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Trip Notes

TORRES DEL PAINE CIRCUIT

Trip code: TAT
 Country: Chile
 Amended: November 2009
 Edition No: ER 1 2010
 Valid from: 01 Jan - 31 Dec 2010



HIGHLIGHTS

- 4* Hotel accommodation in Santiago.
- 3 nights luxury camping in EcoCamp Patagonia. Built in 2000, this is the first ecolodge in Patagonia.
- Optional half-day hike on the Grey Glacier. Located at the south end of the Southern Patagonia Ice Field, the glacier is more than 5 miles across and 10 miles in length.

SUMMARY



This adventurous trip is considered by many to be one of the world's classic trekking routes, and with good reason. In the heart of Chilean Patagonia we find ourselves in Torres del Paine National Park, where the Paine massif dominates the landscape. The incomparable Towers of Paine are undoubtedly one of the park's main highlights, yet we marvel at much more during the trip - beautiful forests, immense, dramatic glaciers, azure lakes and the wild desolation of Patagonia. This unique itinerary follows a new route, which provides superb views of the north side of the Paine Massif, and starts and ends in an excellent fixed eco-camp, probably the best accommodation in the Park.

IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

This is a challenging yet highly rewarding trip. It is necessary for you to have some experience of varied walks in irregular terrain. The entire trip is at low altitude. Some of the trails in the National Park can be overgrown in places, but are generally very good. On the point-to-point trek, several days involve 8 to 11 hours walking, and you should be comfortable with extended walks of this nature.

5 days point-to-point walking, 2 daywalks. Full portorage. Maximum altitude 1300m. Grade C.

JOINING THE TRIP IN LONDON

13 days, depart London Sunday, return Friday.

Itinerary start

The group flight from London is an overnight flight departing the day before Day 1 of the itinerary.

Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of **Lan Airlines** (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly, we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

We also have internal flights -

Return flights from Santiago to Punta Arenas

These flights are included for all clients.

If booking regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the international check in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum, but baggage handling is known to be subject to delays.

Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are included for those on the group flights. Please note that transfers are not included for clients arriving on any other flight, even if Exodus have booked it. Those arriving from London on non-group flights should read the airport transfer section below for information on reaching the start point. Please check with the Exodus office if you are unsure whether or not a transfer is included.



Exodus Travels Ltd

Grange Mills, Weir Road, London SW12 0NE

Sales & Reservations: (44) 0845 330 6008 • Fax: (44) 020 8673 0779 • E-mail: sales@exodus.co.uk • www.exodus.co.uk



JOINING THE TRIP IN SANTIAGO

Duration: 11 days. Start Santiago, end Santiago.

Clients travelling on land only arrangements will be asked to make their own way to the start point (see above), details of how to reach the start point are given in the Final Joining Instructions. If you require airport transfers, please see Airport Transfers section below.

Airport Transfers

Transfers are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight. If you arrive before the group flight, you may (by prior arrangement only) be able to join the group transfer. If you do not take this transfer, you must make your own way to the joining point.

If you would like us to organise a private transfer for you, please enquire with our sales team for a price. Please ensure that you provide us with all relevant information at least 2 weeks before departure. Please note that the cost of a taxi is likely to be about \$25, should you decide to make your way independently.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

The entries in bold at the end of each day indicates the type of accommodation normally used (see accommodation section overleaf for key to codes) and meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner).

Please note the group flight from London is an overnight flight departing the day before Day 1 of the itinerary.

Day 1 Start Sanitago. The city fronts the usually snowcapped Andes, which provides us with a great vista to explore the blend of colonial and modern Santiago. In the afternoon, we take a city tour (approx. 3 hours), visiting the squares and streets of the colonial centre, and the Presidential palace. **CH**

Day 2 Early flight to Punta Arenas. Transfer to Puerto Natales where we will have lunch and some time to explore the town. Continue onto Torres del Paine N.P., where we transfer to the eco-camp. In the Chilean summer, the sun sets around 11pm, which gives us plenty of light to admire the landscape en route. **CC (B,L,D)**

Day 3 We start our trekking journey with the celebrated hike to the foot of the impressive granite massif of El Paine. From here we can admire the fantastic sight of the Towers of Paine (weather permitting) rising above a green lagoon. The famous Torres del Paine consist of three gigantic granite monoliths, the remains of a great cirque that has been sheared away by the forces of glacial ice. (Approx 13 miles round-trip, 9-10 hours walking) **CC (B,L,D)**

Day 4 The day will start at the EcoCamp with a long trek heading towards Dickson Lake. We enjoy a spectacular view of Dickson Glacier and part of the Hielo Patagonico Sur (South Patagonia Ice Field). The trek continues along the eastern bank of the Rio Paine. We will stop at a lookout point with a wonderful panoramic view of Lago Paine below and then we descend to the lake and continue along the Rio Paine to Refugio Dickson. Our campsite will be in the Dickson Valley surrounded by towering snow capped peaks with Mt. Cubo in the distance. Overnight camping at Dickson. (Approx 18 miles, 11 hours walking) **PC (B,L,D)**

Day 5 Today we follow a trail along the Los Perros River, the wildest and least accessible section of the trek. We walk to the lovely Laguna Los Perros where we set up camp. (Approx 5 miles, 5 hours walking) **PC (B,L,D)**

Day 6 Today we reach the highest point of the circuit (1300 mts) with an awe-inspiring view of the Grey glacier. The route continues south along forested slopes with occasional landslides and a beautiful view of the enormous Grey Glacier (more than five miles across and ten miles in length). (Approx 14 miles, 12 hours walking). **PC (B,L,D)**

Day 7 After a hard day yesterday, the group will have the morning to rest and enjoy the Grey Glacier surroundings. During the morning those who wake up with energy can do an optional ice trekking on Grey Glacier until midday. After lunch the trek continues, the view over the lake, with numerous giant icebergs drifting across the waters is very

impressive at this point. The track climbs onto flat ridges and passes a small lake before descending through a shallow dry valley to arrive at Lago Pehoe. We spend the night in our camp by the turquoise Lake Pehoe. (Approx 7 miles, 5 hours walking) **FC (B,L,D)**

Day 8 After breakfast we start the challenging trek to Valles Frances. This is a steep trail that takes us into the heart of the Paine Massif. We follow the trail until we reach the hanging bridge over the French River. Here we are rewarded with magnificent views of the high valley. After a picnic lunch we descend to our campsite for the night. Cuernos (Approx 15 miles, 8 hours walking) **FC (B,L,D)**

Day 9 Today we start our trek along the Cuernos trail to the EcoCamp. We trek along the beautiful Lake Nordenskold and we enjoy the stunning views of the park lakes and the famous Paine Horns. (Approx 13 miles, 8 to 10 hours walking) **CC (B,L,D)**

Day 10 Early morning transfer back to Punta Arenas for the flight back to Santiago. **CH (B,L)**

Day 11 The trip ends in Santiago after breakfast this morning. Those on group flights will transfer to the airport for the flight back to London. **(B)**

The group return flight to London is an overnight flight arriving home on day 12 (day 13 of package itinerary).

EASTER ISLAND EXTENSION

An optional extension to Easter Island is available after this trek. The price of the extension includes airport transfers, three star hotel accommodation (twin-share with breakfast), sightseeing, entrance fees and one boxlunch. Flights to and from Easter Island are not included.

In the middle of the Pacific Ocean, 4,000 km from the coast of Chile, is an island that still holds a very special mystery and magic. The Europeans discovered 'Rapa Nui', as the locals call it, on Easter Sunday and to this day it is simply referred to as Easter Island. But this island holds an intrigue far greater than one might imagine. So far from everything and everyone, isolated by the largest ocean in the world, it demonstrates a rich history, art, language and interestingly once even suffered a civil war – all upon an island not 25 km across. The Island is an equilateral triangular shape, 24 km across its longest side with extinct volcanic cones in each of its three corners respectively. Amidst an atmosphere of friendly Polynesian hospitality, the entire island is today an open-air museum with approximately 900 Moai (statues), the tallest 21 m high. There is also the Orongo Village and many traditional cave dwellings open to view.

Day 11 Free day in Santiago. **CH (B)**

Day 12 Transfer to the airport for the morning flight to Easter Island. On arrival we transfer to the hotel. Free time, options include a visit to the local museum of Hanga Roa - 'Padre Sebastian Englert'. Hanga Roa is the small capital town of the island. This is where the great majority of the population lives (about 4,000 inhabitants). **CH (B)**

Days 13 Excursion to Rano Kau with visit to the craterlake and the ceremonial village of Orongo, where the birdman culture once chose its king. Also visit the famous Ahu Vinapu, which is similar to pre-Inca architecture. There may be some time to explore the town of Hanga Roa and the Museum of Sebastian Englert. We recommend paying a visit to the local church with its extraordinary woodcarvings. After this we drive across the island to see Ahu Akivi and its seven restored moais. Afterwards we visit the Ana Te Pahu Cave. From here we travel on to Ahu Tepeu and the quarry of Puna Pau. **CH (B)**

Day 14 We take a full day excursion today with visits to Ahus Vaihu and Akahanga along the south coast. Later we drive on to Rano Raraku, which is the site where Moais were carved out of the island's very unique bedrock. There are still approximately 400 statues standing and lying here in different stages of completion. The largest is nearly 22 m tall and weighs approximately 250 tons. From here we drive to Ahu Te Pito Kura and the "Navel of the World". Finally we visit the beach of Anakena with its Ahu Nau Nau before heading back to our hotel. **CH (B,L)**

Day 15 The morning is free before we transfer to the airport for the flight back to Santiago. **CH (B)**

Day 16 Free time to relax. Depart Santiago for London. Those on land only arrangements will leave us in the morning.

The return flight to London is an overnight flight arriving home on day 17 (day 18 of package itinerary)

Please call our sales team for prices.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation

We indicate in the itinerary what type of accommodation is provided on each day. The descriptions below are guidelines only and are used to give an idea of the accommodation offered, rather than an exact description.

Single Accommodation

A single room is available on this trip for the 2 nights hotel (in Santiago) only. This will cost £105 and must be requested at time of booking. It is not possible to provide a single supplement for the camping nights.

KEY TO ACCOMMODATION:

We indicate in the itinerary what type of accommodation is provided on each day. The descriptions are guidelines only and are used to give an idea of the accommodation offered, rather than an exact description.

CH Comfortable Hotel, Lodge or Gite - twin rooms with en suite facilities, reliable electricity and water supply, good service and some added amenities.

CC Comfortable Camping - permanent tented campsites, which generally offer walk-in tents, en suite facilities and proper beds, may have added amenities.

FC Full-service Camping - two person tents sometimes in a private or public campsite that contains a communal ablutions block and other amenities and sometimes in a wild camp with toilet tents and mess tent or dining equipment provided. All camp chores are done for you from erecting / dismantling of your tent, to cooking & washing up.

PC Participatory or Basic Camping - normally in two person tents, although sometimes fixed communal tents are used. Organised campsites if used may only have basic facilities. Wild camps may have no facilities provided. The group performs camp chores, although our staff provides advice and assistance.

FOOD & TRANSPORT

Food

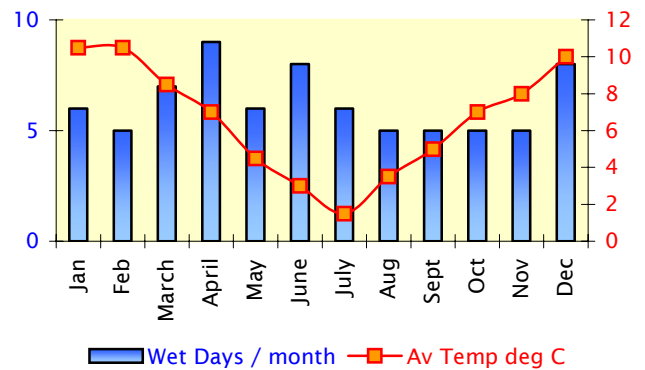
In the itinerary we state which meals are included on which day. You may wish to bring some snacks to eat while trekking.

Transport

For transfers we mostly use minibuses, which are comfortable and have excellent visibility. Most of the roads in the area are metalled and well maintained. There are two internal flights included in the itinerary, normally using the services of Lan Chile.

WEATHER

Punta Arenas



Since Chile is in the southern hemisphere, the seasons are the reverse of those which we experience in Europe; trips are therefore organized between October and March, to take advantage of the longer, warmer days in the rather brief summer period. During these months the summer temperatures in Santiago reach a maximum of 30°C, while in Punta Arenas they are more likely to be around 11°C. Weather in Patagonia is unpredictable and highly changeable, wind is always prevalent and it is quite common that rain, sleet and even snow can follow shortly after a period of sunshine.

PLEASE NOTE: Weather conditions in Patagonia are highly unpredictable most conditions (rain, sleet or sun) are accompanied by a strong wind. Due to the nature of this trip, it may be necessary to alter the itinerary slightly so that you have the best opportunity for making all the passes and having the best possible views of the peaks and surroundings.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment.

Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company. Exodus trips are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.

Recent awards for our work on Responsible Tourism

British Travel Awards: Environmentally Responsible Tourism Company.

Responsible Travel Awards: Best Tour Operator.

BA Tourism for Tomorrow Awards: Highly Commended.

For full details of our Responsible Tourism Policy please visit: www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

British, most European and most other nationalities, including Australians and New Zealanders, do not require visas. All other nationalities should contact the nearest Chilean Embassy if in doubt. Citizens of the USA, Canada, Australia and Mexico pay a fee on first entry into Chile by air (cash US Dollars only, no credit cards or cheques): USA (\$131), Canadian (\$132), Australian (\$61) and Mexican (\$23). There is no fee for other nationalities at the time of writing. The one-time charge is valid for the life of your passport so keep the stub stapled in.

Visa regulations can and do change without notice and if you are not a British passport holder please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

For information on how to obtain visas please call Travcour on 020 7223 5295 or visit their website: <http://www.travcour.com>

PLEASE NOTE – Fresh fruits and vegetables cannot be brought into Chile. Please ensure you are not carrying these goods on arrival. Failure to comply with this legislation will result in large fines.

Vaccinations and Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements for this trip, however it is advised that you are vaccinated against Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid and Hepatitis A.

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions in regards to travel health we strongly recommend you contact your GP or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information.

Nomad Travel Clinics are experts in preparing people for travel, providing expert advice on vaccinations, anti-malarial and staying healthy whilst overseas. We have arranged a special 10% discount for Exodus passengers on any vaccinations that you may require. For information visit the community section of our website or click on this link www.nomadtravel.co.uk/pages/exodus.

For additional information please visit: www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk

Insurance - Are you adequately covered?

Please ask for details of the Exodus insurance policy that has been tailored to provide specific cover for our trips. It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). If taking an alternative policy you must be sure that you are covered for any activities that are part of this trip or optional activities that you intend to take part in. For further information please see the insurance section of the Exodus Travel Advice guide or visit www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/travel-insurance.

Local Time is GMT -4hrs

Group, Staff and Support

The trip is led by an English speaking Chilean leader.

Minimum group size is 6, maximum 16.

The minimum age of clients on this trip is 18 years.

MONEY MATTERS

Exodus and Local Payments

There is no local payment on this holiday. Exodus no longer uses local payments to cover part of the cost of the holiday.

If you are comparing prices with other operators, please check the total price paid, as we believe that Exodus continues to offer the best balance between value for money and operational quality.

Currency Information

The national currency of Chile is the Peso, with an exchange rate of approximately 912 to the UK£.

Exchange rates are correct at the time of publication.

We recommended that you take US dollars, as sterling is difficult to exchange, and the rates are poor. However, Euros are increasingly accepted and have a good rate of exchange in exchange houses and hotels. Changing cash is relatively easy in most places, but travellers cheques are difficult to change and large commissions are usually charged; ideally it is better take cash, but you must obviously be conscious of the security risk of doing so. Please ensure that you do not have any torn or damaged bank notes, as these are often not accepted in Chile.

Commission Free Holiday Currency

For your commission free holiday currency, pre loaded cash cards and travellers cheques delivered directly to your door at very competitive rates, visit us on www.currency-express.com/exodus and receive free delivery on orders over £300.

Extra Expenses and Spending Money

International and domestic departure tax is usually included in the price of the ticket.

Chile is an increasingly popular country, and is steadily getting more expensive. We recommend that you allow \$20 - \$25 per meal for lunches and dinners not included.

Please check that you do not have any torn or damaged bank notes, as these are often not accepted in Chile.

Optional excursions (approximate, depending on group sizes)

The price of the Glaciar hike is \$140 - availability depends on weather conditions.

Tipping (leader and local staff)

We recommend tipping the guides and drivers if you are happy with their service; between USD \$5 - \$10 approx per day.

WHAT TO TAKE

Essential Equipment and Clothing

This should be read in conjunction with our 'What to Pack' section in your Travel Advice booklet (sent when you book).

You will need the following essential items:

Sleeping Bag - we suggest a sleeping bag that will go to minus 15C

Sleeping matt or a Thermarest if you prefer to have one - they are not provided.

Comfortable mountain boots, sunscreen, insect repellent, long trousers, shorts, waterproofs, thick socks, lightweight vest/sweater, towel and torch.

Much of the equipment mentioned above is available at very competitive prices at the Exodus online shop, 'Exodus Travel Essentials' in partnership with Amazon. Please visit www.exodus.co.uk/community for more information.

Baggage and Baggage Allowance

Exodus kitbags are available for purchase at £25, which includes postage, packing and VAT. If, for any reason the kit bag is returned to Exodus, additional postage costs will be charged. Kit bags are available within the UK only.

If you live in the UK or Eire we provide an Exodus kitbag to pack your luggage in whilst on trek. Please note that if you book close to the departure date we cannot guarantee that your kitbag will arrive before your trip starts. If this is the case please use a suitable alternative. Unfortunately it is not possible for us to supply kitbags for those who book from outside of the UK or Eire.

As advice about luggage allowances for both hand and hold luggage is subject to change, we suggest you check www.baa.com and/or the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

Duvet jackets, sleeping bags, thick mattresses are available for hire through our local agents and must be pre booked through the Exodus office to ensure availability, or prior to departure from Trek Hire UK (<http://www.trekhireuk.com/>). Trek Hire UK can also provide a range of trekking essentials and accessories, from rucksacks to trekking poles. Please note that supplies are limited, and it is advisable to reserve any equipment as early as possible. All equipment for local hire must be booked prior to departure. For further details please ask for our Trek Hire leaflet.

Exodus Travel Essentials Store:

If you are interested in any of these books then you can order them from our very own Exodus shop, '[Exodus Travel Essentials](#)' in partnership with Amazon.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CLIENTS

Exodus operate a 24 hour duty office for emergencies, which can be contacted on 0044 (0) 1582 644 100.

Anytime that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the essential information in the brochure or at www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/essential-information?

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons – climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between these Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes are the correct version and supersede the brochure. Abnormal conditions or other events beyond our control can prevail at any time, particularly in remote or off the beaten track destinations, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

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HOW TO BOOK YOUR TRIP

- 1. Check availability** Go online to check availability, or contact us by phone or email.
- 2. Secure your place** You can provisionally hold a place on this trip, usually for between three and seven days.
- 3. Complete your booking and payment** When you're ready to book, go to www.exodus.co.uk for online booking, book over the phone or you can complete a booking form (available online or on request by calling us). We accept all major credit and debit cards, or you can pay by cheque.

Book with confidence Exodus is fully licensed and bonded as a tour operator. We hold Air Traffic Organisers Licence (ATOL) number 2582 issued and bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We are also bonded to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and we are members of the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) and ABTA - The Travel Association. This means you can book your Exodus holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected.

