



Patagonia & Tierra del Fuego between Santiago and Ushuaia (DZSU)

Ushuaia to Santiago 23 days.

Trip notes navigation

- [Optional Activities](#)
 - [Insurance](#)
 - [Emergency Contact](#)
 - [Luggage & Kit List](#)
 - [Personal Medical Kit](#)
 - [Passports](#)
 - [Pre And Post Trip Accommodation And Connecting Flights](#)
 - [Continuing Your Trip](#)
 - [Contingency Emergency Fund](#)
 - [Responsible Tourism](#)
 - [Electrical](#)
 - [A Few Rules](#)
 - [Issues On The Trip](#)
 - [Tipping](#)
 - [Our Community](#)
 - [Feedback](#)
-
- [Countries Visited](#)
 - [Daily Itinerary](#)
 - [Visa Information](#)
 - [Important Notes](#)
 - [Overland Lifestyle And Trip Suitability](#)
 - [Who Travels With Dragoman?](#)
 - [Group Size](#)
 - [Our Crew And Guides](#)
 - [Accommodation On Tour](#)
 - [The Kitty](#)
 - [Meals And Group Participation](#)
 - [Dietary Requirements](#)
 - [Itineraries](#)
 - [British Foreign Office Travel Advice and Warnings](#)
 - [Health](#)
 - [Safety & Security](#)

- [Included Activities](#)



- Trip Type: Traveller Basic
- Route: Ushuaia to Santiago
- Length: 23 days
- Transport: Overland vehicle, ferry, catamaran
- Accommodation: Mainly campsites, with some bush camps and hotels/hostels.

Trip Type: Traveller Basic

These tours are all about exploring the world with like minded people and getting under the skin of a country. Dip your toe beneath the usual tourist surface and discover the real essence of the region, people and culture - enjoy family homestays, interact with locals and experience a traditional way of life. These basic tours allow you the freedom to explore without breaking the bank. Plenty of free time to explore independently. Optional activities to suit your budget. Freedom to choose your own meals. Simple family run hotels. A colourful variety of transportation. Fully trained and experienced leaders.

Countries Visited

Argentina



Argentina is a vast country which has a staggering diversity of climates and landscapes. With vibrant cities, the pampas, jungles and wind swept Patagonia it is a country with a very special character all of its own. Its initial appearance is fairly western but this disguises a long history of its own cultural heritage.

Buenos Aires is the capital of Argentina, lying at the mouth of the River Plate, it is a real viberant city. Full of life, from great local restaurants to local street markets and dances, showing the amazing local tango dance, Buenos Aires is the heart and soul of Argentina. Also home to some exquisite wine bars and an amazing nightlife, Buneos Aires is a must see city if you visit Argentina.

On the pampas the Gaucho people of Argentina spend their days working, riding their horses and protecting their cattle. This has resulted in worldwide export for beef, sunflower oil and wheat, making the Argentina Pampas famous for agriculture.

Deep in the south of the country is Patagonia. This beautiful area is known for its breathtaking landscapes, magnificent lakes and beautiful glacial scenery. It is a great place for outdoor activities, such as, trekking, horse riding, kayaking and mountain biking.

Patagonia is also full of culture, with the Welsh language kept alive for generations, and although it is starting to die out, there are many Welsh communities in Patagonia, especially around the Chebut river.

Heading further south is Tierra del Fuego. Lying across from the Magellan Straights, "The Land of Fire" is mainly in Chile, but 30% of it, including Ushuaia, the most southerly city in the world, belongs to Argentina.

Argentina is also the home to some beautiful wildlife. The Valdez Peninsular, in the Atlantic ocean, is a protected area which is the habitat for whales, penguins and seals. At certain times of the year, there is a chance to see the killer whale. This is also the home for land animals such as the Patagonian fox, guanacos and hairy armadillos.

To the north of Argentina is the Esteros del Ibera reserve in an area of swampland. Near to the borders of Paraguay and Brazil, this is one of South America's most important wilderness areas and is also the place to spot the rare marsh deer, maned wolf, howler monkeys, capybara and over 350 different species of birds.

Chile



With some of the most diverse landscapes in the world, Chile has the beauty of it all. From the driest deserts in the world, to the breathtaking sites of huge glaciers, this country is made for the outdoor enthusiast. Chile is a country full of volcanoes, lakes, rivers and beaches, and there is always an exciting adventure waiting to be found. If you venture off the beaten track, be prepared to make friends for life out of the welcoming locals.

A visit to Chile has to include a trip to the amazing capital of Santiago. This city sits in the country's central valley, and is a place full of amazing landscapes and a gorgeous Mediterranean climate.

With so many locations to visit, the culture of Chile can be exposed through the sound of the music. Ranging from traditional folk music, to popular and classic sounds, the tradition of Chile is seeped into every area of the country.

Seafood is Chile's main cuisine and with so many dishes to try, it is an opportunity not to be passed upon. With 2700 miles of astounding coastline, Chile is the perfect location for the variety of dishes available.

So make friends with strangers, feel the vibe of Chilean music, and let Chile get into your pores.

[Back to top ^](#)

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Ushuaia

Border information: Welcome to Ushuaia, the most southern city in the world. If you are starting in Ushuaia, enter Argentina at Ushuaia Airport.

Today is an arrival day with a pre departure meeting at 18:00 hrs. There are no activities planned so you can arrive at any time. Your leader will leave a note in reception telling you where this important meeting will take place. Your leader will collect your kitty and check your passport and insurance details at this meeting. Accommodation is in a lovely hostel in central Ushuaia.

Hotel for the night: Hostal Los Cormoranes

Hostal Los Cormoranes

Kamshen 788, esquina Alem

Ushuaia

Tel: +54 02901 423459

Ushuaia



Ushuaia lies at the southernmost tip of the Americas, the most southerly city on the island of Tierra del Fuego and often referred to as "the city at the end of the world". The town itself is low-lying and unassuming, centred around one main street and a waterfront that overlooks the Beagle Channel. Originally Ushuaia was little more than a remote outpost, first colonised by a British-funded mission in the late 1800's and subsequently used by the Argentinian government as a penal colony. What was once a sleepy small town has grown rapidly in recent years, much of which is due to tourist development and particularly to the increasing number of Antarctica trips calling to port here.

There's plenty to do in Ushuaia and the surrounding area. The town itself is home to an interesting museum where you can learn more about the history of Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego and the indigenous people who originally lived here. The surrounding scenery is also impressive, so it's worth getting out on a boat-trip into the Beagle Channel, which will give you some great views of town with the Martial range in the background. You can also explore Tierra del Fuego National Park,

another beautiful spot with some spectacular lake and mountain scenery.

The area is famous for its biting winds, so remember to pack your thermal undies if you're heading here, whatever time of year you're going to be visiting!

Day 2: Ushuaia, Tierra Del Fuego

Today is a non-driving day and a chance to explore Tierra del Fuego National Park as an optional activity. We stay for a second night in the same hostel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Beagle channel boat trips	USD 40
Guided tour of Tierra del Fuego National Park	ARS 310

Tierra Del Fuego



Tierra del Fuego ("Land of Fire") is a large island separated from mainland South America by the Magellan Straits. Most of the island belongs to Chile, but 30% of the archipelago is in Argentina, including Argentina's southernmost town, Ushuaia. This is Patagonia at its most remote, with a landscape of windswept plains, forests and swamplands, home to Rheas, Condors, Buzzard Eagles, Seals and Sea Lions, all of which thrive in these conditions. Originally the home of the Yamana and Ona Indians, sadly there are not any indigenous communities left here. The people who inhabit Tierra del Fuego today are the descendants of the colonial settlers who came here from Europe in nineteenth and twentieth centuries, mostly from Britain, Spain and Yugoslavia.

Day 3: Strait of Magellan

Border information: Exit Argentina at San Sebastian, enter Chile at San Sebastian.

We head north driving 430 kms, including a ferry crossing of the infamous Magellan Straits, into Chile where we bush camp for the night.

Activity

Follow in Darwin's footsteps across the Strait of Magellan

Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

Strait of Magellan

Separating Tierra del Fuego from mainland Argentina are the infamous Strait of Magellan. This treacherous stretch of water is about 500km long and takes its name from the explorer Magellan who first navigated these waters in 1520. It was the only ship out of a total of 17 attempting the passage that successfully managed to reach the Pacific. Before the Panama Canal was built, the Strait provided a useful route between Chile, Peru and Europe, and though they are less important as a major shipping route today, they still see a fair amount of traffic.

Day 4: Torres Del Paine National Park

500 kms drive to Torres del Paine National Park in Patagonia. This is one of the most outstanding areas of beauty in Chile and the highlight of the trip for many passengers. We camp for the night at a stunning lakeside campsite.

Activity

4 days to explore and trek the rugged Torres del Paine National Park

Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

Zodiac boat trips, horse rides and trekking in Torres del Paine National Park

USD 90

Torres Del Paine National Park

Parque Nacional Torres del Paine is home to what is undoubtedly some of the most spectacular scenery in all of Patagonia, if not all of South America. Rising up high above the Patagonian steppe are the 3 impressive granite towers that give the park its name, surrounded by towering mountain peaks, the most famous of which are Los Cuernos and Paine Grande. The park is a magical natural wonderland full of deep lakes, sparkling glaciers and cascading waterfalls, and it's also an important habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including the Patagonian rhea and guanaco, as well as flamingoes, condors and other birds.

The best way to explore is definitely to get out there on foot or perhaps on horse-back. The park is criss-crossed by a good network of trails, making it possible for you to see all the main sights either by doing a series of day hikes, or by doing a circular hike like the W-walk, taking a few days and stopping off at the park's refugios or camping along the way. Horse-riding and kayaking can also be arranged locally, and boats and catamarans offer trips across Lago Grey and Lago Pehoe in season.

Day 5: Torres Del Paine National Park

During the next few days you will get to walk part of the famous W-walk circuit with a local guide. You can also complete the full trek if you have pre-booked this option.

Today we take the catamaran across Lake Pehoe to the Paine Grande Campsite. From here the group splits into 2 groups (base package group and W-walk extension group) and we walk with our respective local guides to view Glacier Grey. We then walk back down to Paine Grande where we will spend the night camping. Approximate distance: 22 km, estimated duration: 8 hrs.

Day 6: Torres Del Paine National Park

Today we leave Paine Grande and trek up the French Valley.

Base package group: If you have not opted for the optional 2 day W-walk extension package, you will walk back down to Paine Grande with your local guide. You then board the catamaran back to Pudeto, where the truck will meet you and drive you to our campsite for the night. If you are on a trip during low season you will instead be spending the night in Paine Grande. Approximate distance: 29 km, estimated duration: 11 hrs.

W-walk extension group: If you have chosen the optional 2 day W-walk extension, you will continue trekking with your local guide to Campsite Cuernos where you will spend the night camping. Approximate distance: 27 km, estimated duration: 11 hrs.

Activity	Approximate Cost
W walk extension - 2 days The package includes 2 nights camping with facilities, food for the duration of the trek and the service of an expert English speaking local guide. Please note that this package must be pre booked through your sales agent. Please book as early as possible to ensure availability. For further information on the W walk please refer to the trip notes.	GBP 120

Day 7: Torres Del Paine National Park

Base package group: Today is free for those that have not booked the W-walk optional 2 day extension package. There are many other optional activities available near our campsite, or maybe take a day to relax and just enjoy the spectacular views from the campsite. If you are on a trip during low season you will have the morning free around Paine Grande before taking the catamaran across to Pudeto and the campsite.

W-walk extension group: For those of you that continue on the W-walk, your local guide will direct you along Lago Nordenskjold to Las Torres Campsite where you will spend the night camping. Approximate distance: 11 km, estimated time: 5 hrs.

Day 8: Torres Del Paine National Park

Today is our last full day in this beautiful National Park.

Base package group: We hop on our truck which will take us to the base of the famous three peaks which give the name to the park. From there we will walk up the Torres with our local guide before we make our way back to the truck and onto our campsite for the night. Approximate distance: 20 km, estimated time: 8 hrs.

W-walk extension group: This morning we will hike up to see the Torres and come back down to Las Torres Campsite where the Dragoman truck will be waiting to return the whole group to the campsite for the night. Approximate distance: 20 km, estimated time: 8 hrs.

Day 9: El Calafate

Border information: Exit Chile at Cerro Castillo, enter Argentina at Cerro Castillo.

270 kms drive to El Calafate, crossing the border back into Argentina. We stay in dorm accommodation at a hostel.

El Calafate



El Calafate is a small town on the southern shore of Lago Argentino in Patagonia. Originally a sheep station and trading outpost, today the town has developed a bustling small town atmosphere thanks to a growing tourist trade. Most people base themselves here whilst visiting the nearby Perito Moreno Glacier, located a short distance away at the southern reaches of the Parque Nacional Los Glaciares. Interestingly the town takes its name from the Calafate berry, and locals claim that if you eat one of these and make a wish, you are guaranteed to return to Patagonia.

Day 10: El Calafate

Today we go on a guided visit to view the stunning Perito Moreno Glacier, one of the more spectacular sights in Patagonia. Second night at the same hostel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Guided full day trip to the Perito Moreno Glacier	Included in Kitty
Boat trip beneath the Perito Moreno Glacier	ARS 180

Day 11: El Chalten

We drive 220 kms into Los Glaciares National Park to El Chalten. Here we have two full days to explore the area. We spend 3 nights camping with facilities.

El Chalten



The clouds that form around the summit of the surrounding mountains were mistaken for smoke, which gave the name "Chalten" which means volcano. The picturesque landscape is a perfect place for hiking, as there is so much to explore and the rewards of constant beautiful sights gives a perfect reason to hike.

Day 12 to 13: El Chalten, Los Glaciares National Park

Two days to enjoy the stunning Los Glaciares National Park and Fitzroy National Park where you can go trekking along world class tracks. There's also a wide range of activities available from horse riding to glacier trekking and a boat trip on Viedma Lake.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Glacier trek, hikes and horseriding in Los Glaciares National Park	USD 50

Los Glaciares National Park



Los Glaciares National Park is probably home to some of the most spectacular scenery in all of Argentina, if not South America. This is classic picture-book Patagonia, wherever you turn you're surrounded by wide open skies, magnificent mountains, incredible glaciers, glistening lakes and thick verdant forest. By far the best way to explore is to get out on foot. There are plenty of well established trails through the park and maps can be picked up locally, so you can plan a short walk that will just take you a couple of hours, or the more adventurous might choose to hike out for a whole day or even overnight. Los Glaciares covers a massive area and there are two main gateways to the park; to the south, El Calafate provides access to Lago Argentino and the Perito Moreno Glacier and surrounding area, then in the North, the small town of El Chalten can be used as a base to explore the Fitzroy Mountains and Lake Viedma and it's glacier.

Day 14 to 17: Argentinian Patagonia, Carretera Austral, Puyuhuapi and Queulat NP, Futaleufu

Border information: On the second day exit Argentina at Huemules, enter Chile at Huemules.

We start off going north through Argentina and cross into Chile. We will spend 4 days overlanding through magnificent scenery, generally exploring this area of outstanding natural beauty. We go past the Chilean fjords and visit Queluat National Park where there is the option to walk to see the Colgante Glacier. Please note that the road on this section of the trip is rough and mostly unpaved meaning that the going is slow. The first two nights will most likely be spent bushcamping and the last two nights will be spent in campsites.

Argentinian Patagonia



Patagonia is the name of the region in the far south of South America, the southernmost stretch of the Andes and the surrounding plains and plateau. The area is split down the middle, with Chilean Patagonia on the east, and Argentinian Patagonia on the west. Renowned for its desolate landscape, unrelenting winds and magnificent lake, mountain and glacial scenery, the name Patagonia comes from the word "Patagon", used by the explorer Magellan to describe the local people who he believed to be giants. Today historians believe that the Patagons were actually Tehuelches, with an average height of about 1.8m (or 5' 11) as oppose to 1.55m (5' 1) which was the average height of a Spaniard at the time. Argentinian Patagonia includes the spectacular national parks of Los Glaciares, Nahuel Huapi and Tierra del Fuego, home to the Perito Moreno Glacier, the Argentinian Lake District and the Fitzroy Range.

Carretera Austral

The Carretera Austral or Southern Highway is a fantastic route that passes between Puerto Monte and Coyhaique, through vast tracts of untouched wilderness, past soaring snow capped mountains, glaciers, glass-green fjords and staggering, beautiful valleys. This is Chile at its best and is a perfect area to explore by overland vehicle. You need to have a flexible itinerary and to be able to camp in the wild, as settlements are few and far between. The attraction of this are are the wide-open spaces and the national parks. We spend our time driving through magnificent scenery, hiking, visiting glaciers and generally exploring this area of outstanding natural beauty.

Day 18: Bariloche

Border information: Exit Chile at Futaleufu, enter Argentina at Futaleufu.

Today we will cross into Argentina and continue our journey to the picturesque town of Bariloche. We will stay overnight in dorm beds in a local hostel.

Activity

Overland through the stunning Argentinian Lake District

Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

Bariloche



The Argentinian resort town of Bariloche has a picture perfect setting on the shores of Nahuel Hapi Lake, flanked by the peaks of the surrounding andean mountains. The scenery here is truly stunning, so it's a must to get out and explore and take in all the amazing views. In winter, the town is a popular centre for skiing and in summer the focus shifts to walking, mountain-biking, horse-riding and kayaking and canoeing on the lakes - and if all that sounds too much like hard work, you can sit back and enjoy the view on a leisurely boat trip across to Victoria Island.

Bariloche itself is also an interesting place to wander around. The town is famous for it's handmade chocolates and there are some really spectacular displays in the local chocolate shops. Because of it's popularity with Argentinians as well as international tourists, the town has a lively bar and restaurant scene, with some great places to choose from. This is a particularly good place to sample some world class Argentinian steak, and wild boar and Patagonian lamb is also worth a try here too.

Day 19: Bariloche

Today is a free day to enjoy this beautiful mountain town. Perhaps explore on a mountain bike, take a trip along the river in a kayak or enjoy the delights on a chocolate factory tour!

Second night in the same hostel.

Activity

Horse riding and mountain biking around Bariloche

Approximate Cost

USD 80

Day 20: Pucon

Border information: Exit Chile at Mamuil Malal, enter Argentina at Mamuil Malal.

Today we cross into the Lake District of Chile and the town of Pucon. We will spend 2 nights in a campsite with facilities.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Trek up the snowcapped volcano Mt Villarica	USD 100
Horseriding, white-water rafting or hikes around Pucon	USD 50

Pucon



Southern Chile's lake district boasts some lake and mountain scenery comparable with what the Swiss Alps or New Zealand have to offer. Beautiful deep blue lakes are flanked by majestic forest-clad mountains with snowy peaks to provide picture-postcard views and a perfect spot for walking and camping. The attractive small town of Pucon is located at the heart of the northern Chilean lakes, a great place to stop for a few days so you can explore the area and get involved in some of the many adventure activities on offer here. At certain times of year it's even possible to do a day climb of the nearby Villarrica volcano, a challenging trek, but one that anyone who is reasonably fit should be able to manage - and you're rewarded with some fantastic views of the surrounding area from the summit. In fact the whole area is great for trekking and there are plenty of options to do some great self-guided walks.

Alternatively Pucon offers great horse riding, white-water rafting and mountain-biking opportunities. And if all this talk of activity just sounds a little too much, there are also some great thermal springs to relax in nearby, the natural pools at Pozones have a beautiful setting and is a great place to go and soak your weary limbs in the evening.

Day 21: Pucon

Today is a non-driving day with a range of activities available from hiking to hot springs. We stay for a second night in the same campsite.

Day 22: Santiago

Today we have a full days drive to Santiago. If times allows we will try to visit one of the many vineyard in the wine region south of Santiago. On arrival in Santiago we will stay in a centrally located hostel for the night. We suggest you might stay one extra day in Santiago.

Santiago



Bisected by the Mapocho River, Chile's capital is a large, modern city with a very European atmosphere. In the centre of the city wide tree-lined boulevards lead to pleasant plazas and leafy parks and on a clear day the snow-capped peaks of the Andes provide a magnificent backdrop to the Santiago skyline.

Much of the centre is pedestrianised, which together with the wide streets and efficient metro system make Santiago an easy city to explore on foot. There are plenty of interesting museums where you can learn more about Chilean history and culture, from the City of Santiago Museum which chronicles the city's history to the Natural History Museum and Museum of Pre-Colombian Art. The city's many wonderful parks are also worth a visit, particularly O'Higgins and San Cristobal which offers great views of the city from Cerro San Lucia.

As you would expect from a capital city of this size, Santiago is full of busy bars and restaurants and has some lively nightlife to offer. For cheap eats, full of local flavour, head to the Mercado Central (central market) which is packed full of food stalls and simple cafes and restaurants. For a real treat, you might want to head out to one of the more upmarket neighbourhoods like Bellavista or Providencia, home to some really world-class restaurants and great bars. Barrio Brasil is also worth a look; this old neighbourhood attracts an arty and bohemian crowd and there are often interesting events going on here.

If you have the time, there's also plenty to do in the area surrounding the city. Santiago is right in the middle of Chile's wine producing region, so it is relatively straightforward to arrange full day or half day tours out to the local wineries. You may also be interested in visiting the seaside town of Valparaiso, which can be visited as a day trip from Santiago.

Day 23: Santiago

The trip ends this morning. No accommodation is provided.

Border information: If you are leaving in Santiago, exit Chile at Santiago Airport.

[Back to top ^](#)

Important Notes

The routes, activities and places visited described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance,

vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

We update these notes regularly and so please ensure you have an up-to-date version of these trip notes.

We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often without western infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

Torres del Paine National Park and the W-walk

The group will spend 5 nights and 4 full days in the Torres del Paine National Park, allowing plenty of time for hiking, trekking and other optional activities - such as the 4 day W-walk, a popular route taking in 3 of the most famous features of the park.

The W involves 4 full days trekking and 3 overnight stays away from the truck. Dragoman offers a 2 day W-walk extension package which includes a local guide, food and camping with facilities. This package enables you to complete the entire W walk circuit without having to carry your own tent, cooking equipment or food supplies. It is however important to bear in mind that you will have to carry your own personal effects for the duration of the trek, e.g. sleeping mat, sleeping bag, clothes for 4 days, toiletries, snacks, water, etc.

Please note that the extension package must be pre booked through your sales agent. To ensure availability we recommend that you book early, especially during high season. Please also note that any cancellation within 65 days of departure will incur a 100% cancellation fee.

High season runs from 1 November to 30 March.

Itinerary for Base Package (included in High Season trips):

Day 1: Pehoe Campsite

The group arrives in Puerto Natales where two local guides will join on the journey to Torres del Paine.

Day 2: Paine Grande Campsite

The Dragoman truck will drive the group to Pudeto. From here the group will take the catamaran across Lago Grey to Paine Grande at 09:30 hrs. The group will split into 2 groups, one for the base package walkers and one for the extension package walkers, and hike up to Glacier Grey with their respective guides. The groups will return to Paine Grande in time for dinner. The night will be spent camping in Paine Grande campsite. The walk today is mostly flat with easy terrain.

Day 3: Pehoe Campsite

The groups will hike from Refugio Paine Grande to the French Valley. The base package group will then walk back to Paine Grande and board the catamaran back to Pudeto with their guide. The truck will meet the group here and drive to our campsite for the night. Today the path climbs to reach the top of the French Valley and then descends again. Some parts are steep with loose scree and uneven terrain.

Day 4: Pehoe Campsite

Free day for optional activities around the camp.

Day 5: Pehoe Campsite

This morning the group will wake early to drive to Refugio Las Torres in the Dragoman truck. You will hike with your guide to see the Torres (Towers), and come back down to Refugio Las Torres where the Dragoman truck will be waiting to return the whole group to the campsite for the evening. Today the path climbs to reach the Las Torres lookout and then descends again. The path is quite steep (the last part before reaching the lookout is very steep) with some loose scree and uneven terrain.

Itinerary for Base Package (included in Low Season trips):

Day 1: Pehoe Campsite

The group arrives in Puerto Natales where two local guides will join on the journey to Torres del Paine.

Day 2: Paine Grande Campsite

The Dragoman truck will drive the group to Pudeto. From here the group will take the catamaran across Lago Grey to Paine Grande at 12:00 hrs. The group will then split into 2 groups, one for the base package walkers and one for the extension package walkers, and hike up to the Glacier Grey viewpoint with their respective guides. The groups will return to Paine Grande in time for dinner. The night will be spent camping in Paine Grande campsite. The walk today is mostly flat with easy terrain.

Day 3: Paine Grande Campsite

The groups will hike from Refugio Paine Grande to the French Valley. The base package group will then walk back to Paine Grande with their guide and stay a second night in the campsite. Today the path climbs to reach the top of the French Valley and then descends again. Some parts are steep with loose scree and uneven terrain.

Day 4: Pehoe Campsite

This morning is free time before boarding the catamaran back to Pudeto at 12.30 pm. The truck will meet the group here and drive to our campsite for the night. The afternoon is free for optional activities or relaxing around the camp.

Day 5: Pehoe Campsite

This morning the group will wake early to drive to Refugio Las Torres in the Dragoman truck. You will hike with your guide to see the Torres (Towers), and come back down to Refugio Las Torres where the Dragoman truck will be waiting to return the whole group to the campsite for the evening. Today the path climbs to reach the Las Torres lookout and then descends again. The path is quite steep (the last part before reaching the lookout is very steep) with some loose scree and uneven terrain.

Please note that you will be able to see most areas of the park in the included Base Package itinerary. You should also note that it is possible to visit other areas of the park on day hikes from the main campsite where the truck will be based for 4 nights.

Itinerary for Extension Package to full W-walk (optional):

Day 1: Pehoe Campsite (already included in trip)

The group arrives in Puerto Natales where two local guides will join on the journey to Torres del Paine.

Day 2: Paine Grande Campsite (already included in trip)

The Dragoman truck will drive the group to Pudeto. From here the group will take the catamaran across Lago Grey to Paine Grande. This afternoon the group will split into 2 groups, one for the base package walkers and one for the extension package walkers, and hike up to see Glacier Grey with their respective guides. The groups will return to Paine Grande in time for dinner. The night will be spent camping in Paine Grande campsite. The walk today is mostly flat with easy terrain.

Day 3: Campsite Cuernos (optional extra)

The group will hike from Paine Grande to the French Valley and then finally onward to Los Cuernos. The group will spend the night camping in Campsite Cuernos. Today the path climbs to reach the top of the French Valley and then descends again. Some parts are steep with loose scree and uneven terrain.

Day 4: Las Torres Campsite (optional extra)

The group will hike from Campsite Cuernos along Lake Nordenskjold and Almirante Nieto Mountain to the foot of Ascencio Valley. The group will spend the night camping in Las Torres Campsite. The walk today is mostly flat with easy terrain.

Day 5: Pehoe Campsite (already included in trip)

This morning the group will hike up to see the Torres (Towers), and come back down to Las Torres Campsite where the Dragoman truck will be waiting to return the whole group to the campsite for the evening. Today the path climbs to reach the Las Torres lookout and then descends again. The path is quite steep (the last part before reaching the lookout is very steep) with some loose scree and uneven terrain.

Trekking - what to bring

Tents as well as food during the trek are provided. You will have to carry your own daypack with any items you need during the trek, including sleeping bag and sleeping mat.

You will need to be prepared for 4 seasons' weather in one day. It can be cold and windy and you may have to layer up with thermals and warm socks.

Some very useful things to bring on the trek:

- Daypack (less than 30 litres)
- Waterproof bag(s) to keep your stuff dry (bin liners or similar are fine)
- Sleeping mat (also available from our local supplier)
- Warm sleeping bag (also available to rent from our local supplier)
- Sleeping bag liner (if you wish for extra insulation)
- Walking sticks (some of the track is steep and made of loose scree)
- Water bottle(s) with a total capacity of at least 2 litres
- Head torch or normal torch
- Small towel
- Camera (remember extra batteries and memory cards)
- Binoculars
- Walking boots
- Light shoes or sandals (to allow your feet to relax and breathe during the evenings)
- Waterproofs
- Thermal underwear
- Warm socks
- Fleece or other warm sweater
- Woolly hat & gloves
- Sunglasses
- Sun hat
- Basic toiletries (lip salve, sun block, insect repellent, wet wipes, hand sanitizer, etc)
- Basic medical kit (any personal medication, plasters, painkillers, etc)
- Pack of cards / book / game for evenings
- Any snacks (also possible to buy en route but generally it's cheaper to get it in Puerto Natales)
- Money (for souvenirs, snacks, drinks, etc)
- Entrance ticket to Torres del Paine NP

- Passport + the immigration slip you receive when you enter Chile

Physical Preparation

South America - general

South America is diverse continent from high altitude, to the steamy Amazon, to baking deserts. You should therefore be prepared for the full gambit of climates. There will be time for hiking and other activities such as horse riding and you will need to be reasonably fit. Overland travel can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions can be challenging to some. You will need to be fit enough to help every day with the camp chores (cooking, washing up, general camp set up) as well as putting up and taking down your own tent. There are some long driving days and some early morning starts. The step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down the step at least 8-10 times a day. By and large the South America trips have a good range of hotel accommodation mixed up with camping so that life is not too rough.

Patagonia Extreme Weather Note

You will be travelling to the southernmost point of South America and you should expect extreme weather conditions. It can be bitterly cold and terribly windy at any time of the year. Therefore please remember to prepare accordingly - this is a tough trip and should not be taken lightly. We suggest you take plenty of winter clothing and a good quality four season sleeping bag as well as a sleeping bag liner.

Note on sleeping bags

Please note that a sleeping bag's rating typically indicates the lowest temperature at which it will keep the average sleeper warm. For example, with a 0°C bag, you should be able to sleep in 0°C temperature, but not necessarily comfortably.

For European sleeping bags there are the following standards:

- the upper limit is the highest temperature at which a 'standard' adult man is able to have a comfortable night's sleep without excess sweating.
- the comfort rating is based on a 'standard' adult woman having a comfortable night's sleep.
- the lower limit is based on the lowest temperature at which a 'standard' adult man is deemed to be able to have a comfortable night's sleep.
- the extreme rating is a survival only rating for a 'standard' adult man. This is an extreme survival rating only and it is not advisable to rely on this rating for general use.

The transition zone, in between the comfort and lower temperature, is usually considered as the best purchase guideline.

For Patagonia trips, please ensure your sleeping bag's transition zone goes down to at least -1°C.

Visa Information

Many countries that we visit on our travels will require visas to enter. Some are best obtained before you leave home, and others can be obtained en-route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible.

The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. The information provided is given in good faith and we do try to keep the visa information as up to date as possible. Please be aware though that rules do change, often without prior warning, which is why it is important that you check for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance, you can choose to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy or consulate. However, our recommendation is that you use a visa agent to assist you with your applications. While this does increase the cost, it will make the process much easier for you. Dragoman have teamed up with 'The Visa Machine' to create a safe, secure, hassle-free way of obtaining visas and visa advice. Our unique link within their website is designed to make the visa process as straightforward as possible. Simply go to <https://dragoman.thevisamachine.com> and click on your region of travel followed by your trip route and 'The Visa Machine' will advise you about not only the required visas but also the dates by which you should apply. 'The Visa Machine' can then assist you in the actual visa application, thus taking all the worry and hassle out of the process. This should apply for ALL nationalities and countries of residence.

As you will often need to submit your passport together with your applications, we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure. However if you do need to travel in this period please let us know as soon as possible so that we can help you work out the options for your visa application process.

Argentina

Nationals of most countries including Australia, USA, the EU, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK do not need a visa for tourist visits of limited duration to Argentina.

ARGENTINA RECIPROCITY TAX:

The Argentinian government charges a reciprocity tax which applies to Canadian, US and Australian citizens. The amounts are as follows:

Australians - US\$ 100 (multiple entry for up to 1 year from date of issue)

Canadians - US\$75 (single entry) or US\$ 150 (multiple entry for up to 5 years from date of issue)

Americans - US\$40 (multiple entry for up to 10 years from date of issue)

PLEASE NOTE: This fee has to be paid online **before** arriving to Argentina. The fee can be paid through the following webstes: www.migraciones.gov.ar or www.provinciapagos.com.ar. For instructions on how to process this payment, please visit http://cnyor.mrecic.gov.ar/userfiles/Onlie_payment_instructions_0.pdf.

Chile

Nationals of most countries including Australia, USA, the EU, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK do not need a visa for tourist visits of limited duration to Chile

Personal Spending

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on trips in South America, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US\$15 and a maximum of US\$30 per day. This amount is usually lower in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru but slightly higher elsewhere.

This will cover expenses such as your drinks, meals when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

What else you need to know

Currencies & Cash

It is not really worth trying to buy local currencies before you travel. Bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated!

For obvious security reasons we hesitate to recommend you bring lots of cash with you, a sensible mix of cash and ATM cards is best. Most of our past passengers have said they wished they had been told to bring more cash. Apart from the convenience of being able to change money in many more places, you will sometimes get a much better exchange rate for cash.

More and more people are choosing to travel with cash passports such as TravelEx cards (you can visit www.cashpassport.com for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change in South America with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. However due to a recent counterfeit scam central banks in several South American countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile) have temporarily banned the circulation of \$100 notes bearing a series 2001 production date and a serial number starting with the letters CB or CF and ending in B2. The serial number is printed in green on the emblem. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are dated from 2003 or later. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Cash machines are readily available in most areas but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. If you are taking traveller's

cheques, we recommend that you should only take those issued by American Express. Please note that Thomas Cook traveller's cheques may be used in some places, but are becoming more difficult to change. Brazil can be difficult for changing forex, it's handy to have a cash card as backup. Please bring a mixture of small and large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over \$50. Kitty contributions should be at least half in cash and be in the same denominations and currencies as suggested above. Any proportion of kitty contributions paid in travellers cheques should be increased to cover the commission charge incurred in exchanging them.

Overland Lifestyle and Trip Suitability

Dragoman has 32 years experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose built iconic expedition vehicles on an off the beaten track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up close. Your journey will be overland across vast distances so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity. On an overland journey you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores etc.

Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out!

We are looking forward to welcoming you on one of our overland journeys but before we do there are a few things we would like to draw to your attention:

[Back to top ^](#)

Who Travels with Dragoman?

Our groups are made up of people from around the world and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18 (or 7 on our Family Trips), as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the beauties of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

[Back to top ^](#)

Group Size

The maximum group size we take on our overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location; however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Zanzibar. This means a group starting a trip in Nairobi, for example, will visit Zanzibar at the same time as group starting a trip in Dar es Salaam. In practical terms this means there could be up to 44 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

Please also note that on some departures there may be more than one truck doing the same route. This means that you will be in the same hotel or campsite as another Dragoman group on some days. To ensure that you are not always at the same place at the same time as another group, your

itinerary will most likely be slightly altered from the itinerary advertised in these trip notes.

Our Crew and Guides

Our crew are passionate about travel and are always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all the overland companies, spending 10 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK, and then up to six months on the road as a trainee. On all Dragoman overlanding trips, we usually have 2 western crew. The crew are responsible for the group and the overall organisation of the trip. On our trips in East and Southern Africa we either have 2 western crew or 1 western crew and 1 local driver. While not being guides in the traditional sense, you can expect them to have a broad knowledge of the places visited and for them to offer suggestions of things to do and see.

On trips south of Nairobi in East and Southern Africa we will also have an African camp master/cook who is in charge of running the camp and organising all of the meals. Their knowledge of the local produce makes shopping at the markets great fun and you will learn how to prepare and cook some unusual dishes.

In the rest of Africa, South America and the majority of Central Asia and China we use local guides who may stay with us for just a few hours or will actually travel with us for some or the entire journey. In these cases they become a third crew member and are able to offer their local knowledge as well as a real insight into the lives of the local people.

Dragoman endeavours to provide the services of experienced crew, however, due to the seasonality of travel, situations may arise where your crew is new to a particular region or training other crew. Your crew have a duty of care to all members of the group and therefore they have the authority to ask you to leave the trip if you require serious medical assistance, you are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

Accommodation on Tour

Dragoman's overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying hotels, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip and whilst our crew will do their best to accommodate couples travelling together in twin rooms, all our travellers should expect to stay in multi-share accommodation from time to time.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary depending on what options are available in each of the areas we travel through and the nightstops on our routes; The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses.

Equally, the type and standard of hotel accommodation will vary greatly depending on what is available in the area; hotels can vary from very basic multi-share rooms without electricity or running water all the way to high standard hotels with good facilities!

One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will wild camp; this allows us to get far away from the tourist crowds to some beautiful, secluded spots. Occasionally on some of our trips we are able to stay in villages or local homestays, this allows us to get close to indigenous populations and ensures our money stays within local communities.

[Back to top ^](#)

The Kitty

In addition to the trip price on our overlanding trips, you will also be required to pay a kitty specified for your trip (please note that there is no kitty on our Family Trips). The kitty is payable in installments at the start of each section of the trip for combination trips, and in full at the start of the trip for individual trips. Each customer joining a trip pays their kitty into a central fund. The fund is managed by the Dragoman crew and the kitty accounts can be viewed by all throughout the trip.

The kitty covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park entrances, excursions and local guides).

The kitty system is very unique to overlanding and we believe it allows us to have flexibility and transparency on our trips. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally. It also helps to keep the costs competitive and save on administration costs so that we can pass the saving on to you. Dragoman makes NO PROFIT on kitties, as they are the group's fund. We constantly update the kitty prices on our website and the kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Prices can go up or down with no notice, and exchange rate fluctuations will affect costs. If there is money left in the kitty at the end of your trip, then this is divided between the group and you receive a refund.

Once you book your trip it is very important that you check our website on a regular basis and just before departure for any changes to the kitty amount.

The kitty is payable in full at the start of your trip (in installments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips) or via our new scheme where you can pay in advance 3-4 weeks before the start of your trip (please see http://www.dragoman.com/files/Kitty_doc_v1.pdf for more details - this letter will also be sent in your final documents upon booking a trip).

If you are bringing the kitty out in cash, please try to pay in the specified currency on the website (US Dollars, or Euros in West Africa). Your tour leader will be able to accept some of the kitty in local currency if needed, and they will let you know the exchange rate locally - in most destinations you can withdraw local currencies from ATM machines, using either a cash passport or a credit/debit card. Please bear in mind that most cards have a maximum withdrawal amount per day, local ATMs may run out of cash, and your bank could block the card despite you warning them of your travel plans, so it could be impractical to try to get the entire kitty out from an ATM.

Traveller's cheques are becoming increasingly difficult to change around the world with passengers and our leaders are experiencing frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept TCs on our trips. As an alternative, in most destinations you can withdraw local currencies from ATM machines and use either a cash passport or a debit card.

[Back to top ^](#)

Meals and Group Participation

On an overland journey you are more than just an individual passenger - you're part of the team. You are expected to pitch in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. As part of your trip you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting water and firewood, sweeping out the truck, loading the back locker, etc. While camping on overland journeys, all meals are included in the kitty. This means that you will have to work together to cook for everyone in your group. You will be divided into smaller units of 3-4 people and take it in turns to cook for the whole group according to a rota system. When it is your turn to cook you will have to plan the meal, shop for the ingredients in local markets or supermarkets and then prepare the meal for the whole group. The secret to cooking for 20+ people in a basic camping kitchen is to keep it simple! (On trips south of Nairobi we have a cook on board the truck; however you will still be required to help prepare meals).

An example of a typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, fruit and cereal as well as tea and coffee. When time allows it will also be possible to serve something hot such as eggs or pancakes. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto or pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

[Back to top ^](#)

Dietary Requirements

If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your crew at your welcome meeting. Our crew will try to cater for any particular dietary requirement or food intolerance whenever possible. However, it must be remembered that it may not always be possible and the variety of dishes may be severely limited in comparison to those available to others. If there is anything in particular you require in your diet, or would miss from home, or because of an allergy would miss out on, it would be best to bring these with you. Depending on your particular requirements, you may need to allow yourself some extra spending money to allow you to purchase extra food items.

[Back to top ^](#)

Itineraries

Our itineraries are our intention but travel in more remote areas of the world is unpredictable - borders can close, there can be extreme adverse weather, strikes or maybe mechanical issues that affect the running of your trip but equally due to the nature of our trips we can often spontaneously include a local festival or event into the itinerary. This being said, the safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a priority for Dragoman. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. Dragoman makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources:

- The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice
- Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers
- Leaders reports from off the road
- Local contacts we have built up over 33 years of experience

[Back to top ^](#)

British Foreign Office Travel Advice and Warnings

Dragoman follows the British Foreign Office Travel advice when deciding where and where we are unable to travel. We will base our decisions on itineraries and alterations to published routes based on their advise rather than the advise of other governments.

However we recommend you check the latest travel advisories from your own government for the country you are travelling to before you book and prior to departure. Check to ensure that no travel warning is invalidating your travel insurance Here are a few useful addresses:

UK www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Australia. <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

New Zealand. <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>

United States. http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Canada. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

Dragoman has also teamed up with the UK Foreign and commonwealth office (FCO) in their 'Know before you go campaign' www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo. This website offers straightforward travel advice, top tips, and up to date country information to help you plan a safe trip. We recommend you check this out before you travel. We will advise you of any significant changes in advice before travel or whilst you are overseas.

[Back to top ^](#)

Health

You need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in our trips. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assessed your ability to cope with our style of travel. To help you assess if this trip is suitable, please refer to the physical rating. The ratings for each trip are a good indication of how challenging they are and in some cases you should be prepared for some long driving days and possibly limited facilities. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns. Please note that if, in the opinion of our leader, you are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to yourself and/or the rest of the group, Dragoman reserves the right to exclude you from all or part of the trip without a refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information prior to travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. We also advise you to declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase.

[Back to top ^](#)

Altitude

Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatising to high altitude; please discuss these options with your doctor. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude, the tour leader will issue you with a self assessment altitude questionnaire which allows you to monitor how you are coping with the altitude and informs

you of danger signals so that you can reports these as soon as possible, either to the tour leader or a medical professional.

[Back to top ^](#)

Yellow Fever

A valid international certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever is required in many countries. You may need to present this on arrival at the airport or border crossing. Some countries will refuse entry if you are unable to present your certificate. It's also quite common for your home country to request a Yellow Fever certificate on your arrival back home.

It is your responsibility to check with your doctor well in advance of leaving home about the Yellow Fever requirements for the countries you'll be visiting.

Malaria & other mosquito-borne diseases

Get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your GP / travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as Dengue Fever and Chikungunya are continuing to spread and becoming a bigger problem around the world. Bite prevention is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available.

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists, can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, tent doors or, if sleeping outside, use a mosquito net. Use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing.

Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permetherin solution provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights and in hotel rooms but cannot be used inside the tents.

[Back to top ^](#)

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection vary according to different regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel.

We also recommend you check out any specific health advice for the country you are travelling to either via your GP or the following websites: www.nathnac.org or www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

In the UK, we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive, up-to-date vaccination and health information. You will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

[Back to top ^](#)

Safety & Security

At Dragoman your safety is of paramount importance and we will do our best to ensure that your travel with us is safe and trouble-free but we do ask that you take that little bit of extra care whilst you are away and to understand about the nature of this style of travel.

We want you to have an enjoyable time but you must also remember that part of the enjoyment of travel is experiencing a different way of life and cultures. This may also mean experiencing different safety and hygiene standards than those you are normally used to.

Therefore, please take note of the following safety tips and follow any local safety advice or briefings delivered by our crew or any third party suppliers we use during your trip.

[Back to top ^](#)

Transport Safety

- Our own vehicles have fully fitted seat belts; make sure you always belt up.
- If you find a safety belt inoperable or missing on one of our vehicles, please inform the crew immediately.
- Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that other vehicles we may use or recommend in some countries will be fitted with seat belts on every seat as it is not a legal requirement in much of the world.
- Please remain seated on board vehicles at all times when the vehicle is in motion
- Never place luggage in the aisles or foot wells
- Ensure you know where your nearest Emergency exit is; this may be a designated emergency exit, a window or a roof hatch.
- Check the location of the fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- Follow any safety instructions provided by the crew/driver
- Our vehicles are fitted with roof seats which can be used in certain conditions, such as when driving at low speeds, off main tarmac roads, etc. They can only be used with the express permission of the crew and you must never sit in them without seat belts.

Road Safety

- Traffic in some countries travels on the opposite side of the road to what you may be used to, so ensure you look both ways before crossing the road.
- In many countries vehicles do not automatically stop at crossings.
- Crash Helmets are often not provided with mopeds and motorbikes overseas - we do not recommend you hire these vehicles.

[Back to top ^](#)

Fire & Other Safety - Hostels/Hotels/Homestays

- Ensure you know where your nearest fire exit is and check to ensure that it is operative.
- Check the location of the nearest fire extinguisher.
- Study the fire instructions in your room if available.
- Identify how to raise the alarm if a fire occurs.
- If a fire occurs, leave immediately; do not stop to collect your effects.
- Proceed to an assembly point well away from the building.
- Electrics in hotels in many of the places that we visit will not be up to the same standards as at home. Please ensure that you check rooms, especially bathrooms and are aware of any issues that look unsafe. If in doubt inform the crew who will endeavour to sort the situation out.
- Staircases and stairwells are often built to a very different design than under Western building standards. There may be no guard rails, be excessively steep, etc. At all times be aware and take appropriate and prudent care.
- We often stay in homestays and farmstays. These may range from a traditional yurt through to a tree house or a town house. As these are traditional homes they may well not adhere to our western standards of safety and so it is important that you make yourself aware of potential risks.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with the hotels/hostels or homestays

Fire Safety - Campsites

- Ensure you know where the nearest source of water or fire extinguisher is.
- Know how to raise the alarm.
- Extinguish all camping fires fully before retiring to bed.
- Observe any regulations regarding fires and bushfires in dry conditions.
- Proceed to an assembly point away from the tented accommodation/affected campsite.

Other Campsite Safety & Security

- Familiarise yourself with the campsite and any known hazards.
- Group tents around our vehicle wherever possible.
- No open flames, smoking or flammable liquids in or near the tents.
- Ensure cooking area is well away from the tents.
- Ensure all water for cooking and drinking is purified first.
- Ensure any soil toilets are min 50m away from tents & cooking area.
- All food waste should be burnt or buried - min 100m away from the site.
- Ensure local advice is followed concerning any wildlife.

- Keep valuables locked in the vehicle.
- Be aware of any local security issues that might be important.
- Do not set out tents close to perimeter fences which may be a security risk.
- Be aware of the security arrangements and local guards for campsite and if in doubt ask them where and where not to pitch tents.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with campsite.
- When wild camping, ensure that you do not wander away from the camp alone. If you do leave camp ensure that you have notified the leader or other members of the group. Food Safety We prepare many meals during the tour and our crew are hygiene trained; however, some general tips can help in order to avoid the possibility of stomach upsets;
- Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked.
- Hot food should be hot, cold food should be cold.
- Avoid any uncooked food, except fruit and vegetables, (notably those you can peel or shell yourself).
- In many countries you should only drink bottled water or purified water and ensure any seal is intact when purchasing bottles.
- On the Dragoman vehicles we have a tank of drinking water that is kept purified by the crew.
- Avoid ice in drinks as this can cause upset stomachs in hot climates.
- Make sure you wash your hands in antibacterial product when preparing and/or eating food.
- Restaurant Food: This is grassroots travel and many of the restaurants that you will eat in, either as a group or as individuals, will NOT have the same standards of food hygiene as we have in the Western World. Unfortunately this is part of travel in these regions. Therefore think carefully about what food you order and be aware of the risks.

[Back to top ^](#)

Personal Safety

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise you to leave any valuable jewellery, watches, etc, at home. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice. We have come up with a few pointers that we recommend you follow:

- Follow the crew's specific safety advice in each destination.
- Be aware, stay away from situations where you do not feel comfortable.

- Avoid carrying too much money.
- Use of a money belt / neck wallet or is encouraged at all times while travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items.
- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas.
- Ensure your valuables are left secure when you go out.
- In any hostels/hotels, place all valuables in a safety deposit box, where available or with reception or locked away by the crew.
- Do not take any valuable jewellery/watches etc. away with you.
- If possible avoid walking around on your own; it is always safer to explore with others.

[Back to top ^](#)

Activity Safety & Optional Activities

You will have the opportunity to take part in many exciting activities and excursions, some of which are included, whilst others are optional (i.e. hiking The Inca Trail, trekking to see Mountain Gorillas). These require a certain level of fitness, so it's important that you read through the trip notes thoroughly and make your own conclusions as to whether you feel that you are fit and healthy enough to enjoy this trip to its fullest.

Some activities may have higher risks than you are used to and you must judge whether or not you wish to, or have the physical ability to take part.

Optional activities mentioned by Dragoman are not included in the trip price or kitty and do not form part of your contract with Dragoman. As such you accept that any assistance given by Dragoman crew members or local representatives in arranging optional activities does not render us liable for them in any way. The Dragoman crew are assisting you in arranging these activities for your added enjoyment whilst on your trip. The operators of these services and optional extras are local suppliers who contract directly with the Client 'on the road' subject to and in accordance with their own terms and conditions. Dragoman accepts no liability for any action or activity undertaken by the Client which is arranged independently of Dragoman while on tour. Crew may take part in an optional activity but do so as private individuals and not as company representatives.

Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time.

Ensure that you use the appropriate equipment on optional activities, including life jackets, helmets, etc. This is especially important on activities such as horse riding, white-water rafting, etc.

[Back to top ^](#)

Included Activities

Included activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary, all other activities are optional and at your own expense. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not necessarily be refunded; this is something you will need to check with your leader.

[Back to top ^](#)

Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only. Prices are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. Optional activities are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Dragoman nor included in the price of this trip. If you do any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities.

[Back to top ^](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

We recommend that any policy has a minimum medical (including repatriation) cover of £5,000,000. We recommend that any policy also has a minimum level of cover for Personal Liability of £5,000,000 and for Cancellation and Curtailment of £5,000. Cover for loss of baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice although please bear in mind that personal effects are more likely to go missing whilst travelling and you should ensure that your policy is adequate to cover the value of your personal effects e.g. cameras, I pads, phones etc. Please note that Dragoman is not responsible for your personal effects and is not insured for their loss.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel and make sure it covers any activity you intend to undertake. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries - for example, that they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. On activities or side trips that are not recommended by us please ensure you are happy with the safety of the activity before participating.

Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas.

[Back to top ^](#)

Our Liability Insurance

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger vehicle liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £5,000,000 and £10,000,000 per incident respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

[Back to top ^](#)

Emergency Contact

We have a dedicated 24 hour telephone number which should only be used once you have left the UK and in the event of a real emergency. Should you need to call the number, we will do what we can to help but please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal

office hours.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please let us know and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in these trip notes. If you cannot get through leave a message and a contact number as these will be regularly checked and the crew informed if necessary.

Emergency Number: +44 (0) 7985106564

[Back to top ^](#)

Luggage & Kit List

Although you will not have to carry your main bag long distances, you will need to help load and unload them onto the truck. For this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip your main luggage will be kept in the back locker, so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use. Please be aware that due to the constant dust and vibrations your luggage bag will be subject to extreme wear and tear.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. Different trucks have different-sized lockers, however to be safe we recommend that your bag be no larger than 66cm deep, 30cm wide, and 30cm high. The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is a maximum of 20kg. Backpacks should not have an external frame unless it can be easily removed and stored separately to avoid damaging other people's luggage.

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in. On overland trips, Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats (except on routes between Nairobi and Cape Town where ground mats are provided).

The clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats*, so you'll need to bring those with you. Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to- there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag if it's likely to get cold. And remember that even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

IMPORTANT: Ground mats are provided on all of our overland trips that run in South and East Africa, between Nairobi and Cape Town. This includes our Family trips between Nairobi and Cape Town.

For a general idea of what you need this list provides a guide:

- Sleeping bag* - Check the expected climate en route. Nights in desert and mountain regions can be very cold in winter months.
- Sleeping bag liner* (or sheet folded and sewn up on 2 sides). It will help keep your sleeping bag clean, and can be used on its own on warm nights.
- Ground mat or compressed foam*
- A day pack is useful for short hikes in the countryside, wandering around cities, etc and also for keeping inside the vehicle for items used during the day

- 2 sets of comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable cotton clothes are best)
- 1 set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out. Women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf for visiting places of worship
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Sun hat or warm hat if trekking
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Warm sweater/fleeces
- 1 waterproof jacket with hood
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots (or ankle height canvas jungle boots)
- 1 pair of sandals or flip-flops
- Underwear and socks (thermals are also a good idea if you are travelling to altitude or to the desert as it can get very cold at night)
- Swimwear
- 2 small towels
- Washing kit, including a small mirror
- Clothes washing detergent, small scrubbing brush & washing line (just a length of cord)
- Head torch/flashlight with spare batteries & bulbs (only the 3 standard sizes of round 1.5v batteries are widely available en route)
- Passport photos (average of 2 per country for which visas will be applied for en route)
- Good water bottle at least 1 litre
- A pouch or money belt worn inside your clothing, or unobtrusive pocket sewn into the inside of a pair of loose fitting trousers, is a must.
- Alarm clock
- Pocket calculator (useful when exchanging money)
- Writing materials & notebook/diary
- Multi purpose knife.
- Mosquito net - The tents supplied by us have mosquito netting and you will only need a net if you think you will sleep out under the stars a lot of the time.
- "Wet Ones" (moistened tissues) and hand gel
- Toilet paper - this can be purchased almost everywhere en-route but one roll is worth packing

- Assorted sized plastic bags - protects clothing and equipment from dust and damp
- Extra batteries for your camera / phone etc as there are only limited opportunities to recharge. For a comprehensive kit list take a look at the Dragoman kit list that Nomad Travel has created. You will receive a 10% discount on all equipment purchased either online or in store. Click to see the kit lists www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list

*For trips with camping nights

[Back to top ^](#)

Personal Medical Kit

All of our trucks have a fully stocked medical kit onboard for use in emergency situations only. Therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit. In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce the Dragoman Travel Medical Kit. It has been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contains everything you would need for any minor accidents. For more details please visit their website:

www.nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit

[Back to top ^](#)

Passports

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or "visitor's" passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for your trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

[Back to top ^](#)

Pre and Post Trip Accommodation and Connecting Flights

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of the joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay? Dragoman can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While Dragoman is happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand that you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet. Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk-in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival; however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can

offer, as not all hotels offer this service.

[Back to top ^](#)

Continuing Your Trip

Having an amazing trip and met a great group of people? Having too much fun to go home yet? If on your trip you decide that you would like to continue, then why not speak to your trip leader who can advise you of the cost and availability of continuing your journey.

[Back to top ^](#)

Contingency Emergency Fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond Dragoman's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although Dragoman will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside Dragoman's control you will be required to contribute the additional costs involved and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

[Back to top ^](#)

Responsible Tourism

Dragoman is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. Dragoman recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners, so that they benefit directly from our visit. You can find full details of Dragoman's responsible tourism policy linked from the home page.

www.dragoman.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/our-commitment

[Back to top ^](#)

Water

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 litres of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilised water stored in the purpose-built storage tank or in water jerry cans in your overland vehicle. You are free to refill your bottle as many times a day as you like. You are helping the environment and your pocket!

[Back to top ^](#)

Electrical Equipment

Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket, so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12 volt adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

For mobile phones, please note that most countries in the Americas operate at 850MHz and 1900 MHz which is not the same frequencies used in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. Most modern tri-band and quad-band mobile phones will be able to operate on these frequencies but please check your mobile phone specifications before travelling to ensure that you'll be able to use your phone in the Americas.

[Back to top ^](#)

A Few Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs is not only against the law, but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for Dragoman groups. It is one of our core values to treat all people we encounter with respect which of course includes all the local people who make our destinations so special. The exploitation of prostitutes or children is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes or abuse children. Equally Dragoman will not tolerate any violence or threat of violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession, if they use prostitutes, abuse children, use violence or threaten violence, without a refund of the trip price.

We expect you to obey all the laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs (as above), firearms, antiquities and ivory. Any customer found contravening such laws or customs will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

[Back to top ^](#)

Issues on the Trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on

customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk.

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

[Back to top ^](#)

Tipping

Tipping is entirely voluntary. The Dragoman crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it.

On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own Dragoman crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD \$1 to USD \$4 per person per day, but check with your crew for an appropriate amount.

[Back to top ^](#)

Our Community

At any time before or after you book, you can join our community - Dragoland. This is a great place to ask questions before you travel and to catch up with your fellow travellers once your trip has finished. You can share photos, videos and stories and you can also download a selection of free travel apps. See the home page to sign in - it's free and easy. We also have a Facebook page where travellers regularly swap info with each other

[Back to top ^](#)

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us to understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better, and it allows us to make improvements for future travellers.

[Back to top ^](#)

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey, once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these Trip Notes

These trip notes were printed on 31/01/2015