

HUT-TO-HUT TREK IN PATAGONIA BINATIONAL PARK

Northern Patagonia, Chile & Argentina

- Duration** 9 days / 8 nights
- Difficulty** Advanced ● ● ● ◐
- Departure** November to March

OVERVIEW

A distinctive “northern” Patagonia experience visiting both Chile and Argentina via a “Hut to Hut” trek that is situated in some of the most remote terrain of the newly formed Patagonia Binational Park. The trail follows an old route once used by smugglers trafficking goods and animals between Argentina and Chile. The rustic huts are outfitted basecamps that allow for basic comfort, tucked away in beech forest in the enchanting El Zeballos and Chacabuco valleys. The Patagonia Park was a private reserve donated by the late Doug Tompkins and his wife Kris, and it is now part of the country’s national park system, known for its combination of cold steppe, wetlands, deciduous forests, and high mountain terrain. The trip includes a scenic drive along Chile’s famous Southern Highway, winding through breathtaking fjord land and emerald temperate rainforest.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Explore the newly developed Patagonia Park, a major conservation project between Chile and Argentina.
- ★ Discover the diversity of fauna in Patagonia, including huemul deer, pumas, guanaco, condors, rheas, flamingos and more.
- ★ Spend several nights in a wood-hewn hut next to a warm fire, using the huts as a base to trek through wilderness not seen by many travelers.
- ★ Enjoy a scenic ride along Chile's most famous highway, the Carretera Austral.



DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1. Chile Chico

Upon arrival at Balmaceda Airport in Chile, your trip leader will transport you to the north shore of Lago General Carrera, offering dramatic views along the way of the peaks of Cerro Castillo and the raging Ibáñez River. Following lunch in the village of Puerto Ibañez, we'll board the ferry Tehuelche for a 2.5-hour ride to the windswept yet charming village of Chile Chico and the Campamento Ñandú Hostel.

Accommodation: Hostel in Chile Chico

Meals: L, D

Transportation: Private bus transfer/2.5 hours ferry

Day 2. Hiking the Luna Valley

After a relaxed breakfast, we depart to the Lunar Valley for a 5-hour hike that highlights surreal geological formations formed 350 million years ago, well before the Andes range. Here we are also treated to a visit to the Cueva de Manos to view evocative, ancient cave art dated to 9,000 years ago. Night in Chile Chico.

Accommodation: Hostel in Chile Chico

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 5 hours trekking -5 miles/ 8 km; 2,000 ft/ 610 m elevation gain

Transportation: 1-hour private van transfer

Day 3. Trek to Glacier Hut

From Chile Chico, a 1-hour drive across the Patagonian plains and along the Jeinimeni River (the geographical border between Chile and Argentina) will put us at the north entrance of Patagonia Park. Here we will check in, shoulder our packs and start our 16-mile hike along the vibrant turquoise waters of Jeinimeni Lake. The trail crosses wide, shallow rivers with lots of milky glacial silt and river debris, heading over La Gloria Pass, with gorgeous views of Jeinimeni and Verde lakes. A number of steep inclines follow before reaching Glacier Hut Camp, where a roaring fire, hot shower and welcome drink await.

Accommodation: Glacier Hut Camp

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 9-10 hours trekking - 16 Miles/ 26 km; 750ft/ 230 m elevation gain

Transportation: 1-hour private van transfer

Day 4. Trek Glacier Hut Camp to Lago Superior Circuit

We will embark today on a more technical trek of the Lago Superior circuit, stopping for lunch at the hanging glacier of Punta Guanaco peak. The hike is steep, ascending eroded rock and gullies until it reaches the dramatic landscape of Baguales Glacier, named after the wild horses the original settlers found there. Enjoy exhilarating views of glacial lakes and cascading waterfalls before returning via the same path to Glacier Hut Camp for dinner.

Accommodation: Glacier Hut Camp

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 4-5 hours trekking - 4 Miles/ 6,5 km; 1,000ft/ 300 m elevation gain

Day 5. Trek to Renoval Hut

Leaving early, we'll begin our trek with impressive views of the Jeinimeni, El Tronador and Las Llaves mountain ranges. Leaving the open alpine terrain, we'll enter a lush evergreen forest, descending to the Avilés Valley and passing by small lakes and a stand of ancient beech trees, until reaching the Renoval Hut Camp. Along the way, we will see gaucho-dwelling shelters, giving us a glimpse of the past.

Accommodation: Renoval Hut Camp

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 5-6 hours trekking - 9 Miles/ 15 km; 300ft / 90 m elevation gain, 1,900ft/ 580 m elevation loss.

Day 6. Trek Mount Tronador Lookout Circuit

This morning we'll hike up the north Aviles Valley through beech forest, on the search for Magellanic woodpeckers and the endangered huemul deer, until we reach Mount Tronador, which we can view along with its glaciers. Night at the Hut Renoval Camp.

Accommodation: Renoval Hut Camp

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 5-6 hours trekking - 6.5 Miles/ 10 km; 500ft/150 m elevation gain

Day 7. Trek from Aviles River to Chelenco Lake – Chile Chico

The last day of the trek takes us across the wide rivers of the Avilés Valley. Depending on weather conditions, we'll take part in a river crossing undertaken with a rope-and-harness system, which is normally the most exhilarating part of this day's journey. This route follows cattle trails that gauchos have used to get their animals to summer pasture, with picadas

(narrow cut trails) beside a canyon and corrals, ending at the old mining town of Fachinal in Lake General Carrera. Concluding our hike, our van will bring us back to Chile Chico.

Accommodation: Hostel Chile Chico

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: 9-10 hours trekking - 14 Miles/ 22.5 km; 500ft/ 150 m elevation gain, 1,000ft/ 300 m elevation loss

Transportation: ½ hour in private van

Day 8. Wildlife Conservation and Land Restoration in Patagonia Binational Park

This morning we will cross the border to the Argentine town Los Antiguos, followed by Monte Zeballos and Patagonia Park. We reach the border again at Baker Pass Entrance, then drive along the park with a stop at the restored house of the British pioneer of the region, passing guanaco herds and lakes dotted with flamingos. This once overgrazed sheep and cattle ranch now protects an abundance of Patagonian steppe grasslands and rebounding wildlife. The binational restoration project here is one of the largest of its kind in the world. We will visit the information center, then continue our drive to our cabin along the most voluminous river in Chile: the Baker.

Accommodation: Green Baker Cabin – Puerto Bertrand

Meals: B, BL, D

Activity: Visitors Center. Trekking optional (Chacabuco creek or Lagunas Altas)

Transportation: 4-hour private van transfer

Day 9. Departure, Carretera Austral

Drive back to the Balmaceda Airport via the Carretera Austral, Chile's internationally renowned scenic highway. After breakfast, a bumpy ride along the Baker River follows, with its hypnotic turquoise waters that rush through dense southern beech forests. The drive continues with dramatic views of Lake General Carrera and the Patagonian Andes. After stopping for a picnic lunch, arrive at the airport for trip to Santiago. End of services.

Meals: B, BL,

Transportation: 5 hours private van transfer

INCLUDED

- Local knowledgeable English-speaking guide (1:6 clients)
- Park Entrances
- Private transfer throughout the trip
- Porters to carry food and camp equipment from day 3 to 7
- Meals as stated 8 B(Breakfast), 9 BL (packed lunch), 8 D(Dinner)
- 3 nights in Hostel/ Hotel in Chile Chico
- 1 night in Green Baker Cabin in Puerto Bertrand
- 4 nights in Wilderness Camp
- 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

- Beverage
- Tips to local guides & other personnel
- International and national airfare to Santiago de Chile and Balmaceda
- Personal equipment (sleeping bag and liner, mattress, technical clothes, trekking boots etc.)
- Porters to carry personal equipment (can be contracted)
- Personal bio security kit (mask, gloves etc)
- Personal medical and evacuation insurance (obligatory)