



JANUARY 2020

TREKKING IN PATAGONIA

TORRES DEL PAINE W CIRCUIT

5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS

THE REGION

Patagonia is mainly shaped by three factors: geological and tectonic forces, the **Icefields** and the **Wind**. The Andean Cordillera is the longest mountain range in the world, stretching from Colombia to Chile for about 8000km; it represents the backbone of South America and shapes the landscape throughout the sub-continent, particularly in the southern most part of it. The predominant western winds (the **Westerlies**) carry moisture from the Pacific ocean and as they slam into the Chilean coast the mountains force moisture-laden air up, drenching the western side of the range in rain and burying the summits in snow. Patagonia's extensive network of glaciers is thus built and shaped by the wind, and the delicate balance of glacial ice in these temperate latitude depends on the strength and constancy of the Westerlies. Towards the East lies instead a flat and drier landscape, the **Patagonian Steppe** or Pampa, dominated by yellow-cushioned bushes and grasses and where average rainfall is almost as equal to a desert-like environment. **Torres del Paine National Park** lies right in the middle of this scenario, thus its importance as a special ecosystem and a worldwide recognized Biosphere Reserve; from one side the **Southern Patagonian Icefield** and from another the grassy **Steppe**, right in the middle the craggy, granite peaks of the **Paine Massif** that we will traverse from West to East along a marvellous 5-day hiking circuit.



THE TREKKING

Paine Massif W Circuit, is a non-technical trekking connecting the best-of-the-best of Patagonia **Torres del Paine National Park**. On this **5-day trekking** and lodging adventure, you'll hike **more than 60 km** (37 miles) along one of the world's classic trails; continually accompanied by granite mountains, countless glacier-fed lakes, untamed weather and spectacular views of the **Southern Patagonian Ice Field**.

Starting with a glimpse of the iconic **Three-Tower** which give the Park's name, we'll move to a less explore area following **Nordenskjold Lake** till reaching **Los Cuernos** Mountain Hut and Cabins located right at the feet of the monstrous-shape-like **Paine Horns** geologically composed by a "sandwich" of granite and metamorphic Hornfels.

From here we'll slightly ascend through a beech forest to explore the amphitheater of the magical **French Valley** before continuing towards West alongside **Skottsberg Lake** to reach **Paine Grande** before tackling our last stretch of the W, the 7 miles to **Grey Refuge** and the impressive ice-walls of **Grey Glacier**. We call it the "Bluest Grey Ever", and you'll understand why during your last farewell trip across **Grey Lake**!



DETAILED PROGRAM

1° DAY: PUERTO NATALES --> BASE TORRES

22km (13.5 Miles) - Elevation Gain: +/-770m (+/-9600 ft) - Hiking Time: 7-8 hrs

Departing Puerto Natales early in the morning we travel to Torres del Paine National Park via unpaved accompanied by jumping guanacos, elusive grey foxes and black-necked swans. Our first challenge is the ascent to Base Torres lookout, following the Ascencio River into the Ascencio Valley. After our first hour-an-half trek we'll pause to observe the magnificent valley filled up with beech forests, glaciers and waterfalls. We'll then continue uphill for another 90 minutes and prepare to ascend a gigantic terminal moraine. At the top, we'll be rewarded by the arresting sight of the Towers themselves. At this lookout point 900 meters above sea level, the three granite spires appear to burst dramatically out of the rocky landscape, while at their base a green-blue lake provides a counterpoint of stillness. Here, we'll have lunch and take pictures before beginning our descent down the same path and to our mountain lodge: Refugio Torre Central.

2° DAY: TORRE CENTRAL --> LOS CUERNOS

11km (7 Miles) - Elevation Gain: +/-250m (+/-750 ft) - Hiking Time: 4-5 hrs

After breakfast, we take the trail towards Los Cuernos (The Horns), spectacular peaks of granite and metamorphic rocks. Compared to the steep ascends of the previous day, this is an easy-going trail with great views of the mountains and the lakes with few ascents and descents. Around midday we stop for a picnic next to the Lake Nordenskjöld and we continue to Refugio Los Cuernos where we stay overnight in one of the Private Cabins (with share bathrooms).

3° DAY: LOS CUERNOS --> PAINE GRANDE

16km (9 Miles) - Elevation Gain: +/-350m)+/.4500 ft) - Hiking Time: 6-7 hrs

After early breakfast we start our hike up to the French Valley; it's 2,5 hours walk from Refugio Los Cuernos to the Italian Campsite where we can leave our backpacks and continue to the French Plateau which is going to be a short detour that will lead us to one of the most spectacular views of the W circuit: a 360° view of the hanging glacier of Paine Grande and its numerous avalanches, the granitic peaks of Espada, Hoja, Mascara and Cuerno Norte and the beautiful lake Nordenskjöld and Pehoe standing towards the south. After having our lunch break on the lookout we walk back to Italian campsite to pick up our backpacks and we continue to the Refugio Paine Grande for a couple of hours of easy walk.



DETAILED PROGRAM

4° DAY: PAINE GRANDE --> GREY

11 km (7 Miles) - Elevation Gain: +/-250m (+/-850 ft) - Hiking Time: 3,5-4 hrs

On our fourth day in the park we start to hike up to the Grey Valley. After 3,5 hrs walking we arrive to Refugio Grey and we keep walking to the Grey lookout where you can see the eastern face of the Grey Glacier. Relax and overnight stay at Refugio Grey.

5° DAY: GREY --> PUERTO NATALES

10km (6,5 Miles) - Elevation Gain: +/-200m (+/-600 ft) - Hiking Time: 3,5-4 hrs

Day of optional activities. Early morning if weather permits we can enjoy kayaking in Grey lake near icebergs; as an alternative we can proceed towards Campamento Paso going across two hanging bridges to admire Grey Glacier from another perspective. The hike might last a couple of hours each way whereas kayaking will be over around midday. At 2pm we will take our boat from Refugio Grey to visit the Grey Glacier and after 2.5hrs journey we will disembark at Playa Grey where we will take our private transfer back to Puerto Natales. Overnight in Puerto Natales.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Entrance to Torres del Paine National Park
- 4 Nights Lodging in Mountain Huts
- All Meals indicated in the Program except for Breakfast on Day 1 and Dinner on Day 5
- Private Transportation Puerto Natales - Torres del Paine NP Round Trip
- Catamaran to Visit Grey Glacier and cross Grey Lake
- Certified Guide of Torres del Paine National Park

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Any Additional Nights
- Travel Insurance (Air/Ground Evacuation Costs)
- Medical Insurance
- Alcoholic and Non-Alcoholic Drinks except the ones included in the Menu
- Kayak Activity on Day 5
- Gratuities for Guide

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

- Daypack (40-50Lts approx)
- Hiking Boots/ Waterproof Hiking Shoes
- Rainproof Jacket and Pants
- Second Layer Fleece
- Hiking T-shirts and Hiking Pants (quick dry material)
- Down or Synthetic Jacket for Cold & Wind at the Mountain Passes
- Normal T-Shirt for Mountain Huts Use
- Base Layer for Sleeping
- Hiking Socks and Underwear
- Gloves & Beanie
- Flip/Flops or Sandals
- Trek Towel (They rented at the campsite but better to bring your personal one)
- Dry Bags and Backpack Rain Cover
- Hiking Poles
- Hat and High UV Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Headlamp
- Toiletries (Tooth Paste, Tooth Brush, etc..)
- Personal Medication (i.e. Painkillers, Blister Bandage, Plasters, etc....)
- 1 Lt. Water Flask (We don't use purifying tablets although if you are used to feel free to carry them)
- Favourite Trail Bars
- Passport/Immigration Paper/Money/Credit Cards