving to Laguna Castillo just below the Cerro Castillo Peaks. What a view. We continue in steep and slippery alpine environment with impressive views to the south of the Ibañez valley, Lago Chelenko, the Northern Ice Field and the Hudson Volcano. We continue ascending to the highest point of the trip enjoying new views of the Estero Parada. Ahead is a long, steep and loose descent before arriving at camp.

Accommodation: Wilderness Camp at Campground “Porteadores”

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 5h trek – 6,2 miles/10 km - start 3,100ft/ 940 m – end 4,100ft/ 1250 m

Day 5. Explore Circus Valley

We leave camp to enter the lovely Circus Valley surrounded by impressive mountain peaks, amongst them the Cerro Castillo. The weather and group abilities will decide our route today. We hike along Estero Parada past the Neozelandés Camp to the origin of the river at Laguna Duff.

Accommodation: Wilderness Camp at Campground “Porteadores”

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 5h trek – 6,2 miles/10 km - start 4,100ft/ 1250 m – end 4,100ft/ 1250 m

Day 6. End of Trek

Today we take the down camp before heading down the high valley towards Villa Cerro Castillo. We have a huge descent before arriving to Hueitra and flat land to end at our lodging in Villa Cerro Castillo.

Accommodation: Hostel in Villa Cerro Castillo

Meals: B

Activity: 3h trek – 4,5 miles/7 km – start 4,100ft/ 1250 m – end 1,000ft/ 300 m

Day 7. Backcountry

We have a short drive into gaucho land before the trailhead of our second trek to the Towers of Aysen (Torres de Avellano). The valleys are still transited by gauchos and their cattle. We start off on private land winding our way through valleys containing forest and abundant lakes and rivers, many of which we cross, penetrating deep into the forest and always with the striking Avellano Mountain range in sight. We camp close to a gaucho shelter in a beautiful “dead” forest.

Accommodation: Wilderness Camp at Campground “Puestos”

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 5h trek – 9 miles/14 km – start 3,100`/ 950 m – end 2,700`/ 830 m

Transport: 1 hour in private van

Day 8. Torres del Avellano Lookout

Today we take a daypack and head deep into the most spectacular valley of the entire Avellano Massif. We ascend abruptly, bordering a river carrying glacial melt from the Towers. The trail is very little traveled and presents certain challenges and bush-bashing while still under the tree line. We pass two beautiful high-altitude lagoons before the last ascent to the saddle that makes the Torres del Avellano Lookout. We take in the breathtaking views in all directions and savor the moment, all alone in deep nature before taking the same trail down and back to camp.

Accommodation: Wilderness Camp at Campground “Puestos”

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 9h trek – 9 miles/ 14 km – start 2,700 ft/ 830 m – end 2,700 ft/ 830 m

Day 9. Gaucho Trails

We pack up camp and take the western route out of the valley following the Murta River on

trails only travelled by gauchos on horseback. Bahia Murta is situated just off the Ruta 7 Highway and is a very small agricultural and artisanal village. It is becoming famous for the best organic beef and the highly valued murta jam. We will camp here, explore the village and the confluence of 3 rivers running out into Lago Chelenko.

Accommodation: Camp at Campground "Murta"

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 8h trek – 12,5 miles/ 20 km – start 2,700 ft/ 830 m – end 820 ft/ 250 m

Day 10. Marble Caves of Lake Chelenko

In the morning, we join a guided tour to Puerto Sanchez on the shores of Lake Chelenko, the largest lake in Chile. We set out kayaks on the turquoise waters and paddle to Isla Panichini. We will visit the old port from where locals crossed the lake before the Southern Highway was built during the last part of last century. We pass abandoned boats on our way to the island, and then explore the fantastic marble caves on its western shores. Upon returning to the shore we will drive around the Chelenko Lago to take in the incredible and changing scenery.

Accommodation: Hostel or cabaña in Chile Chico

Meals: B, BL

Activity: 7h kayak expedition (approx. 3-4 hours in kayak – no previous experience)

Day 11. Patagonia National Park

Today we drive into the new Patagonia National Park to experience the vast pampas, unbelievable rock formations and ancient cave paintings. A perfect and leisurely ending to an incredible backcountry trekking trip. Tonight, we finish this amazing journey through culture and nature with a goodbye dinner in the hotel.

Accommodation: Hostel in Chile Chico

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 4-5 h hike

Day 12. Goodbye Patagonia

In the morning we are taken across the Lake Chelenko to the northern shore where a beautiful valley takes us north towards the Carretera Austral Southern Highway (Ruta 7) to the Balmaceda Airport to catch an early afternoon flight out to Santiago. End of Services.

Meals: B

Transport: 2 hours boat ride & 3 hours private transport

INCLUDED

- Skilled English speaking guide (1:6 clients)
- Park Entrances
- Private groundtransport throughout the trip
- Porters in Cerro Castillo & Torres de Avellano carrying camp equipment from day 2 to 9
- All meals as stated 11B (Breakfast), 9BL (Packed Lunch) and 9D (Dinner)
- 1 nights in hostel/ hotel in Coyhaique
- 1 night in Refugio Cerro Castillo
- 1 night in Camping in Bahia Murta
- 2 nights in hostel or cabaña, Chile Chico
- 6 nights Wilderness Camping
- Kayak excursion to the Marble Caves
- Group bio security equipment (according to international standards)
- Emergency kit: Wilderness First aid kit, VHF/ UHF radio and Satellite phone
- Tents and Camp equipment (pots, stoves, utensils etc)

NOT INCLUDED

- Beverages
- Tips to local guides & other personel
- International and national airfare to Santiago de Chile and Balmaceda
- Personal equipment (sleeping bag, sleeping pad, technical clothes, trekking boots etc.)
- Porters to carry personal equipment or share of food (can be contracted)
- Personal bio security kit (mask, gloves etc)
- Personal medical and evacuation insurance (obligatory)