

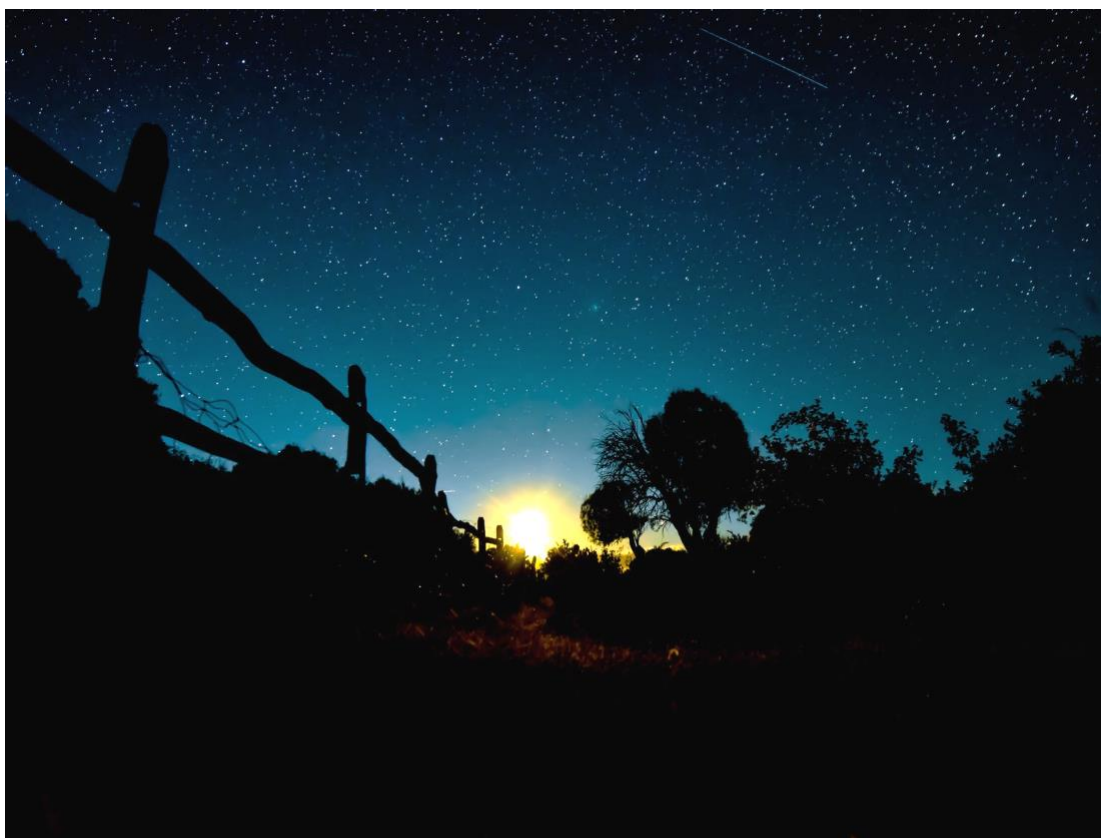


AMC ADVENTURE TRAVEL
Volunteer-Led Excursions Worldwide

Trip 2323

22 January–3 February 2023

EXPLORING UNKNOWN PATAGONIA



Dawn at our lakeside ranch on Lago General Carrera

1. BACKGROUND

Many adventure travelers are aware of Patagonia's famous Torres del Paine National Park & the route that leads through it in the shape of a "W". *This is not that.*

Instead, we will explore Patagonia's wild Aysén region in Chile. This park has a unique origin. In 2015 the Tompkins family, the founders of Patagonia & North Face clothing brands, gave ≈200,000 acres of land to the Chilean government. Combined with two other land preserves it has helped to create in January 2019 a new national park spreading over 750,000 acres, greater than the size of Yellowstone National Park. While spectacular in every way, the area remains relatively unknown outside of Chile itself.

We will explore this unique region in cooperation with [Chulengo Expeditions](#), an organization dedicated to the restoration & preservation of this exquisite area. They have developed a custom itinerary for us that allows exploration of this remote region using only daypacks.

2. HIGHLIGHTS

- A. 10 days of hiking in spectacular landscapes including a four-day trek supported by horses
- B. One day of whitewater rafting on the Baker River
- C. All meals, on trip transportation, etc. starting with arrival in the region's capital, Coyhaique
- D. Local guides throughout who will share with us their knowledge of the region's history, geology, flora & fauna, land conservation, etc.
- E. Simple accommodations, eight nights sleeping in tents under the stars

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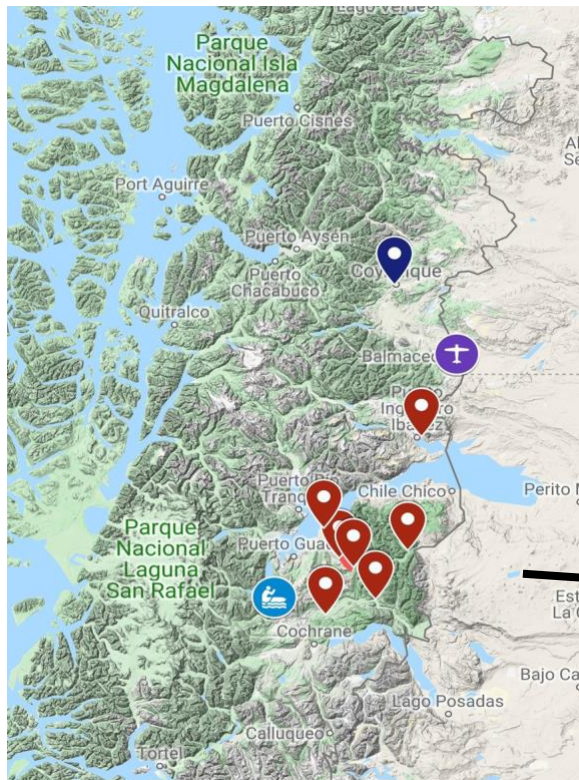
4. PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

- A. Hike up to 12 miles/day at 6,000–8,000 ft & climb up to 3,500 ft carrying 15–20 lb pack. Some of the brochure photos show large packs because the photos were taken on backpack expeditions—the scenery is relevant to our trip; the pack size is not.
- B. Contribute to the work of outdoor travel & communal living. This includes setting up & taking down tents, packing of gear, & helping to cook shared meals.
- C. Enjoy rustic camping in full Patagonia weather: rain, wind, cold, sun, & heat—all possibly in one day.
- D. Trip is rated [Vigorous–Strenuous](#).



5. LOCATION

Patagonia National Park:



Map legend:

- A. Red teardrops are overnight locations
- B. Dark blue teardrop is Coyhaique, airport Balmaceda symbol is BBA
- C. Light blue is rafting location on the Baker River



6. ITINERARY

A. Friday 20 January 2023

- i. Depart the US
- ii. Suggest you travel this day earlier to account for common winter delays from New England. Give yourself time to rest from flight.


B. Saturday 21 January 2023

- i. Extra travel day for contingency. Alternate date to depart the US, although at high risk of winter storm delays, which could delay arrival to join the trip at extra cost.
- ii. Possibly spend an overnight in Santiago to visit museums & landmarks.
- iii. Or continue travel to Balmaceda, Chile (BBA), the main airport for Chile's Aysén Region for walking tour of the area.

C. Sunday 22 January

- i. For those who stayed overnight in Santiago, travel to Balmaceda, Chile (BBA), the main airport for Chile's Aysén Region.
- ii. Transfer to the region's capital, Coyhaique.
- iii. Trip begins.
- iv. Group dinner.

D. Monday 23 January

- i. Expedition begins!
- ii. We will meet the bus & head south.
- iii. Our first day will take us on a spectacular day hike, one of the most iconic in the Aysén Region, to Laguna Cerro Castillo, in the newly-created Cerro Castillo National Park.
- iv. We spend the night at a rustic farm in the nearby town of Puerto Ibanez, on the shores of immense glacial-blue Lago General Carrera, South America's second largest lake.
- v. Distance  11 miles, elevation gain ↑3,500 feet
- vi. Accommodation: rustic farmstead, sleeping in tents, showers & bathrooms available.

E. Tuesday 24 January 2023

- i. Via a spectacular two-hour ferry, with sweeping views east to Argentina & west to the Northern Patagonian Ice Field, we cross Lago General Carrera to arrive in the small town of Chile Chico.
- ii. From there, we take a 1.5-hour transfer into the Jeinimeni sector of Patagonia National Park, where we set up a front-country (car-accessible) camp on the shores of the deep-blue Lago Jeinimeni.

- iii. From there, we day hike around the shores of the lake, and, for the adventurous, make a river crossing, to arrive at the opaque turquoise Lago Verde, before returning to our camp.



- iv. ➡ 6–10 mi, depending on whether the group continues to Lago Verde, ↑400 ft
- v. Accommodation: car-camping site with simple bathrooms & cook shelters, sleeping in tents, no showers.

F. Wednesday 25 January

- i. After waking up to beautiful mountain views, we drive north to the wild rock formations of Valle de la Luna, where we explore this desert's ecosystems through a loop trail.
- ii. After the hike, we drive a final 1.5 hours along the shores of the lake to a family ranch, where we'll get oriented for the horse-supported backpacking days.
- iii. That afternoon, we will talk through systems for horse-packing & backcountry living.
- iv. Those who want to swim in the clear waters of Lago General Carrera are encouraged to do so!
- v. ➡ 4.2 mi ↑1,800 ft
- vi. Accommodation: ranch house, staying inside with showers, minimal electricity.



G. Thursday 26 January

- i. After a hearty breakfast at the ranch, we'll pack up & head into the mountains.
- ii. We meet the local families who will support our trek, as well as their horses!
- iii. After dividing & organizing food & gear for the horses to carry, we'll set off on our trek.
- iv. We start off winding through a traditional Patagonian *campo* before heading higher into the mountains.
- v. The uphill makes us grateful to the horses! Our campsite is a spectacular perch overlooking the Jeinimeni mountains, where we have the opportunity to spend time with an experienced gaucho tending sheep in the high mountains.
- vi. In the evening, we'll gather around a fire for conversation about Patagonian history & culture.
- vii. ➡ 5 mi ↑ 2,500 ft
- viii. Accommodation: backcountry camping in tents, no showers.



H. Friday 27 January



- i. After breakfast & morning reflections, we begin our day climbing higher on a dramatic plateau, which, on a clear day, affords sweeping views down to Lago General Carrera, across to the Northern Patagonian Ice Field.
- ii. We spend most of the day hiking above treeline, through strange colored rock formations, before descending to our idyllic camp in a lush valley, surrounded by hanging glaciers.
- iii. The horses meet us here to deliver our supplies & we set up a base camp for the next two nights.
- iv. In the evening, we'll gather to learn more about the establishment of nearby Patagonia National Park.
- v. \square 8 mi \uparrow 1,200 ft
- vi. Accommodation: backcountry camping in tents.

I. Saturday 28 January

- i. We head out for day explorations of surrounding area.
- ii. One option is to hike toward the toe of a nearby glacier; another is to gain a higher plateau for broad views into the park & beyond.
- iii. Back at camp, we'll share dinner & reflections on our own wilderness experiences.
- iv. \square 5–10 mi, depending on day hike option, \uparrow 800–3,000 ft
- v. Accommodation: backcountry camping in tents.





J. Sunday 29 January

- i. Our final trekking day takes us through beautiful southern beech forest & glacial valleys as we make our way back toward Lago General Carrera.
- ii. As we near our pick-up point, we return to the land of Patagonian *campos*.
- iii. We return to the lakeside ranch for a celebratory dinner, a big traditional *asado al palo*, & enjoy an indoor sleep!
- iv.  10 mi  100 ft
- v. Accommodation: ranch house, staying inside with showers, minimal electricity.



K. Monday 30 January

- i. We transition to the center of Patagonia National Park, a newly-created park some have called the “Yellowstone of South America.”
- ii. After sharing breakfast, we’ll drive 1.5 hours to the Aviles Valley Trailhead, where we set off for a dramatic nine-mile loop hike through the colorful red mountains & glacially formed plateaus that make this side valley unique.
- iii. That evening, we’ll camp at the comfortable front-country campsite located at a historic ranch building, Casa Piedra.
- iv.  9 mi  1,500 ft
- v. Accommodation: car-camping site with simple bathrooms & cook shelters, sleeping in tents.

L. Tuesday 31 January

- i. We drive 30 minutes east toward Argentina, watching the landscape transition to Patagonian steppe.
- ii. We’ll arrive at the Lago Chico trailhead & begin this glorious seven-mile loop hike, with sweeping views of the immense Lago Cochrane, the transnational lake that forms the park’s southern border.
- iii. On clear days, we may catch a glimpse of Cerro San Lorenzo, Patagonia’s second-highest peak.

- iv. Once we finish our hike, we'll drive west through the Chacabuco Valley, the heart of Patagonia National Park, to Westwinds Campground, another one of the park's comfortable car-accessible campgrounds.
- v. ➡ 7 mi ↑ 800 ft
- vi. Accommodation: car-camping site with simple bathrooms & cook shelters, sleeping in tents.



M. Wednesday 1 February

- i. On our final day in Patagonia National Park, we tackle the 12-mile Lagunas Altas loop, named one of Patagonia's five best trails, with panoramic views & varied terrain.
- ii. That evening, we'll camp back at Westwinds.
- iii. ➡ 12 mi (daypacks only) ↑ 2,500 ft
- iv. Accommodation: car-camping site with simple bathrooms & cook shelters, sleeping in tents.



N. Thursday 2 February

- i. After many days of walking, we travel to the headwaters of the mighty Baker River, Chile's largest river by volume & the center of the country's largest (and ultimately successful) environmental campaign against the proposed HidroAysen megadam project.
- ii. The river is deep, clear blue, cutting through spectacular southern beech forest.
- iii. We'll raft a high-volume but straightforward section of Class III rapids, then float & enjoy the scenery.
- iv. We'll spend a final night in cabins along the Baker River, & enjoy a celebratory dinner together.
- v. Accommodations: simple cabins with bathrooms & showers.

O. Friday 3 February

- i. We continue the journey north. We will stop at the Balmaceda airport or in Coyhaique, depending on departure plans. Trip ends.
- ii. Transfer time: 6 hours

7. MARBLE CAVES

- A. Our itinerary does not include a visit to the Capillas de Mármol on the shores of Lake General Carrera.

B. Arrange that directly separate from the trip.



- C. Preference is to visit after the trip, while we are already close to the caves. Join an outfitter on a tour, then arrange transport to airport from the region.
- D. Or visit in advance of the trip. That can be a long day from Coyhaique. According to Lonely Planet: “Many tour agencies offer day trips to Capilla de Mármol: don’t do it unless you are game to spend a punishing eight hours on the road. It’s better to head south on your own, if you can.”
- E. Contact the leader to explore options for such visit.

8. TERMS & CONDITIONS

Please refer to [Terms & Conditions](#) regarding the AMC Adventure Travel:

- Cancellation Policy
- Leaders’ Right to Change Itinerary
- Leaders’ Expectations of Participants
- Trip Price
- Travel Documents
- Safety
- Activity Rating System



9. TRIP PRICE

- A. Price is \$4,500 per person shared occupancy for AMC members & \$4,600 for non-members. [Join the AMC](#) for \$50.
- B. Deposit of \$1,000 is due with application. Balance \$3,500 due 1 August 2022.
- C. The price will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements we can make & currency fluctuations. Any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases, will be passed back to you. Our cost estimates are conservative. A refund is considerably more likely than a price increase.



The Baker River

D. The expedition includes:

- i. Guiding in remote, often off-trail, areas by experienced instructors
- ii. Field instruction in outdoor skills, natural & human history of Patagonia
- iii. Lodging accommodations, from backcountry camping to car-camping to simple lodges starting Sunday night 22 January through Friday night 3 February 2023
- iv. Quality backcountry food & cook gear for all meals starting with dinner on Sunday 22 January through breakfast on Friday 3 February 2023
- v. On-trip transportation between 23 January until 3 February 2023
- vi. Logistical support including resupplies
- vii. One day of whitewater rafting
- viii. Emergency medical evacuation insurance

E. Participants are responsible for:

- i. Flights to & from Balmaceda, Chile.
- ii. Personal clothes & gear including sleeping bag & tent—tent can be rented if desired. Complete gear list to be distributed later.
- iii. Guide tips—tips are not expected & are not included in the trip price. If you feel that the guides have provided exceptional service you are welcome to tip them as you see fit.

- iv. Accommodations outside of trip dates.
- v. Any beverages during the front-country portions of the expedition
- vi. Insurance for travel delay, interruption, cancellation, or for baggage loss. If the possibility of such problems concerns you, individual travel insurance is suggested. The AMC has a recommended vendor whose material will be sent to you if your application is accepted.



10. LOGISTICS

Travel is by flying in & out of Balmaceda, Chile (BBA). International flights connect through Santiago. Plan to fly out 15:00 or later on Friday 3 February 2023.

11. REGISTRATION

We expect a group size of 10 people, including one leader. This trip is likely to fill quickly. Apply as soon as possible.

To enter Chile, you will need a valid US passport. The format requirement is to be valid for duration of stay. We recommend it valid for 3–6 months after the trip. Airlines, connections in other countries, & delays may add to the requirement.

To apply, you must [review, complete, & submit the application form](#) which consist of:

- A. Application
- B. Acknowledgement & Assumption of Risk & Release form
- C. Medical Questionnaire

Full link to the form at <https://forms.office.com/r/h6Dxk0APR3>

You will not be accepted & your check will not be deposited until the leaders have determined by telephone conversation with you that you & the trip are a good match. Deposit checks from wait-listed applicants will not be cashed until a spot is available, the applicant is accepted onto the trip, & they confirmed their continued interest.

12. TRIP LEADER



Rami is an active AMC leader with Adventure Travel, Bicycle, & Ski committees. He travelled throughout the world on several trips for hiking, bicycle touring, sightseeing, [Boston Marathon](#), & Ironman Switzerland.

He has been on extended trekking, trail running, & bicycle tours through the [White Mountains](#), [100 Mile Wilderness](#), [Pacific Northwest](#), Japan, [southern Patagonia](#), [Switzerland](#), [Hong Kong](#), [South Africa](#), [France](#), [Italy](#), & [Germany](#). Follow his adventures on [blog](#), [Instagram](#), & [Strava](#).

13. GEAR LIST

Choosing the right equipment for an outdoor trip is crucial to your safety and happiness. Patagonia is notorious for its variable weather, and your equipment must keep you warm, dry, comfortable, and healthy in challenging conditions.

Refer to this detailed document for more information:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jF95Nb1sVBTKKNU5HNqmSfdGZkET8ewF5v9-TvDh1bQ>

14. READING LIST

Chulengo Expeditions has developed an extensive [reading list](#). Particularly with this expedition the more you read & understand ahead of time, the more you will get of this unique experience.

15. PHOTO CREDIT

All photographs have been taken & supplied by Nadine Lehner, one of the co-founders of Chulengo Expeditions.