



Trekking Patagonia - Argentina and Chile

February 15-29, 2020, Trip #2007



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Join leaders Robin Melavalin and Leslie Carson on a 15-day adventure to remote southern Patagonia, land of superlatives – majestic pinnacle peaks, immense glaciers, fierce winds and exotic animals. Explore some of South America's finest national parks including the Los Glaciares National Park, home to some of the world's most stunning ice formations, and Torres del Paine National Park famous for its granite pillars, lakes and mountains.

Patagonia is the geographical region that lies at the southernmost tip of South America, lying in both Chile and Argentina. Patagonia has a well-deserved reputation for outstanding natural and scenic beauty. Spectacular treks will lead us to iconic massifs: Fitz Roy, Cerro Torre, Cuernos and Torres del Paine, and other dramatic sights. Join us on this exciting adventure to see jagged peaks, massive glaciers, icebergs, blue-green lakes and much more. A combination of day hikes to see sights, overnight backpack hikes with full-service backcountry refugios, and guided tours will provide us a unique opportunity to experience this rugged and beautiful area.

TRIP ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY/DATE	DESTINATION
1. Sat, Feb 15	Leave USA
2. Sun, Feb 16	Arrive El Calafate, Argentina; transfer to local accommodation
3. Mon, Feb 17	Visit Laguna Nimez bird sanctuary and explore the town
4. Tues, Feb 18	Guided tour to Perito Moreno Glacier; travel to El Chaltén
5. Wed, Feb 19	Day hike to Laguna Torre for views of Cerro Torre and massive glaciers
6. Thurs, Feb 20	Day hike to Laguna de los Tres for excellent views of Mt. Fitz Roy
7. Fri, Feb 21	Guided Cagliero Glacier ice trekking
8. Sat, Feb 22	Private charter van excursion from El Chaltén to Puerto Natales
9. Sun, Feb 23	Time to explore Puerto Natales, do laundry and repack
10. Mon, Feb 24	Take the bus to Torres del Paine National Park where we will start the world-famous "W" trek; hike to refugio Grey and spend the night
11. Tues, Feb 25	Hike to the mirador beyond Grey and hike to Paine Grande Lodge for the night
12. Wed, Feb 26	Hike to Refugio Cuernos; optional side trip up the French Valley, weather permitting
13. Thurs, Feb 27	Hike to Refugio Chileno along beautiful Lago Nordenskjöld for our last night in the Park
14. Fri, Feb 28	Up early to hike to Mirador de Las Torres area, and return to Hosteria las Torres to meet our private transport to Puerto Natales
15. Sat, Feb 29	Bus to Punta Arenas airport for afternoon flights home or elsewhere
16. Sun, Mar 1	Arrive USA

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1. Sat Feb 15 – Leave USA. You may also choose to leave Friday evening and spend an extra night in El Calafate or en route in Buenos Aires, which might help with snow-related delays departing from the USA.

Day 2. Sun Feb 16 – It is likely that your flight will connect via Buenos Aires. Please allow plenty of time (4-5 hours) to transfer from the International Airport in Buenos Aires (EZE) to the domestic Buenos Aires Airport (AEP) for your flight to El Calafate. Arrive in El Calafate and transfer to our local accommodation by taxi (at your own cost). The name and address of your hostel (shared rooms with two beds) in El Calafate will be provided. The town has many restaurants and there is a supermarket nearby to shop for your lunches, trail snacks and fruits. We will have our first evening meal together with all participants on either the first or second night depending on when trip members arrive.

Day 3. Mon Feb 17 – Free exploration or catch-up day in El Calafate. Included buffet breakfast in our hostel opens at 6 AM. There is an interesting National Park in town and a wonderful bird sanctuary, Laguna Nimez, which we will visit. If your luggage or your flight(s) are delayed, you can use today to catch up.

Day 4. Tue Feb 18 – We will check out of the hostel and travel to the Perito Moreno glacier, passing Lago Argentino, accompanied by a local naturalist. Once inside the National Park we will wander long and wide catwalks, arranged in three levels, to be dazzled by the spectacular views of the Perito Moreno Glacier, further enhanced every now and then by the calving,

sometimes significant, of its front wall. We will continue travel by the same charter van to our hostel in El Chaltén with stops for breath-taking photography opportunities. We will stay in the same hostel for 4 nights in shared twin bed rooms with breakfasts included.

Day 5. Wed Feb 19 – We will do a day hike in Los Glaciares to Laguna Torre, with magnificent views of the extraordinary rock spire of Cerro Torre and a sprawling mass of intersecting glaciers. We may take a side trip to Mirador Maestri for more views of Cerro Torre and Cordón Adela, a serrated ridge of snow-capped peaks between Cerro Grande and Cerro Torre. Distance is about 13 miles without the side trip. Book time is 6 hours with about 1200' elevation gain.

Day 6. Thur Feb 20 – Another day hike from El Chaltén, this time to Campamento Poincenot and Laguna de los Tres, the lake at the foot of iconic Monte Fitz Roy. At Campamento Poincenot we will look directly up at the spires of the Fitz Roy massif. Further views of Fitz Roy from Laguna de los Tres and its surroundings will reward your climb of about 2500'. Distance is about 13 miles and the book time is 8 hours.

Day 7. Fri Feb 21 – If the weather forecast is good in El Chaltén, we will take a guided Cagliero Glacier mini ice trek adventure. Board a boat that takes about an hour to reach the glacier. After scrambling over some cliffs and being given a geological history of the glacier, you will put on provided crampons and venture out onto the glacier for about 2 hours to see some amazing features of the glacier. The whole trip is about 6 hours. If the weather is not suitable for the boat ride, this day will be a free day for short hikes to nearby waterfalls and other attractions.

Day 8. Sat Feb 22 – Private charter van excursion and many magnificent viewpoints along the way from El Chaltén in Argentina to Puerto Natales, Chile, the jumping off place for the Torres del Paine trek.

Day 9. Sun Feb 23 – You will have time today to explore Puerto Natales, repack and get ready for Torres del Paine National Park (TDP). Our luggage not used in the 5-day “W” backpack will be stored at our hostel in Puerto Natales.

Day 10. Mon Feb 24 – Take a public bus to Pudeto pier on Lake Pehoe in Torres del Paine National Park. We will take a scenic catamaran ride at noon to Paine Grande Lodge and hike from there to Refugio Grey where we spend our first night. Expect about four hours hiking, mostly lakeside.

Day 11. Tue Feb 25 – We will trek to viewpoints beyond Refugio Grey to take in views of the snout of Grey Glacier, the largest in Torres del Paine, before we return to Paine Grande for our second night. Paine Grande is the largest refugio in the Park and has a full bar and lots of lounging areas. We'll hike about 5-6 hours today.



Lago Grey and Icebergs

© S. Jamke, 2008

Day 12. Wed Feb 26 – Today we will trek from Paine Grande to Albergue Los Cuernos. If the weather and Park conditions permit we will explore the remote French Valley from Campamento

Italiano. The French Glacier clings to the mountain here and we may see and hear cascading avalanches of snow and ice as we hike up the opposite side of the valley. Trek back down the valley and continue on to the Albergue Los Cuernos. If we are able to do the French Valley, this is a full day's hike of 15 miles (book time 9 hours) with fantastic views of granite peaks as well as the waterscapes below including lakes Pehoe, Skottsburg, and Nordenskjöld. If we do not go up the French Valley, the hike is 8 miles (book time 4-5 hours). We spend the night at the beautiful Albergue Los Cuernos on the shore of Lago Nordenskjöld.

Day 13. Thur Feb 27 – Today we do some ups and downs and ups (elevation gain about 1700', book time 4-5 hours, approximately 8 miles) hiking to the refugio Chileno, which lies at about 1300.' We continue trekking northeast along the tranquil shores of Lago Nordenskjöld and on to our hut. Get ready for an early start the next day!

Day 14. Fri Feb 28 – We want to hike to the much-photographed Torres del Paine lookout (mirador) today for classic photo opportunities. This is about a 4-hour round trip, approximately 5 miles with about 1500' of elevation gain from the hut. We can take just our day hiking gear with us and leave our overnight gear at the hut. In the afternoon we will pick up all of our gear and hike down to Hosteria las Torres (about two hours) where we catch a private charter van back to Puerto Natales. We'll have our farewell dinner here.

Day 15. Sat Feb 29 – The 9 am bus to Punta Arenas, on the Straits of Magellan will drop us at the airport (PUQ) just before noon in time for afternoon flights home (or to your next destination.) Most of us will probably fly home from Punta Arenas via Santiago, Chile. (Note – those wishing to visit the city of Punta Arenas may stay on the bus and spend a day or two in the city and take in a tour of one of the penguin sanctuaries if weather permits. There is easy transport back to PUQ airport from the city. This extension is not part of the AMC trip but the leaders are familiar with this option and will gladly advise you about it.)

Day 16. Sun March 1 – Arrive back in the USA.

POSSIBLE ITINERARY CHANGES

While the itinerary in this prospectus is what the leaders have planned at the time of writing, various factors may require changes for reasons of safety, transportation or lodging availability, and unforeseeable circumstances (such as weather considerations, natural disasters in areas to be visited, or recommendations of governmental agencies). The leaders reserve the right to make such changes as necessary, both before and during the trip.



Paine Grande Lodge

© S. Jamke,

ACCOMMODATIONS AND MEALS

The accommodations provided on this trip are a mix of small hotels, hostels and backcountry full-service huts (called refugios). Room accommodations will be mixed gender in some of the hostels and refugios. All meals on the "W" backpack (from dinner on Feb 24 through lunch on Feb 28) are included. All other breakfasts from Feb 17 through Feb 29, are included.

AIRLINES AND TRAVEL

Please arrive at El Calafate, Argentina, by late afternoon on Sunday, February 16. The trip ends at Punta Arenas, Chile, on the morning of Saturday, February 29. Your transportation to El Calafate, Argentina (FTE) and back from Punta Arenas, Chile (PUQ) is your responsibility. You may want to use frequent flyer miles, a travel agent, an airline, or any discount wholesaler (Orbitz, Kayak, Expedia, etc.) The leaders will research flights and will be happy to make flight suggestions. Do not make any non-refundable travel plans until advised to do so by the leaders.

EXPERIENCE AND RISKS

Although the hiking will be at a moderate pace, this is not a trip for beginners or people who have not backpacked for several years. Several of the days are long (up to 15 miles) and strenuous. Be prepared for very high winds and the possibility of rain. It is important for you to be in excellent physical condition at the time we depart. Since it will be winter in the USA and late summer in Patagonia, please commit yourself to keeping in shape between the time you sign up for the trip and the time you depart. At twelve weeks prior to the trip consult your physician to see what, if any, vaccinations are recommended for travel to South America and to ensure that you are in excellent physical condition for the rigor of this trip.

As participant safety is a high priority for all AMC-sponsored events, procedures and policies have been developed to attempt to limit participant risk. Participants are expected to work with volunteer leaders to reduce risks and make the experience successful for all in the group. Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips and camps, and transportation in vehicles, on foot, by boat, or on a bike. When you apply for acceptance onto a trip, please carefully read and sign the *Adventure Travel Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Release and Indemnity Agreement* and call if you have any questions.



A little Patagonian “breeze”...

© S. Rose, 2012

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND EXPECTATIONS

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run in a manner supportive of and consistent with the conservation, recreational and educational principles and mission of the Appalachian Mountain Club. Trip leaders encourage participant conduct consistent with Leave No Trace environmental and conservation principles and local regulations.

This trip is designed for experienced hikers. You must be able to hike for up to 8 hours a day, not counting breaks, at a moderate pace, with moderate elevation gains (up to 3,000 feet), while carrying enough equipment to keep you safe in the event of bad weather or injury. Please see the gear list below. You should enjoy traveling and be able to deal positively with the discomforts of traveling in areas that are unfamiliar to you. You will likely find yourself in closer quarters and less comfortable than you are used to at home. Everyone on the trip is expected to help others in the group if needed and to be collaborative and cooperative. Participants are encouraged to learn some basic Spanish before departure, though this is not a requirement.

Group safety is our number 1 priority.

It may happen on any trip that a trip member is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. Leaders in their sole judgment have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of safety, whether it be of the group or of the individual. Illness, injury or lack of proper gear or fitness for a particular activity are examples of some conditions that might result in a participant's being unable to perform one or more activity. Leaders will assist with finding a substitute activity or travel arrangements for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.

GROUP SIZE

We expect a group size of 12 people including the two leaders. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, let us know by email or give us a call. We will email the necessary application materials to you. When the group is finalized, we will send all participants the names and email addresses of all those going on the trip.

COST*

The cost of the trip is \$4225, which includes the following:

- All accommodations from Feb 16 through Feb 29
- All breakfasts from Feb 17 through Feb 29
- All meals on the "W" backpack in TDP from dinner on Feb 24 through lunch on Feb 28
- Welcome and farewell dinners
- Local ground transportation from Feb 17 through Feb 29
- Hut and backcountry permits
- Park admission fees
- Guided Cagliero Glacier tour, ice trek and boat ride
- Guides in Chalten and Torres del Paine
- AMC Adventure Travel fee and emergency evacuation insurance**

Not included in price of trip:

- Airfare
- Transportation from the airport to the hostel in El Calafate, Argentina
- Dinners and lunches are not included, except while on the "W" backpack in Torres del Paine and the farewell and welcome dinners
- Alcohol
- Personal expenses
- Trip cancellation insurance

*The cost for the trip is based on estimates inflated from 2018. The final cost of the trip will be adjusted in accordance with the best arrangements we can make for the group.

****The trip fee also includes emergency medical and evacuation insurance (see below).**

Please be aware that, in accordance with AMC policy, you are subsidizing the leaders' costs. Beyond this, the leaders are not allowed to realize any profit from this excursion. The trip price also includes an AMC overhead fee to cover the administrative expenses of offering Adventure Travel excursions. The trip fee includes emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage, which is required by the AMC. It does not include insurance for travel delay, interruption, or cancellation, or for baggage loss. If these possibilities concern you, individual travel insurance is recommended. More information about included emergency medical and evacuation insurance, as well as about optional and recommended travel insurance, will be provided to participants in their formal acceptance letters, which will be sent out when the trip has the required number of accepted applicants.

The price for this excursion is based on quotes or estimates obtained at the time the trip was submitted to the Adventure Travel Committee for approval. The final price of the trip will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements we can make. If the trip's financial position is strong enough at the start, the leaders may make partial refunds during the trip, in the form of payments toward some meals and/or free time activities which would otherwise not be included. Any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases we incur, will be shared by trip participants. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is considerably more likely than a price increase. All Adventure Travel trips are run on a non-profit basis and refunds, if any, are issued after the trip's financial accounting is complete.

INSURANCE

The basic medical and evacuation policy that is included with your trip fee covers up to \$5,000 for primary medical expenses, up to \$200,000 for emergency medical evacuation, and up to \$5000 for death and dismemberment. Coverage includes only the dates of travel of the official AMC trip (last day is in Chile) so additional days before and/or after are not included. The included policy does not include insurance for travel delay, interruption, cancellation, or for baggage loss. Participants should have their own medical insurance and travel cancellation insurance. The leaders will provide information about purchasing optional travel insurance that could cover cancellation, lost baggage, etc.

APPLICATION AND PAYMENTS

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run on a non-profit basis. Leaders are volunteers who are not compensated except for their travel costs associated with the trip. The advertised trip cost includes a surcharge that goes toward the administrative expenses of the AMC Adventure Travel program.

To apply, complete and submit the Application, Confidential Medical form, and Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk and Release form, and mail a registration deposit check of \$1000. Email robinoutdoors@gmail.com to request these forms.

Please mail your paperwork and all check payments made out to "Appalachian Mountain Club" to: Robin Melavalin, 11 Cuthbert Road, West Roxbury, MA 02132.

You will be officially accepted after the leaders have determined by email or a telephone conversation with you that there seems to be a good match between you and the trip.

Your check will be deposited after the trip leaders confirm the trip has sufficient number of participants and is going as planned.

The second payment of \$1000 is due May 1, 2019 and the final balance of \$2225 is due October 1, 2019.

A waitlist will be developed if the trip fills. Deposit checks from wait-listed applicants will not be cashed until a spot is available, the applicant is accepted onto the trip, and they confirm their continued interest.

CANCELLATION POLICY

- All cancellation requests must be made in writing to robinoutdoors@gmail.com.
- The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the fact that your cancellation may not raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders.
- The published minimum penalty fee is zero before April 30, 2019.
- A \$200 fee if cancellation occurs between May 1, 2019 and October 1, 2019.
- If actual costs (expenses already incurred on your behalf and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation) are higher, they will be assessed instead, unless they can be applied toward another acceptable participant.
- Should the leaders be able to replace you, you may be charged a reduced or zero fee. This will generally not be determined until after the trip.
- Flight tickets are your property and are generally non-refundable.
- We strongly recommend that you purchase travel cancellation insurance.
- If AMC cancels the trip you will receive a full refund for all payments made to AMC.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Below is a list of the required and recommended gear for the trip.

Required and Essential Gear

- Passport, at least six months before expiration at the time of travel (it is best to have 7+ months before expiration; if it needs to be renewed, do it now)
- Backpack, at least 3000-4000 cubic inches (50-65 liters)
- Waterproof pack liner or both a liner AND a pack cover (a pack cover will not keep water out in very high wind, but can keep the outside of the pack dryer)
- Sturdy, comfortable, waterproof hiking boots with extra shoelaces
- Sleeping bag of 30 - 40°F for "W" trek
- Synthetic hiking clothing (tops and bottoms); no cotton on hikes

	SKY	WIND	T° C.
24	[Cloud icon]	N/O 80 KM/h	17° C
25	[Cloud icon]	N/O 80 KM/h	16° C
26	[Cloud icon]	N/O 60 KM/h	16° C / 7°
27	[Cloud icon]	N/O 80 KM/h	18° C / 8°
28	[Cloud icon]	N/O 60 KM/h	16° C / 8°
CATAMARAN:			-12:30-18:30 hs.

Typical March weather in Torres del Paine National Park

- Waterproof rain gear (tops and bottoms)
- Sweater/jacket, wool or fleece
- Long pants, wool or fleece
- Nalgene bottles or Camelback (at least 2 liters total capacity)
- Sun hat or bandanna
- Warm hat, neckband or balaclava
- Gloves/mittens
- Minimum 3 pairs of hiking socks (wool or synthetic), liners if needed
- Texas, Crocs or other similar footwear (to wear in lodging)
- Headlamp or flashlight with fresh batteries
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Personal blister kit, first aid kit and personal medications
- High-energy trail snacks
- Whistle
- Camp towel or light weight bath towel for backpack trip (yes, there are showers in the huts!)

Recommended and Optional Gear

- Small daypack/lumbar pack for sightseeing (or adaptation of full pack)
- Gaiters (for rain and debris)
- Hiking poles (not in carry-on luggage), highly recommended for stream crossings, in rain and high winds
- Waterproof matches (not in carry-on luggage)
- Casual clothing
- Camera and spare batteries/charger and voltage converter or adapter as required
- Hiking knife (do not put knife in carry-on luggage)

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact either of the leaders to discuss.

Robin Melavalin: robinoutdoors@gmail.com or 617-780-5362

Leslie Carson: lesliecarson929@yahoo.com or 508-833-8237

TRIP LEADERS



Robin Melavalin has been involved with educational travel for over 25 years working with college students and faculty. She has led a variety of AMC Adventure Travel trips, including: trekking in Morocco, hiking hut to hut in the Bavarian Alps, kayaking in the Sea of Cortez in Mexico, and trekking to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro (19,341 feet) in Tanzania. Her research and personal travels include Cuba, Cabo Verde, Kenya, Nicaragua, China, Chile, Russia, Uzbekistan, Costa Rica, Azores Islands, Bali, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. She has Wilderness First Responder and CPR certifications. Photography, kayaking and hospice are some of her special interests.

Leslie Carson is a four-season hike leader with the Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter and has led hikes for AMC August Camp in the Pacific Northwest for the past six years. She recently led AT trips hiking in the Dolomites and Morocco and has co-led AT trips to Utah and trekking the Haute Route in Switzerland. Her personal travels include hiking the Tour du Mont Blanc, Peru, New Zealand, Spain, Italy, Belize, Canada, Caribbean islands, and many of our national parks. When not hiking, planning trips or traveling, she enjoys kayaking, cross-country skiing, reading and gardening.

