



Pre-Departure Information

PATAGONIA: TRACKING PUMAS AND CRUISING THE FJORDS



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WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.
- Vaccination Card:** Please send us a photo or scanned copy of your completed Covid-19 Vaccination Card if you have not already done so. Just the front side of the card is sufficient.

PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our [website](#) or e-mail us at: info@wildernesstravel.com.

Travel Information

PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for six months after your date of exit from Chile and Argentina. In addition, we recommend your passport has at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** (travel.state.gov/passports) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express** (www.passportvisasexpress.com). Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page, two extra passport photos, and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) as an additional piece of identification or in case your passport is lost.

VISAS

US citizens do not need a visa for Argentina or Chile.

If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

MONEY

Chile is more expensive than most South American countries, with prices comparable to the US or Europe, while Argentina is moderately priced for Americans. Recently exchange controls were lifted, and the Argentine peso exchange rate is not as volatile as it once was. We suggest you carry money in US dollars in small denominations (\$20s, \$10s) or local currency. US dollars are more widely accepted in Argentina than Chile. Credit cards are accepted at major establishments in the bigger cities.

You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, any meals not included in the trip itinerary, and personal items such as beverages.

To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad. Please note that there is limited access to ATMs while on the trip.

TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. A range of reference would be \$150-\$200 USD per trip member for the Trip Leader, \$45-\$65 USD for the driver, and \$30-\$50 USD for the Assistant Trip Leader in Chile, which can be given in US dollars or local currency. The Trip Leader takes care of gratuities for luggage handling, waiters at restaurants, and local guides who are with the group for only a short time.

SPECIAL DIETS

Please reach out to us directly to discuss any dietary restrictions or concerns you may have. We can easily make arrangements for most diets, but please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or logistical limitations can make it difficult or at times impossible to accommodate all requests. With this in mind, please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a special diet, and any food allergies in particular, so we can do our best to meet your needs.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone

The international dialing code for Argentina is 54; for Chile, 56. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

Email & Internet Access

Internet access is available at most of our lodges. Some have one shared computer and some have Wi-Fi.

ELECTRICITY

Argentina and Chile have 220-volt (50 Hz) current. Plugs in Argentina usually have three slanted flat pins (type I); plugs in Chile usually have two or three round pins (type C and L). Bring a converter and plug adapter kit for appliance use.

Medical Information

The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**.

INOCULATIONS

No inoculations are required for this trip. We recommend that you discuss the following with your physician:

Yellow Fever

A Yellow Fever vaccination is strongly recommended if you plan to take the Iguazu Falls Extension and visit the *Brazil* side of the falls. The shot is good for 10 years. Have proof of the shot recorded in your International Health Card.

Hepatitis

The vaccines HAVRIX and VAQTA (two injections, six to 18 months apart) give long-term protection against Hepatitis A and are worthwhile if you travel regularly to developing countries.

Tetanus Booster

It is very easy to get a small cut. A booster is strongly recommended (effective for 10 years).

Typhoid

The CDC recommends the shot or the oral vaccine, Vivotif Berna.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CARD

A Yellow Fever vaccination is recommended if you plan to take the optional Iguazu Falls Extension and visit the *Brazil* side of the falls. Have the shot recorded in your International Health Card and carry the card with your passport as proof of vaccination.

STAYING HEALTHY

There is little problem in Patagonia with contaminated food or water. The tap water is safe to drink in most of Chile and Argentina. Bottled water is available for purchase at the lodges and shops. Do not drink water from streams, no matter how clear the water looks. You might want to bring iodine crystals for water treatment if you plan to refill your water bottle from streams during day hikes.

Helpful Information

PHOTOGRAPHY

Camera Recommendations

With the many advances in digital technology, a simple compact digital camera or even your smartphone is capable of taking pictures suitable for the needs of most people. For higher quality images and the ability to use long lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a DSLR camera is well worthwhile, though heavier. Most digital cameras and phones have good video options, but you may want to consider a GoPro for a lightweight, waterproof option. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. Camera equipment is available for rent from **Borrow Lenses**, with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients. This is an especially good idea for renting large zoom lenses that you may need for just one trip.

Camera Accessories

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards or a small digital storage unit (or tablet) to back up your photos, freeing space on your memory cards. Don't forget to bring a battery charger and a backup battery so one is always charged and ready to use. For trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger or buying additional backup batteries, and check that you have the appropriate adapter for the electrical outlets in your destination.

Sharing Your Images

We would love for you to share photos from your trip, and with your permission, may even use your photos in our marketing materials or on our photo blog. We request that you send us a small sample of your best images. Please email your photos to wphotoblog@gmail.com or tag us [@WildernessTravel](#) on social media.

Photography Etiquette

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Approaching people with a warm smile and using polite gestures or simple phrases to ask permission to photograph them usually works well. It is always recommended to engage people in conversation before asking to photograph them, but if people do not wish to have their photo taken, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which makes it harder for future travelers to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people. Please always heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate.

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

Packing List

THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- International Health Card ("Yellow Card") with proof of Yellow Fever inoculation within the last 10 years (strongly recommended if you are taking the optional Iguazu Falls Extension and visiting the Brazil side of the falls)
- Expense money

WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our [WT Gear Store](#).

LUGGAGE

- Soft-sided roller bag with small padlock (must be unlocked for international travel).
- Daypack, large enough for a fleece jacket, rain gear, water bottle, camera, and other items you want on the trail. It should be a shoulder pack (not a fanny pack) with a supporting waist belt. Packs with a capacity of 1450-2000 cubic inches (or 30-40 liters) are recommended. Hike with your pack before the trip to make sure it is comfortable.

WEIGHT LIMITS

There is a baggage weight limit on checked luggage for internal flights within Argentina. You are limited to 33 pounds per person for checked bags and 11 pounds per person for carry-on bags. Excess baggage fees may apply and must be paid directly to the carrier.

NOTES ON CLOTHING

Our best advice for anticipating weather on this trip is to be prepared for everything! You'll want to pack lightly, leaving space for souvenirs, but you also want to be prepared for all kinds of weather.

Fabrics

An insulating base layer (top and bottom) beneath your hiking clothes will keep you warm and comfortable. Capilene, fleece, and other synthetic fabrics are excellent, as are lightweight wool insulating layers by Patagonia, Icebreakers, and SmartWool. Cotton is not a good insulator, especially as a first layer next to the skin. Once it gets wet from perspiration, it stays wet and keeps you cold.

Burrs

Some Patagonian plants are spiny and have stickers or burrs that load up on socks, pants, and especially on pile clothing. Gaiters can be helpful in protecting your pant legs from burrs and keeping mud off if it is rainy. Wind pants reduce the burr load on pant legs. A pocket comb or Swiss army knife is helpful for removing burrs.

Laundry

There will be limited opportunities to do laundry on the trip. Please bring enough items to last the entire trip or plan to wash clothes yourself. Items should be lightweight so they can dry overnight.

CLOTHING

- Fiberfill, down or thick fleece jacket. Temperatures can be as low as 40°F.
- Fleece sweater. Some people prefer vests.
- Excellent quality rain/wind shell jacket with hood and good quality rain/wind pants. Gore-Tex is best.
- Hiking pants. Synthetic, quick-drying fabric is best. Jeans are not suitable because they are made of heavy cotton.
- Sturdy hiking shorts (optional—it is rare but it may be warm enough for shorts on some days)
- Polypropylene, Capilene, or wool long underwear, bottoms and tops
- Long-sleeved shirts. Quick-drying “travel” fabrics are best.
- T-shirts
- Shade/sun hat with wide brim. A hat with a chinstrap is best in the Patagonian wind!
- Fleece or wool hat for warmth
- Lightweight polypropylene gloves
- Lightweight or medium-weight hiking boots with Vibram-type soles and waterproofable uppers
- Running shoes or tennis shoes to change into after day's hike (and Tevas if you plan to take the Iguazu Falls extension)
- Gaiters to protect socks and pants from burrs, thistles, and stickers
- Insulating headband for protection against wind
- Hiking socks. Thorlo brand (moisture-wicking synthetic with padded toes and heels) are a good choice. Make sure you bring enough so you always have clean, dry socks.
- Casual socks for city wear
- Underwear. Synthetics dry faster.
- Sleepwear (long underwear can double)
- Lightweight casual city/hotel attire (it will be hot and humid in Buenos Aires should you elect to spend some extra time there)

EQUIPMENT

- Sturdy, reusable, wide-mouth water bottles or hydration reservoir. 3 liters total capacity recommended for the longest hikes.
- Good quality sunglasses with case. A spare pair of sunglasses is invaluable should your first pair be broken or lost.
- Collapsible walking stick or trekking poles. Hiking with a collapsible hiking pole, such as those by Leki, REI, and Black Diamond, helps to distribute your body weight, takes pressure off your knees, and improves your balance.
- Waterproof pack cover
- Ear plugs, eye shades for air travel
- Flashlight and extra batteries (or flashlight app)
- Travel alarm clock (or use your phone). Many of our lodges don't have clocks or phones so this is important for wake-up calls.

NOTE about contact lenses: Patagonia is constantly windy, and this can make wearing contact lenses miserable. We strongly suggest that you bring a pair of eyeglasses just in case!

PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member should bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher . We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Lip balm with sunscreen and/or zinc oxide
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headache, Tylenol PM
- Topical antibiotic (such as Neosporin) for cuts
- Small amount of insect repellent
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. “Liquid band-aids,” such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Dramamine or other medication for motion sickness (for long days of road travel)
- Anti-bacterial gel for hand washing
- Antihistamine such as Benadryl and cold remedy such as Sudafed
- Imodium for diarrhea.
- Prescription medications properly labeled

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Converter/plug adapter for appliance use in hotels
- Assorted plastic bags to keep items dry in your bag (it's also a good idea to bring plastic baggies for disposal of toilet paper while on hikes)
- Sports bra for women
- Camera, spare batteries
- Headband or ear muffs for wind protection
- Reading/writing material. A few long days of bus travel are required to travel the long distances between the wilderness areas we visit.
- Binoculars
- Bandanna
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.

Reading List

ALSO RECOMMENDED

Travels in a Thin Country, A Journey through Chile

Sara Wheeler

1999, 336 PAGES

British author Sara Wheeler deploys her wit, intelligence and powerful investigative skills on the Republic of Chile in this insightful travelogue.

The Whispering Land

Gerald Durrell

2006, 240 PAGES

A sparkling account of an eight-month jaunt on the trail of fur seals, guanaco, parrots and other Patagonian marvels. Excellent family reading.

Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego Map

ITMB

2015

This handy map shows all Patagonia on one side (1:2,000,000), with a more detailed map of Tierra del Fuego (1:750,000) on the reverse.

Moon Handbook Patagonia

Wayne Bernhardson

2014, 550 PAGES

A practical guide in the Moon series, packed not only with travel necessities (hotels, restaurants, sights), but also with a good overview of history and destinations throughout Patagonia.

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