

Jetset Journals


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PATAGONIA

8 Days

Roadtrip



a travel guide

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INTRO

Patagonia—undoubtedly one of the most breathtaking regions on Earth in terms of scenery—is located in the southern part of the South American continent.

Here you'll find vast plains, impressive mountain ranges, glaciers, and a diverse array of wildlife.

A trip to the region is often combined with visits to other cities or countries in South America, and we, too, also visited Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro.

That's why we only had a little over a week left for Patagonia.

Of course, you can also spend much more time in the places we visited, or explore other destinations like Ushuaia in the far south or Northern Patagonia.

The best time to visit Patagonia is during the summer (December–February).

In Patagonia, the weather changes so quickly that you can experience all four seasons in a single day. Keep this in mind when packing (wear layers).

A basic knowledge of Spanish certainly won't hurt here, but many people also speak some English.

The region is very vast, and the distances between destinations are very long.

Renting a car is the most flexible and convenient option here, but the bus network is also well-developed. I'll share a suggested itinerary with you on the next page.



Route:

El Calafate

We originally landed in Buenos Aires. The other option would have been to start in Santiago de Chile and follow the route through Chile. From El Calafate Airport, we drove directly to El Chaltén in our rental car. The drive takes a good two hours.

El Chaltén (3 Days)

After arriving in El Chaltén, we spent two more full days there hiking.

Puerto Natales (1 Day)

From El Chaltén, we drove about five hours across the Chilean border to Puerto Natales, where we spent the night.

Torres del Paine (2 Days)

We spent the next two days in Torres del Paine National Park, where we spent one night at El Chileno Camp and the second night back in Puerto Natales.

El Calafate (1 Day)

On the 7th day, we set off early again, drove back to El Calafate, and visited the Perito Moreno Glacier there in the afternoon, which is about an hour's drive away.

Departure

After our final night in El Calafate, we flew back to Buenos Aires.

Infos

There are a few things to keep in mind when planning this route. To cross the border into Chile, you'll need a border crossing permit from your car rental company; there are only a few gas stations along the route, so you'll need to plan accordingly, don't leave the solid roads, even if navigation says so and for the national parks, you'll need tickets, which you can purchase online in advance.

HIGHLIGHTS



01.

Fitz Roy

Without a doubt, the region’s most famous highlight is Mount Fitz Roy, which was a constant companion during our first few days. We saw it from the plane, on the drive to El Chaltén, and during our hikes—especially at sunrise on our trek to Laguna de Los Tres. What makes it truly special is the striking, pointed shape of this granite mountain, which stands at a good 3,400 meters. It’s no coincidence that this mountain is the Patagonia clothing logo.



02.

Torres del Paine

Torres del Paine National Park is also a real highlight. The park is located on the Chilean side of the region, and the multi-day O and W treks through the park are particularly popular, as is the hike to Base Torres to watch the sunrise. But even aside from these activities, the park is breathtaking in terms of both scenery and wildlife—with a little luck, you might even spot a puma here.



03.

Perito Moreno

You really get a sense of just how far south you are on the globe when you visit the Perito Moreno Glacier. This glacier, which is about 70 meters high and 4 kilometers wide, is truly impressive and one of the few glaciers that has actually grown at times in recent years. In the midday sun, you can watch the glacier calve (break off). You can approach it by boat or canoe or just enjoy the view from the walkway.



04.

Salto Grande

Salto Grande is another highlight of Torres del Paine National Park. Although the waterfall isn't particularly tall, the bright turquoise water is well worth seeing. It's just a short walk (10 minutes) from the nearby parking lot.

05.

Cuernos

The Cuernos are another highlight of Torres del Paine National Park. What makes them special is their distinct color contrast—with gray and black sections. Here, you can take a moderate hike to the viewpoint at Salto Grande or enjoy the view from Lake Pehoe.

06.

Mirador Nordenskjöld

A somewhat lesser-known highlight in Torres del Paine National Park that we really enjoyed is the Mirador Nordenskjöld, which offers a view of the Cuernos in the background and the turquoise lakes in the foreground. You can reach the parking lot by car.

07.

El Chaltén

Of all the places we visited—El Calafate, El Chaltén, and Puerto Natales—we definitely liked El Chaltén the best. The town, which is still fairly new, had a relaxed atmosphere; there were only hikers around, and there were plenty of small, authentic cafés, restaurants, and bakeries.



08. Roadtrip

On a road trip through Patagonia, with its diverse landscapes, long, quiet highways, and the occasional animal crossing the road, you'll feel a great sense of freedom. With its endless expanses, it's certainly one of the most popular road trip destinations in the world.

09. Trails

Of course, the region's many diverse hiking trails are a particular highlight. The best-known ones are undoubtedly those leading to Laguna Torre and Laguna de Los Tres from El Chaltén, those in and around Torres del Paine National Park, and the easy, short trail to Mirador Cuernos.



10. Animals

The wildlife in Patagonia is also quite unique, and you have to keep a sharp eye out to catch a glimpse of pumas, foxes, or armadillos. You're almost certain to encounter guanacos—a species belonging to the llama family—during a road trip, and you just have to be careful when they cross the road in front of you.





DAY TO DAY

Day 1 – On the first day of our stay in *Patagonia*, we flew from *Buenos Aires* to *El Calafate* in the morning, where we picked up our rental car and drove to *El Chaltén*. The *drive* there was a real highlight in itself, and once we arrived, we bought supplies for the hike the next day and had dinner at *La Tapera*.

Day 2 – On the second day, our first hike to *Laguna Torre* was first on the agenda. The hike goes about 18 kms and is rather moderate. Before that, we had a quick breakfast at *Malbec y Macchiato*. In the evening, we had an early dinner at *Laborum* and went to bed early to prepare for the sunrise hike..

Day 3 – Day 3 began for us in the middle of the night—we set off around 2 a.m. and started the sunrise hike to *Laguna de Los Tres*—definitely THE highlight of our trip, but also pretty exhausting. When we got back to the village around noon, we relaxed and had a slice of cake at *Meme’s Cakes*. We enjoyed the sunshine, and in the evening we headed to *Cerveceria Patagonia*.

Day 4 – The next day, it was time to say goodbye to *El Chaltén*. We drove for 5–6 hours to *Puerto Natales* and across the *Chilean border*. In *Puerto Natales*, we had dinner at *La cocina criolla*.

Day 5 – Then we headed to *Torres del Paine National Park*, where we marveled at *Salto Grande*, *Mirador Nordenskjöld*, and *Los Cuernos*, and then drove to the parking lot at *Hotel Las Torres*, where we began our *hike* to *Camp El Chileno*, where we also had *dinner*.

Day 6 – The next day, we had to get up early again and hiked to *Base Torres* to watch the *sunrise*. Afterward, we hiked back to the parking lot and drove back to *Puerto Natales*. For dinner, we had tacos at *El Tejano Tacos* and stayed one more night.

Day 7 – On the 7th day, we drove back to *El Calafate* and from there continued on to the *Perito Moreno Glacier*, which was about an hour’s drive away. It’s recommended to not arrive too late to have enough time.

After enjoying the view there, we drove back to *El Calafate*, where we spent our last night.

Day 8 – The next morning, we flew back to *Buenos Aires*.

Alternatives – Of course, you can always set aside much more time for Patagonia. Especially given the unpredictable weather, it’s a good idea to have a few buffer days. We, too, had initially planned for two extra days, but we’d already made the most of the weather, and since the forecast called for worse conditions in the coming days, we had to decide whether to make a detour to Ushuaia or head back to Buenos Aires early. We opted for the sun and warmth in BA and flew there. But visiting the penguins in Ushuaia is also nice.

Favorite Hikes – Here, I’ll go over the best hikes in more detail:

Laguna de Los Tres –

The hike to Laguna de Los Tres at sunrise is definitely the most impressive. Over the approximately 20 km round trip, you’ll be treated to breathtaking views time and again, especially once it’s light out on the way back. The first 90% of the trail is very gentle, before the final kilometer becomes a steep climb—this section takes about an hour of the 4-hour hike. When you reach the top and the sun turns the peaks of Fitz Roy a brilliant orange, it’s definitely a spectacular sight.

Laguna Torre –

The Laguna Torre trail is also one of the most famous in and around El Chaltén. It’s slightly shorter than the trail to Laguna de Los Tres, at about 18 km round-trip. While this hike is still quite long, it’s less strenuous and has fewer steep inclines. It’s still a pretty long distance.

Once you arrive at the lagoon, you’ll be treated to a fantastic view of the glacier and the jagged peak of Cerro Torre, weather permitting.

Base Torres –

We also really enjoyed our second sunrise hike. Starting from Camp Chileno in Torres del Paine National Park, the hike to Base Torres takes about 2–3 hours and isn’t as challenging as the one to Laguna de Los Tres, even though the final stretch here is also relatively steep. Starting from the parking lot at Hotel Las Torres, the hike to the summit takes 5–6 hours.

Mirador Cuernos –

The approximately 5-kilometer loop trail from the parking lot at Salto Grande Waterfall to Mirador Cuernos is less of a hike and more of a stroll. Along the way, you can not only admire the waterfall but also enjoy the view of the lake and the Cuernos mountains..

WHERE TO EAT

Restaurants & Cafés:

El Calafate

★ **Lucinda Casa Campo**

Authentic Asado, good Empanadas
Los Tehuelches 856, Z9405 El Calafate

● **Sandwicheria MIGA`s**

Small shop, very good Empanadas
Julio Argentino Roca 1384, El Calafate

● **Calafate Coffee Roasters**

Good coffee & breakfast spot, Cookies
José Pantin 31 local 2, Z9405 El Calafate



Puerto Natales

● **La cocina criolla**

Typical chilean cuisine
Manuel Bulnes 242, 6160982 Puerto Natales



★ **El Tejano Tacos**

Amazing Tacos and Enchiladas
Miraflores 754, 6160000 Natales

● **Lenga Restaurant**

Chic and good restaurant
Arturo Prat 156, 6160000 Puerto Natales

● **Holaste! Specialty Coffee**

Good breakfast spot & coffee
Carlos Borjes 385, 6160000 Natales

● **Edafön Coffee**

Delicious coffee, also to go
Hermann Eberhard 361, 6160000 Natales

Torres del Paine NP

● **Camp El Chileno**

The food at Camp El Chileno wasn't exactly cheap, but it was very tasty, with an appetizer, main course, and dessert.

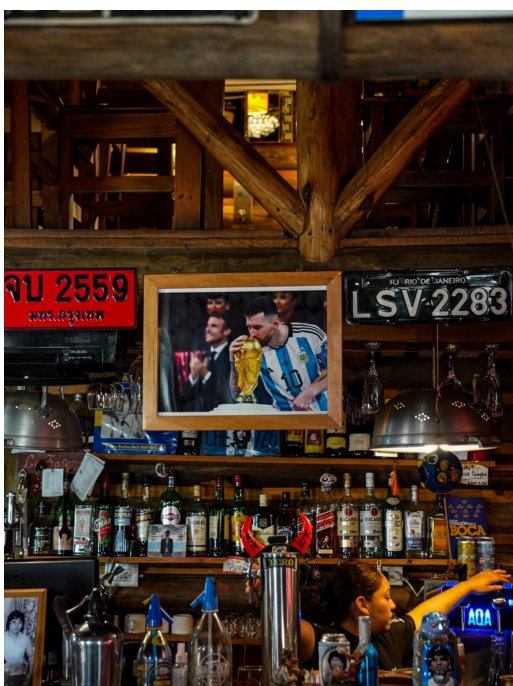
El Chaltén

★ Laborum

Delicious Pizza, check opening times
Lago del Desierto 398, Z9301 El Chaltén

● La Tapera

Typical food, Guanaco-Carpaccio
José Antonio Rojo 50 74, Z9301 El Chaltén



● The Asadores

Very good and chic Asado
Ricardo Arbilla 101, Z9301 El Chalten

● Cerveceria Patagonia

Good Restaurant & cool Bar
San Martín 96, Z9304 El Chalten

● Espacio Soda

Great selection, delicious food
Z9301 El Chaltén, Santa Cruz Province

● Meme`s Cakes

Very good cakes, nice terrace
San Martín 149, Z9301 El Chaltén

★ Malbec y Macchiato

Delicious coffee, also to go
San Martín 260, Z9301 El Chaltén

● COFFEE STATION

Also good coffee spot
Perito Moreno 17, Z9301 El Chalten

● Panaderia Lo De Haydee

Great baked goods like Empanadas
San Martín 21, Z9301 El Chaltén

● Supermarkets everywhere



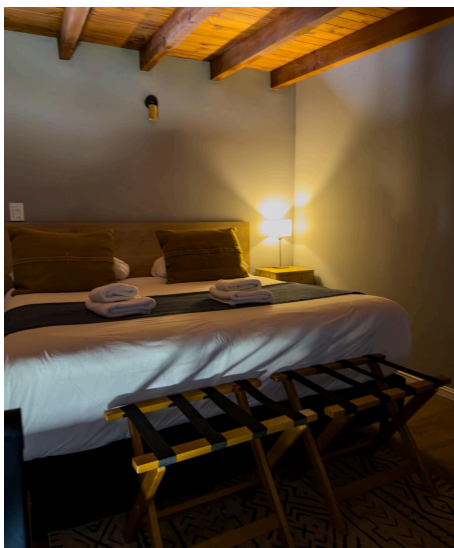
WHERE TO SLEEP

El Chaltén

- **Desierto Suites**

A very spacious two-story apartment with a large kitchen, a large bathroom, and nice beds. The apartment was always well-heated and was centrally located with parking.

Pasaje Iñaki Coussirat 88, Z9301 El Chalten



Puerto Natales

- **Hostel El Sendero**

A cool hostel with private rooms. The rooms and hallway have been completely renovated, and the common area is nice too. The sliding doors made it a bit noisy, though.

The prices were reasonable, and breakfast was included.

Puerto Natales

Alternative: Hostal America - Basic Hotel with good Service
Miraflores 1045, 6160000 Puerto Natales



El Calafate

- **Hosteria La Estepa**

Located a short distance outside town, but with a beautiful view of Lake Argentino. Nice common areas and a good restaurant.

Basic hotel, good value for money
Av. del Libertador 5310, Z9405 El Calafate

Torres del Paine NP

- **Camp El Chileno**

Good tents and gear, a good restaurant and café, hot showers.

A 2-3-hour hike from the parking lot at Hotel Las Torres; not cheap.





Thanks for reading! You can find more details on my website or on Instagram and TikTok!



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