

## WILDLANDS OF PATAGONIA & THE ALTIPLANO, (JZU)


La Paz to Ushuaia 43 days, departing 29 Nov 2020



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### TRIP OVERVIEW

<b>Trip Style:</b>	Overlanding
<b>Route:</b>	La Paz to Ushuaia
<b>Duration:</b>	43 days
<b>Transport:</b>	Overland expedition vehicle, 4x4, Local bus, Boat, Ferry
	 45%  55%
<b>Accom:</b>	Hotels, Hostels, Campsites, Wild Camps

#### Physical Challenge:

EASY  HARD

The trip may include multi-day treks at high altitude, walking for 5-8 hours per day.

#### Lifestyle Challenge:

EASY  HARD

This is a fairly challenging trip; you may well be travelling at high altitudes, across deserts or through cold and windy or hot and steamy areas.

[Itineraries](#)  
[British Foreign Office Travel Advice and Warnings](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Safety & Security](#)  
[Included Activities](#)

## ROUTE MAP



## COUNTRIES VISITED

### Argentina



Argentina is a vast country which has a staggering diversity of climates and landscapes. With vibrant cities, the pampas, the jungles and the wind-swept wilds of [Patagonia](#), it is a country with a very special character all of its own and a rich cultural heritage.

[Buenos Aires](#) is the vibrant capital of Argentina. Full of life and brimming with culture, music and art, with great local restaurants, local street markets and dances, Buenos Aires is the heart

### Bolivia



Bolivia's major attraction is its wild natural beauty, with much of the country being very remote and off the beaten track! The country is divided into two distinct regions, the Amazon and the Altiplano, with the Yungas cloud forest regions in between the two.

and soul of Argentina and swings to the rhythm of the tango. Also home to some exquisite wine bars and an amazing nightlife, Buenos Aires is a must-see city while in South America!

### STAY WITH REAL ARGENTINIAN COWBOYS

On the vast green pampas, the gauchos (Argentina's famous cowboys) spend their days riding their horses and protecting their cattle. Argentina is world-famous for the incredible quality of its beef and steaks, largely due to the huge pastures that the cattle have to roam on.

The north west of the country has some beautiful deserts full of multi-coloured rock formations and some magnificent wines are produced here around Salta and Cafayate. Also famous for its incredible wines is the region of [Mendoza](#), a serene town surrounded by the Andes, including Aconcagua, which at 6,962 metres is the tallest mountain in South America.

### EXPLORE ARGENTINA'S PEACEFUL LAKE DISTRICT

Further south is Argentina's peaceful and beautiful lake district, and further still are the haunting moorlands of Patagonia. This beautiful area is known for its breathtaking and desolate landscapes, towering rugged mountains, magnificent lakes and beautiful glacial scenery. It is a great place for outdoor activities, such as trekking, horse riding, kayaking and mountain biking! At the far south is the remote island of [Tierra del Fuego](#) and the most southerly town in the world, Ushuaia.

Argentina is the home to some beautiful wildlife. The Península Valdés near Puerto Madryn is a protected area for whales, penguins and seals, and Patagonia is full of fascinating birdlife and wild guanacos.

### CREATE MEMORIES AT MIGHTY IGUAZU FALLS

One of the great highlights of Argentina is the mighty [Iguazu Falls](#), on the border with Brazil. This incredible set of waterfalls is one of the world's largest, and one of the most spectacular sights in the world!

Argentina is a magnificent country full of buzzing culture, amazing landscapes and a wide variety of activities, and should be high on every traveller's wish list!

### WILD, REMOTE AND BEAUTIFUL

Bolivia is a fantastic country for the outdoor enthusiast, with horse riding, trekking, mountain biking and jeep trips available in many of the areas we travel through. Its landscapes are truly remarkable, with its salt pans, high lakes, mountains and beautiful jungle making it a great destination for any traveller.

The dizzying heights of the city of La Paz are enough to take your breath away! With buildings that hug the side of the canyon, and the spectacular views of Mount Illimani, the city is over 3,650 metres above sea level and is one of the fastest growing in Latin America.

### EXPLORE BOLIVIA'S HIGH ALTIPLANO

There are many areas of natural beauty in Bolivia, with one of the most unbelievable and overlooked areas being the surreal and phenomenal coloured lakes and landscapes of the high Altiplano near Laguna Colorada. More famous and equally as stunning, the perspective-bending salt flats of Salar de Uyuni are an awe-inspiring natural wonder. At opposite ends of the country are the steamy jungles of Bolivia's Amazon region - teeming with wildlife and explored by boat, the area receives very few visitors despite its fantastic highlights.

Bolivia has some interesting towns to explore, such as the serene city of Sucre, the buzzing city of La Paz and the mining town of Potosí. There are some excellent activities to get involved with, such as trekking across the tranquil Isla del Sol on Lake Titicaca, exploring the silver mines of Cerro Rico, and of course mountain biking down the famous 'World's Most Dangerous Road' near La Paz!

Bolivia is truly one of South America's most beautiful spots and a highlight of many people's travels through the continent!

## Chile



With some of the most diverse landscapes in the world, Chile is stunningly beautiful in so many different ways! From the driest deserts in the world in the northern Atacama region, to the lush wine regions near Santiago, to the lakes and forests of the Carretera Austral, to the huge glaciers and rugged mountains of Patagonia, this country has it all. Chile is dotted with lakes, volcanoes, rivers, and beaches, and there is always an exciting adventure to be found for the outdoor enthusiast.

### TRAVEL OVERLAND THROUGH AMAZING LANDSCAPES

A visit to Chile has to include a trip to the vibrant capital of Santiago. This city sits in the country's central valley, a place full of amazing landscapes and a gorgeous Mediterranean-like climate. The city buzzes with culture and cuisine, and has some of the best live music to be found on the continent!

In the far north, you can spend time in the rugged deserts, moon-like valleys and stunning salt pans of the Atacama. The area is world-famous for its stargazing, and there are a plethora of thermal springs, geysers and volcanoes to discover.

In the south we visit the outdoor adventurer's paradise of Pucón, a wonderland of adventure activities such as white-water rafting, canyoning, and trekking up the stunning Villarica volcano that looms over the town.

### EXPLORE PATAGONIA'S NATIONAL PARKS

In the far south of Patagonia we find one of the world's most spectacular National Parks, Torres del Paine. Its twisted mountains, rock towers, lakes, and amazing glaciers make the area one of the most stunning locations in South America and a wonderful place for trekking and horse riding.

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# DAILY ITINERARY

## Day 1: La Paz ( Sun 29 Nov )

**Border information:** if you are joining in La Paz, you will most likely enter Bolivia at La Paz El Alto International Airport (IATA code: LPB).

Welcome to La Paz, Bolivia's seat of government and the highest administrative capital in the world! There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

**A note on altitude:** If you are joining in La Paz, we strongly recommend arriving at least 24 hours before the trip begins to allow additional time to acclimatise.

In La Paz we will stay in a good hotel in the historical centre.

Hotel for the night: Estrella Andina

### **Estrella Andina**

Avenida Illampu 716

Zona El Rosario

La Paz

Bolivia

Tel - +591 2245 6421

### **About La Paz:**

Bolivia's largest city of La Paz is spectacularly located lying huddled in a canyon basin, hiding from the harsh conditions of the surrounding altiplano. It is a fascinating city - the old town and more expensive neighbourhoods at the bottom of the canyon in the centre, surrounded by sprawling shanty-towns which extend up the slopes of the bowl, merging into the huge Aymara district of "El Alto" back on the plains, a suburb of La Paz that has grown to be a city in its own right.

The city skyline is dominated by the snow-capped peaks of Mount Illimani, a staggeringly beautiful backdrop that leaves many visitors stunned when they catch their first glimpse of the city as they descend into the canyon. The old town is full of markets and winding cobbled streets full of people in traditional Aymara clothing selling anything and everything you could ever think of, including dried llama fetuses on sale in the witch's market!

There are plenty of other activities to do in La Paz, including the famous downhill bike ride through the Yungas on the 'world's most dangerous road'!

## Day 2: La Paz ( Mon 30 Nov )

Today we will have a free day to make the most of the extraordinary city of La Paz, explore the witches market or take a mountain biking trip down the World's Most Dangerous Road.

### **Activity**

### **Approximate Cost**



Downhill "gravity assisted" mountain biking from La Paz to Coroico USD 125

Guided tour to explore Tiahuanacu Inca Ruins BOB 220

Take a trip out to the mountain resort of Chacaltaya and the other-worldly landscape of the Moon Valley near La Paz BOB 130

Take a guided tour of the main sights and viewpoints around La Paz BOB 150

### Day 3: Uyuni ( Tue 01 Dec )

Today we will drive south to Uyuni, the gateway to the incredible salt flats of the Salar de Uyuni.

In Uyuni we will stay in a friendly hotel, famous for serving the highest pizzas in the world!

Estimated Drive Time - 9hrs

#### About Uyuni:

Arriving in Uyuni feels a bit like you've reached the end of the road, which in many ways is true. This remote small town sits on the edge of the high altiplano, a wilderness that extends for hundreds of kilometres towards the border with Argentina and Chile - so it's hardly surprising that the town can have a bit of a wild-west feel about it.

Uyuni is of course best known for being the gateway to the Bolivian salt flats known as the "Salar de Uyuni". Also nearby is the Train Cemetery, a graveyard for the carcasses of old steam engines that have been left here to rust - an other-worldly and eerie sight set in the bright altiplano sunshine against the background of the distant Salar.

### Day 4: Salar De Uyuni ( Wed 02 Dec )

Today we will venture out onto the salt flats of the Salar de Uyuni, spending a full day exploring this phenomenal location by jeep and on foot. En route we will explore the nearby train graveyard and the cactus-filled 'Fish Island', and take all the time we need to get plenty of perspective-bending photographs!

#### Activity

Take jeeps out onto the dazzling Uyuni Salt Flats

#### Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

#### About Salar De Uyuni:



The Salar de Uyuni is a truly unforgettable sight, and a landscape quite unlike anything you'll have seen anywhere else in the world! The Salar de Uyuni is a dazzling dry lake of over 12,000 sq. kms, made of blinding white interlocking salt crystals. It is the world's largest salt pan, and is a bright white expanse that stretches as far as the eye can see - when there's a little bit of water on the flats, it reflects the bright blue sky of the altiplano perfectly, acting like a mirror and making the horizon disappear!

## Day 5: Bolivian Altiplano ( Thu 03 Dec )

Today we will head off across the wilds of the Altiplano, a surreal and desolate desert landscape that stretches all the way into Chile. We will make plenty of stop for photographs on the way and at the end of the day we aim to cross the border into Chile, making camp soon afterwards.

Tonight we will bush camp in a remote spot with no facilities!

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

**Border information:** Exit Bolivia and enter Chile at Ollague

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Take the epic journey across the Altiplano - an incredible high-altitude adventure through a surreal desert landscape, taking in bizarre rock formations and stunning lakes.

Included in Kitty

### About Bolivian Altiplano:

The high Altiplano stretches hundreds of kilometres from the small town of Uyuni out across the borders with Argentina and Chile. This is real wilderness - there are no roads up here, just a few tracks to follow, and you're more likely to see a flamingo or llama than another human being!

The only way to cross the altiplano is by travelling in a specialist expedition vehicle like one of our overland trucks. The crossing is an adventurous one - travelling across the high-altitude dirt tracks can be challenging and rough, and the trip from Uyuni to San Pedro De Atamcama normally takes a couple of days - but it's without a doubt one of the most unforgettable journeys you'll ever make, as the landscape here is out of this world. Wild and remote, the high altiplano is made up of barren semi-desert open plains dotted by streams and lakes, many of which appear vividly coloured due to the mineral deposits in the water. The lakes are flanked by the impressive volcanic peaks of the high Bolivian Andes, which are awe-inspiringly beautiful and undoubtedly some of the most spectacular mountain scenery you'll ever see.

You'll also pass a few remote villages, inhabited by Quechua farmers who try their best to eke out a living up here from the rough pasture, grazing a few llamas and alpacas. The altitude here is considerable and it can be very cold and windy. When travelling here you should be



prepared for the cold temperatures, and it is worth making sure you have a really good quality sleeping bag.

## Day 6 to 7: San Pedro De Atacama ( Fri 04 Dec to Sat 05 Dec )

After breakfast we will break camp, and drive through the stunning Reserva Nacional Alto Loa on the Chilean part of the Altiplano, stopping off en route for photographs and a lunch stop at the famous El Tatio Geysers, the worlds highest Geyser field at 4300m. Afterwards descending down to San Pedro de Atacama.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

On the following day we will have a free day to explore the incredible highlights of the Atacama desert surrounding San Pedro. In the evening we will take an included trip out to the extraordinary Moon Valley, where we will hopefully see an incredible sunset. At night we will also have the chance to go stargazing, in one of the world's premier regions for astronomy (please note that this is only possible when there is not a full moon).

In San Pedro de Atacama we will stay in a centrally located hostel.

**Please note:** The weather in this region can be unpredictable and has been known to close the road to the border. On these occasions we will take an alternate route across the Altiplano, crossing into either Chile or Argentina at a different border point. Your Tour Leaders will keep you informed of any changes that may be necessary.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Explore the dramatic landscape of the Moon Valley

Included in Kitty

Observe the night skies at a Chilean observatory

CLP 20000

Experience the incredible El Tatio geysers in the mountains high above the Atacama Desert

Included in Kitty

Hire a bike to explore the incredible deserts surrounding San Pedro de Atacama at your own pace

CLP 5000

Discover the incredible deserts of San Pedro on horseback

CLP 13500

### About San Pedro De Atacama:

San Pedro is a small oasis town in the Atacama desert in northern





Chile. It's a quirky little place - low-lying adobe buildings line the narrow streets, leading to a sleepy tree-lined plaza that's home to a pretty white-washed church and a fascinating small museum with some interesting mummies and various other Indian artifacts.

Pleasant though the town is, the real attraction here is the phenomenal surrounding landscapes and scenery. Perhaps most well known is the unusual desert landscape of "Moon Valley", just a short distance outside San Pedro, where other-worldly rock formations, unusual layer-cake landscapes and huge dunes combine to create some incredible views. The sunsets here can be amazing, the changing light turning the stone and sand a kaleidoscope of different colours, so the end of the day is definitely the best time of day to visit.

There are a whole host of other activities on offer here, from stargazing and visiting the Atacama salt flats, to horse-riding and mountain-biking in the surrounding countryside. The town itself is also a pleasant place just to kick-back and relax, with some good bars and restaurants thanks to the developing tourist-trade.

## Day 8 to 9: Salta ( Sun 06 Dec to Mon 07 Dec )

**Border information:** Exit Chile at Paso Jama, enter Argentina at Paso Jama.

Today we will have a long drive day to cross the mighty Andes, cross the border into Argentina, and reach the beautiful town of Salta.

In Salta we will stay in a local hotel or guesthouse.

Estimated Drive Time - 11-12 hours.

On day 12 we will have a free day to explore Salta, visit its many museums, or explore the beautiful surrounding hills on foot or by mountain bike. We will also have the chance to take the cable car to the viewpoint on San Bernardo Hill overlooking the town, or take the famous 'Train to the Clouds' through some of the incredible mountain scenery nearby.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Take the cable car up to the top of San Bernardo Hill, and take in the breathtaking views out over the city of Salta below	ARS 200
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Explore the beautiful mountains and forests near Salta on a mountain biking trip	ARS 1300
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### About Salta:

Salta is an attractive town in the north west of Argentina. Nicknamed "Salta la Linda" (or "Salta the Beautiful"), the city is well known as being a stunning town in a beautiful area. Home to some fantastic colonial architecture, the old town centres around the main plaza which is lined with cafes and restaurants, a great place to independently explore and soak up the serene Argentine atmosphere.

To get a better view of the city and surrounding area you can take a cable-car from Parque San Martín up to the Cerro San Bernardo viewpoint overlooking the city, and the many churches and the cathedral are also worth a visit. Salta is also home to some fantastic museums, making it a good place to learn a bit more about Argentinian history and culture.

## **Day 10 to 11: Cafayate ( Tue 08 Dec to Wed 09 Dec )**

Today we will drive through the spectacular rock formations of the Quebrada de las Conchas, and reach the serene town of Cafayate. This small unassuming town is the centre of one of Argentina's principal wine producing regions, famous for the quality of its Torrontes and Tannat wines! We will have the opportunity to go to a few of the vineyards nearby to see how the wine is made, and of course to try them!

In Cafayate we stay at a campsite with good facilities.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-5 hours.

### **Activity**

### **Approximate Cost**

Discover the bodegas and stock up on wine in Cafayate

ARS 150

Visit the impressive rock formations of 'El Amphiteatro' and 'La Garganta del Diablo' en route through the primeval landscape of the Quebrada de las Conchas

Included in Kitty

### **About Cafayate:**

Cafayate is a small town in north west Argentina, and is world-famous for its wine production. The surrounding vineyards produce some of the best quality wine in South America - Cafayate is particularly renowned for its Torrontes, a distinctive and crisp white wine that is typically Argentinian and similar in style to a Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio.

Cafayate itself is small and has a sleepy laid-back feel, although it can become busy during Argentinian holiday periods. Many of the local bodegas offer tastings and tours of their wine cellars which can be easily organised while you are here. Also worth seeking out is the local ice-cream parlour, which together with the more usual flavours also offers red and white wine ice-cream!

## **Day 12: Recreo, Quilmes Ruins ( Thu 10 Dec )**

Today we will drive south through spectacular mountains and arrive in the pampas that Argentina is famous for. We will visit the ancient ruins of the indigenous city of Quilmes en route.

Tonight we will aim to wild camp en route.

Estimated Drive Time - 10 hours.

### Activity

Visit the Quilmes ruins

### Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

### About Quilmes Ruins:

The ruins of the city of Quilmes are located on a remote hillside in the Tucumán province in north west Argentina. The people of Quilmes were an indigenous tribe who inhabited this area as far back as 850 CE, fiercely resisting attempted Inca invasions in the 15th and 16th Centuries and even holding out against the Spanish for over 100 years before finally succumbing to a siege led by the colonial powers in 1667. After the siege, the Spanish took the area over and deported the few surviving indigenous people to a 'reservation' close to Buenos Aires. The 2000 remaining Quilmes Indians were forced to make this 1500km journey on foot, causing many to die along the way.

The ruins of the city are the largest and most important pre-Columbian site in Argentina - at its height the city would have housed nearly 5000 people, however today there are only a handful of Quilmes' descendants left in Tucumán.

## Day 13 to 15: Estancia ( Fri 11 Dec to Sun 13 Dec )

Today we drive to a unique Anglo-Argentine Estancia, where we will stay for 3 nights.

Estimated Drive Time - 5hours.

During our time at the Estancia, we will head out horseback riding. This is a magical experience in a beautiful and many people's highlight of the trip!

*Please note that some of these activities are subject to weather conditions. Please also note that there is a strict weight limit of 15 stone (210lbs) or 95kg to partake in the horse riding - if you should weigh more than this, then unfortunately you will not be able to participate in the horseback riding.*

In the Estancia we will camp with facilities in the grounds near the main house.

### Activity

Spend 3 unique days at an Anglo-Argentinian estancia to experience the Gaucho way of life

### Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

### About Estancia:

To the east of the Andes in the centre of Argentina is the country's second major city, Córdoba. Rising just to the west of the city are the beautiful rolling hills of the Sierra de Córdoba, where we spend three nights at a unique Anglo-Argentinian Estancia.

The Estancia has been in the same family for four generations, and is a working cattle ranch farming the prized Argentinian Aberdeen Angus cattle. Here we will sample the traditional hospitality of the Anglo-Argentinian ranching community. An asado (Argentinian BBQ) will be enjoyed on one of our nights here, as well as an evening of traditional music, a chance to try lassoing and wine tasting featuring some of the local produce. Daily horse riding excursions will also be arranged to ride through the hills on the fabulous horses and even completely inexperienced riders will feel like gauchos in a short time.

*Please note that these activities are subject to weather conditions. Please also note that there is a strict weight limit for all riders of 15 stone (210 lbs, 95 kg) to ensure the horses' well-being. If you are heavier than this weight you will unfortunately be unable to ride.*

## **Day 16: Córdoba ( Mon 14 Dec )**

Today we will have a leisurely start after breakfast to the city of Cordoba, where we will enjoy a free afternoon to explore the city.

### **About Córdoba:**

Córdoba is Argentina's second largest city, located at the heart of the Argentinian sierras. It's a lively university city and an important economic and commercial centre, which makes for a vibrant busy atmosphere and some excellent nightlife.

## **Day 17 to 18: Mendoza ( Tue 15 Dec to Wed 16 Dec )**

Today we will have a very early start for a full day's drive to the stunning town of Mendoza, nestled in the dry flats underneath the shadows of the largest mountains of the Andes. Mendoza is the centre of Argentine wine production, and one of the nine 'Wine Capitals of the World' - it is especially famous for its Malbec, grown at some of the highest-altitude vineyards to be found in the world.

Estimated Drive Time - 9 hours.

The following day will be free time to explore the region, head out on various adventure activities, or of course take a tasting tour of the incredible wineries in the region.

In Mendoza we stay in a centrally located hostel in dorm accommodation.

### **Activity**

### **Approximate Cost**

Go for a horse ride through the arid foothills west of Mendoza

ARS 1400

Explore the vineyards of the Mendoza and Maipu region, either on an organised tour or by cycling between the bodegas

ARS 950

White water rafting on the Mendoza River      ARS 1000

Relax in the beautiful thermal baths in Cacheuta, in the hills above Mendoza      ARS 450

### About Mendoza:

Mendoza is a vibrant city full of pleasant leafy boulevards and atmospheric plazas where the locals catch up over coffee in the many street cafes and bars. A university town and an important economic centre, the city has a bustling cosmopolitan feel and has some great restaurants, lively nightlife, interesting museums and galleries, and great shopping. On summer weekends, open-air concerts and markets often take place in the beautiful plazas.

Mendoza and the adjacent town of Maipú are perhaps most famous for their wine. Whilst Mendoza is located in the dry deserts just underneath the Andes, extensive artificial irrigation has made it possible to grow grapes and olives here, both of which benefit from the long, hot, sunny summers - the region produces around two-thirds of Argentina's wine, and is especially renowned for its Malbec, Temperanillo and Sauvignon Blanc varieties. The wine made here is world class, and tours of local vineyards and wineries are easily arranged.

Mendoza is also used by many adventurers as a base from which to explore the colossal mountains in the area. The highest mountain in the Americas, Mt. Aconcagua (with a summit 6,962m above sea level), is in the high Andes just to the west of the city making the city a big draw for mountaineers, and skiing is popular in the winter months.

## Day 19 to 20: Santiago ( Thu 17 Dec to Fri 18 Dec )

**Border information:** Exit Argentina at Los Libertadores, enter Chile at Paso Cristo Redentor.

Today we will drive over the stunning Cristo Redentor pass in the high Andes, passing Aconcagua (the highest mountain in the Southern Hemisphere) and heading to the Chilean capital of Santiago.

In Santiago we will stay in a centrally located hostel.

Estimated Drive Time - 10-11 hours.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Learn more about Santiago and its history on a free walking tour of the centre from a knowledgeable local guide      Free

Take in the breathtaking vista of the city skyline backdropped by the mighty Andes, from the viewpoints at Cerro San Cristobal or Cerro San Lucia      Free

### About Santiago:

Chile's capital, Santiago, 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 Cristóbal 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 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 Valparaíso, which can be visited as a day trip from Santiago.

### Day 21: Santiago ( Sat 19 Dec )

Welcome to Santiago, the cosmopolitan Chilean capital! There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

Important note from September 2018 departures: The full W-Walk is now included in this tour. If you wish to remain at our base camp, please inform us at time of booking so that we can arrange your meals and guides.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Santiago before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Santiago.

In Santiago we will stay in a centrally-located hostel.

**Border information:** if you are joining in Santiago, you will most likely enter Chile at Santiago Arturo Merino Benítez International Airport (IATA code: SCL).

Hotel for the night: Happy House Hostel

## Happy House Hostel

Moneda 1829

Santiago

Chile

Tel - +56 2 2688 4849

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Learn more about Santiago and its history on a free walking tour of the centre from a knowledgeable local guide

Free

Take in the breathtaking vista of the city skyline backdropped by the mighty Andes, from the viewpoints at Cerro San Cristobal or Cerro San Lucia

Free

Discover all of Santiago's sights on a hop-on/hop-off bus around the city

CLP 21000

## Day 22: Buchupureo, San Javier ( Sun 20 Dec )

Today we will leave the bright lights of Santiago behind and head to San Javier, to take a wine tour at one of the famous vineyards of the region. After lunch, we will head to the laid back farming village of Buchupureo, on the Chilean coast, where we can relax by the beach for a couple of hours.

Tonight we will camp in a well equipped campsite.

Estimated Drive Time - 6-7 hours

(Please note; all drive times given here are the approximate number of hours that the truck will be in motion only, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors - flexibility is essential on any overland trip!).

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Whet your palette during winetasting at a vineyard in San Javier

Included in Kitty

## Day 23 to 24: Pucón ( Mon 21 Dec to Tue 22 Dec )

This morning we will continue our drive into the Chilean Lake District to the town of Pucon.

Tomorrow we will have a free day in Pucón to enjoy a range of optional activities, such as a sunrise expedition to climb the Villarica volcano

which looms over Pucón, heading out horse riding through the surrounding forests, or an evening visit to the nearby natural hot springs.

In Pucon we will stay in a comfortable hostel.

Estimated drive time: 7-8 hours

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Trek up the snowcapped volcano Mt Villarica	CLP 95000
Relax in the soothing waters of the Pozones natural hot springs	CLP 10000
Learn all about Pucón and the history of its people on a free walking tour of the town	Free
Explore the spectacular Lake District near Pucón by mountain bike	CLP 10000
Head on an exciting white-water rafting trip on the rapids of the Trancura River near Pucón	CLP 25000
Take part in a fantastic canyoning expedition through the gorges of the Chilean Lake District near Pucón	CLP 25000

### **About Pucón:**

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 Pucón is located at the heart of the 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. The whole area is great for trekking and there are plenty of options to do some fantastic self-guided walks.

Alternatively Pucón offers great horse riding, white-water rafting and mountain-biking opportunities. For those who would prefer to relax, there are also some great thermal springs nearby - the natural pools at Pozones are located in a beautiful setting and are a great place to go and soak your weary limbs in the evening!



## Day 25: Bariloche ( Wed 23 Dec )

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

Today we cross the Andes into Argentina and continue our journey to the picturesque town of Bariloche via the scenic Ruta de los Siete Lagos (Seven Lakes Route).

In Bariloche we stay in a comfortable hostel in the town.

Estimated Drive Time - 9 hours.

### About Bariloche:

The Argentinian resort town of Bariloche has a picture-perfect setting on the shores of Nahuel Huapi Lake, flanked by the peaks of the surrounding Andean mountains. The scenery here is truly stunning, so it's a magical place to 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 its handmade chocolates, and there are some really spectacular displays in the local chocolate shops. Because of its 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 26: Bariloche ( Thu 24 Dec )

Today will be a free day to enjoy the beautiful mountain town of Bariloche and the stunning surrounding lakes, mountains and forests. We have the options to explore the area by foot, mountain bike, kayak or boat.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Discover the incredible scenery of the Nahuel Huapi Lake and the Victoria Islands on a boat trip from Bariloche	ARS 2100
Hire mountain bikes to explore the forests and hills surrounding Lake Nahuel Huapi and Bariloche	ARS 420
Visit the interesting Fenoglio Chocolate Museum in Bariloche, and learn all about the town's tradition of chocolate making	ARS 50

Explore the nearby Lago Gutierrez and take in its amazing views from the water on a half-day tandem kayaking trip

ARS 550

Explore the best viewpoints around Bariloche and some of the locals' favourite spots, such as the summit of Cerro Campanario, the beautiful beach of Playa Bonita, and the delightful waterfalls of Los Duendes

Free

## Day 27: Futaleufú ( Fri 25 Dec )

**Border Information:** Exit Argentina at Rio Futaleufú, enter Chile at Rio Futaleufú.

Today we cross back into Chile and drive to the rafting mecca of Futaleufú. From this point we will join the famous Carretera Austral, probably one of the most stunning roads in South America, surrounded in gorgeous mountain and forest scenery. Please note that the road from here to El Chaltén is rough and mostly unpaved meaning that the going is slow.

In Futaleufú we stay in a local campsite

Estimated Drive Time - 6-7 hours.

### About Futaleufú:

Futaleufú is a serene frontier town in the northern part of Chilean Patagonia - its name comes from the swirling river that passes by the town, which means "Big River" in the Mapuche language. The town is becoming increasingly popular with travellers through Patagonia due to its wonderful scenery and outdoor activities in the area.

## Day 28: Carretera Austral, Puyuhuapi and Queulat National Park ( Sat 26 Dec )

Today we will leave Futaleufú and drive through the Chilean fjords to Queulat National Park. If time allows there is an optional walk to see the incredible hanging Glacier.

Tonight we will camp in a basic campsite with facilities.

Estimated Drive Time - 5-6 hours.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Visit the stunning Queulat National Park, and take a trek through the 'Enchanted Forest' to view the magnificent Hanging Glacier

Free

### About Carretera Austral:

The Carretera Austral (meaning Southern Highway) is a fantastic route that passes between Puerto Montt 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, driving through magnificent scenery in this area of outstanding natural beauty.

**About Puyuhuapi and Queulat National Park:**

Puyuhuapi is a small village in Chilean Patagonia along the Carretera Austral, and is the gateway to the Queulat National Park. The National Park is dominated by the Patagonian Andes, and it covers a large section of the Puyuhuapi Volcanic Group south of Lake Risopatrón. There are two small ice fields in the National Park with glaciers of up to 12kms long, including the centrepiece Queulat Hanging Glacier, which spills out over the edge of a cliff and has a waterfall of melt-water pouring from its base. The park is also full of temperate rainforest comprising mainly of Coihue and Tepa trees, and has a large variety of birds such as the Magellanic woodpecker.

**Day 29: Cerro Castillo National Reserve, Carretera Austral**

**( Sun 27 Dec )**

Today we drive south through the magnificent Chilean scenery to the beautiful area of Cerro Castillo National Reserve.

In Cerro Castillo we will camp in a lovely family-run campsite with basic facilities, where we will enjoy a Chilean BBQ.

Estimated Drive Time - 6-7 hours.

**Activity**

**Approximate Cost**

Enjoy a traditional Chilean BBQ

Included in Kitty

**About Cerro Castillo National Reserve:**

The Cerro Castillo National Reserve is a nature reserve near the southern section of the Carretera Austral, famous for its rugged landscapes centred around the photogenic rocky mountain of Cerro Castillo. There are abundant Lenga tree forests and several mammals in the area such as South Andean deer and guanacos, and birds including Austral parakeets and Andean condors.

**Day 30: Cerro Castillo National Reserve ( Mon 28 Dec )**

Today we have a free day to hike to the stunning turquoise waters of Laguna Cerro Castillo or to go horse riding.

We camp in the same campsite.

**Activity**

**Approximate Cost**

Hike to the stunning Laguna Cerro Castillo      Free

Explore the beautiful mountain scenery of Cerro Castillo on a horse riding trip      CLP 16000

## Day 31: Argentinian Patagonia ( Tue 29 Dec )

**Border Information:** Exit Chile at Huemules, enter Argentina at Huemules.

Today we will cross into Argentina's Patagonia region and continue our journey south along the famous Ruta 40 (Route 40).

Tonight we will wild camp somewhere in the Rio Pinturas area.

Estimated Drive Time - 8-9 hours.

### About 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 plateaus. The area is split down the middle by the Andes, with Chilean Patagonia on the west, and Argentinian Patagonia on the east. Renowned for its desolate landscapes, 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 as opposed to the average height of a Spaniard at the time of 1.55m!

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 Fitz Roy range.

## Day 32: El Chaltén ( Wed 30 Dec )

Today we will drive into the heart of the Patagonia region and reach the tiny town of El Chaltén, situated in Los Glaciares National Park and famous for its incredible mountains, glaciers and world-class trekking opportunities.

In El Chaltén we stay in dorm beds in a hostel.

Estimated Drive Time - 6-7 hours.

### About El Chaltén:

El Chaltén is small remote Patagonian town nestled under the shadow of the iconic Mt. Fitz Roy. The town itself has an interesting origin - the area was disputed between Argentina and Chile for a number of years, so the Argentinians thought they would settle the argument by hastily building the town of El Chaltén in 1985 to claim the territory!

The name of Chaltén comes from the Tehuelche word for 'smoky mountain', so called as the early morning clouds gathering around Fitz

Roy look remarkably like volcanic smoke.

It is a fantastic base from which to explore the northern sections of the incredible Los Glaciares National Park, and is home to many adventure tour operators offering outdoor activities in the area.

## Day 33: El Chaltén, Los Glaciares National Park

( Thu 31 Dec )

Enjoy the stunning Los Glaciares National Park and the incredible scenery of the nearby Mt. Fitz Roy. There are lots of trekking opportunities here, as well as boat trips, horse riding, and mountain biking

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Freely explore and trek around the walking trails of Los Glaciares National Park, taking in the marvellous vistas of the Fitz Roy mountain range

Free

Enjoy a spectacular kayaking trip down the Río de las Vueltas, taking in some incredible views of the surrounding mountains

USD 125

Head on a rock-climbing course in the magnificent landscapes surrounding El Chaltén

USD 90

### About Los Glaciares National Park:

Los Glaciares National Park is the largest protected area in Argentina, covering a huge area of Argentinian Patagonia along the southern tail of the Andes range. The National Park is home to some of the most spectacular scenery in all of South America. This is classic picture-book Patagonia, and 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 mountains and forests of the National Park that are easy to explore independently with a map, so you can plan many treks around the area from around two hours to an entire challenging day out. As well as the phenomenal needle-like Cerro Torre, the iconic mountain of Fitz Roy looms over our base of El Chaltén, an impossibly-picturesque and steep mountain (which is also the logo for the 'Patagonia' clothing brand!) which can be viewed from many angles on treks in the area.

Other activities can include boat trips and ice climbing on the incredible Videma Glacier, a visit to the serene Lago del Desierto, and horse-riding excursions through the incredible landscapes.

## Day 34: El Calafate ( Fri 01 Jan )

Today we have a short drive to El Calafate, the gateway to the Perito Moreno Glacier.

In El Calafate we stay in dorm beds in a lovely hostel.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

### About 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 atmosphere and an ever-growing tourist trade. 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.

Most people base themselves here to visit the nearby Perito Moreno Glacier, located a short distance away at the southern reaches of the Los Glaciares National Park - the glacier is one of the most famous and spectacular glaciers to be seen anywhere in the world. The Perito Moreno Glacier is approximately 30kms long from where it spills out of the Southern Patagonia Ice Field, and 5kms wide at its terminus, where it has a ice face that is on average 170m high (with about 70m of which is above the surface of the lake). Visitors can view the glacier from an incredible viewpoint only a few hundred metres away from its face, where if you're lucky you'll see some of the ice face carve off into the lake under the pressure of all the ice behind it! It is also possible to take a boat trip to get extremely close, or embark on a challenging ice-climbing expedition on the glacier itself.

## Day 35: El Calafate ( Sat 02 Jan )

Today we will head out on an included full day guided visit to view the stunning Perito Moreno Glacier, one of the most spectacular sights in Patagonia.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Guided full day trip to the Perito Moreno Glacier

Included in Kitty

Boat trip beneath the Perito Moreno Glacier

ARS 800

Learn all about glaciers at the fantastic modern Glaciarium Museum in El Calafate, and visit its cool ice bar in the basement!

ARS 300

## Day 36: Torres Del Paine National Park ( Sun 03 Jan )

**Border information:** Exit Argentina and enter Chile at Cerro Castillo.

Today we will drive to the world-famous Torres del Paine National Park. This is one of the most outstanding areas of natural beauty in the world and the main highlight of the trip for many of our passengers and leaders!

Tonight we will camp at Camping Pehoe, a stunning campsite inside the National Park with incredible views of Los Cuernos mountains, which we will refer to as our 'base campsite'.

Estimated Drive Time - 5-6 hours.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

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

Included in Kitty

### About Torres Del Paine National Park:

Torres del Paine National Park contains what is undoubtedly some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the world. Rising up high above the Patagonian steppe are the three impressive granite towers that give the park its name, surrounded by high plateaus and 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 is also an important habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including guanacos, pumas, flamingos and condors.

The best way to explore the National Park is definitely to get out on foot - the region 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 embarking on a multi-day walk such as the famous W-walk, 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 Pehoé in season.

## Day 37: Torres Del Paine National Park ( Mon 04 Jan )

From September 2018, the full W-Walk will be included as part of your trip Kitty.

Embark on the full W-Walk with a local guide. Places at the campsites are limited by the National Park, so we book them in advance of your trip. We will be trekking the W-Walk from West to East, to enjoy the spectacular views.

This morning we will wake early and transfer by truck for the morning Catamaran at approximately, to cross Lago Pehoe. We will then set up camp at Paine Grande, before continuing on our hike towards Glacier Grey.

You can choose to hike to the first look out to enjoy views of the Glacier (approx 4hrs round trip) or to continue to the second look (approx 8hrs round trip)!! Both walks return by the same route.

## Day 38: Torres Del Paine National Park ( Tue 05

**Jan )**

Today we depart from our camp at Paine Grande and hike into the stunning French Valley. In the afternoon, we will make our way to Camp Cuernos.

The hike is approximately 8 hours.

### **Day 39: Torres Del Paine National Park ( Wed 06 Jan )**

Today we have a slightly easier day, we will hike from Camping Cuernos along the edge of Lago Nodenskjold, around Almirante Nieto and stay just outside Valley Ascencio. We will arrive at Camp Central after approximately 5 hours hiking.

### **Day 40: Torres Del Paine National Park ( Thu 07 Jan )**

This is our final day of the W-Walk and the most spectacular. The day begins with a steady climb from our camp site up Rio Asencio. Be prepared for the final hour which is a relatively steep scramble up to the Tarn and Mirrador Las Torres, affording great views of the iconic Towers.

We will transfer back to Camping Pehoe, our base camp at the end of the day.

Our hike today is approximately 8 hours for the return trip (20km).

### **Day 41: Tierra Del Fuego ( Fri 08 Jan )**

Today we will have a full day drive south to cross the Magellan Straits over to the island of Tierra del Fuego.

Tonight we will wild camp somewhere on the Chilean side of Tierra del Fuego.

Estimated Drive Time - 9-10 hours.

#### **About Tierra Del Fuego:**

Tierra del Fuego (meaning "Land of Fire") is a large island separated from mainland South America by the Magellan Strait. The island gets its name from the fires of the Selknam tribe that originally lived here, which Magellan and his sailors observed from their boats on their first travels through the area - unfortunately the Selknam and Yaghan tribes that originally inhabited the island are all but extinct due to illnesses brought in by European settlers that arrived in the 19th Century. The island is split in half with a straight north-south line between Argentina and Chile, with the Argentinian half containing the island's largest settlement, Ushuaia.

The island of Tierra del Fuego is Patagonia at its most remote and desolate, 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. On the Chilean half of the island lies Inútil Bay, a remote bay that is home to the only colony of King Penguins that exists outside of Antarctica!

## Day 42: Tierra Del Fuego, Ushuaia ( Sat 09 Jan )

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

Today we cross over to the Argentine side of Tierra del Fuego and drive to the incredible port town of Ushuaia, the southernmost town in the world!

In Ushuaia we stay in a Hotel out of town close to the National park, there are regular shuttles into the town.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Beagle channel boat trips	ARS 1200

### About Ushuaia:

Ushuaia is a port town that lies at the south of Tierra del Fuego on the Argentinian side - it is often known as "the city at the end of the world", as it is the world's most southern city (the Chilean town of Puerto Williams is slightly further south but is much smaller than Ushuaia). Ushuaia 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 1800s and subsequently used by the Argentinian government as a penal colony. What was once a small sleepy 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 mountain range in the background. You can also explore Tierra del Fuego National Park, another beautiful spot with some spectacular lake and mountain scenery.

## Day 43: Tierra Del Fuego, Ushuaia ( Sun 10 Jan )

**Border information:** if you are finishing in Ushuaia, you will most likely exit Argentina at Ushuaia Malvinas Argentinas International Airport (IATA code: USH).

Today is a free day in the wonderful remote town of Ushuaia, with options such as a visit to the hauntingly beautiful Tierra del Fuego

National Park, boat trips to see the scenery and wildlife of the Beagle Channel, or heading out horse riding along the coast for those with more time here.

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Ushuaia. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact the Sales Team if you would like to arrange some extra nights of accommodation here after your trip.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Take a journey along the Rio Pipo on the 'Train to the End of the World', once built by prisoners at Ushuaia's old penal colony	ARS 850
Delve into Ushuaia's past and learn about its maritime tradition and former prison colony at the Maritime Museum	ARS 400
Head out to the impressive Martial Glacier near Ushuaia, taking in the beautiful scenery of the Darwin Mountains and the Beagle Channel	USD 110
Explore Tierra del Fuego National Park on a day tour from Ushuaia	ARS 1450

## 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, and information about kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

We update these notes regularly, 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 and inclusions cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our 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, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards.

## ALTITUDE WARNING

### Warning - this trip goes above 2800m.

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE).

Because of this it is very important that you make yourself aware of the cause and effects of travelling at

altitude and monitor your health during this trip.

[For further information please click here to download our AMS information sheet](#) or refer to the following website: [www.high-altitude-medicine.com](http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com)

Your leader will also hand you a copy of the AMS information sheet during your trip as well as holding a short meeting prior to travelling to altitudes above 2800m/9200ft for the first time.

If you are starting your trip in a destination above 2800m/9200ft we strongly advise reading this information prior to arrival.

**Some Travel Insurance companies will stipulate a maximum altitude limit. Please ensure that you are covered and if necessary pay the additional premium of extended cover.**

## **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 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.

[W Walk Info Graphic.pdf](#)

### **Itinerary for Base Package:**

#### *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 first catamaran across Lago Grey to Paine Grande. The group will 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: Pehoe Campsite*

This morning will be free to enjoy the surroundings of Paine Grande and then the group and the guide will take the catamaran back to Pudeto around midday. The truck will meet the group here and drive to our campsite for the night.

#### *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.

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 first catamaran across Lago Grey to Paine Grande. The group will 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: 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 your sleeping bag.

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 (only for base package; a mat is included in the extension package)
- Warm sleeping bag
- 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

## **MULTIPLE DEPARTURES AND AMENDED ITINERARIES**

South America is very busy for travel at certain times of the year, particularly in connection with the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro but also at other times of the year. Please note that there may be more than just one truck on your specific departure date, and these trucks will travel in parallel with each other.

Trucks on multiple departures will operate on slightly different itineraries and your day to day itinerary may vary from your trip notes. You will of course still visit all the highlights listed, and the presence of other trucks can make for a great atmosphere. If you should have any concerns then please contact your sales agent.

Even on the majority of our trips where there is only the one truck, you may from time to time meet up with other groups at points on the road, and may partake in activities jointly with other groups on these occasions.

This may also occur occasionally in Africa, but is very unlikely in Asia or North and Central America.

From September 2018 we will include the Full 4 day W-Walk as standard in our kitty. This includes transfers to the start and finish points, camping equipment, full board and the services of an English speaking local guide throughout the trip.

The W-walk involves 4 days of trekking and 3 overnight stays away from the truck, your tents will be set up at pre-booked campsites at Paine Grande, Los Cuernos and Las Torres, and meals included. It is 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, toiletries, snacks, water, etc. Some days of the W-Walk can be shortened for those wishing to trek slightly shorter distances, for example on Day 2 it is possible to trek to the first view point and return to Paine Grande via the same route, reducing the trek by half.

For anyone who wishes to stay at our Base Camp, this can be arranged in advance through your Sales agent. This package will include camping and full board at our base camp at Camping Pehoe, as well as the opportunity to join the W-Walkers for guided single day hikes to Glacier Grey and the Las Torres viewpoint, transfers will be provided your crew in the truck.

Please note that the price is the same whether you choose to stay at the Base Camp, or take part in the full W-Walk, however in order for us to make arrangements for meal provisions, you must tell us in advance if you will not be trekking the W-Walk.

It is possible to hire Porters for the W-Walk at a cost of 150,000CLP per porter. Their maximum load is 15kg. We recommend that you put your bag into a waterproof liner or dry sac before giving it to a porter. In high season (mid November to mid March) we recommended booking in advance.

## **PATAGONIA NOTES**

This trip will be travelling to the southernmost point of South America, and you should expect extreme weather conditions. It can be bitterly cold and very windy with heavy rain at any time of the year. Furthermore, the weather changes extremely fast so you should expect four seasons' weather in one day. Therefore please remember to prepare accordingly - this is a tough trip and should not be taken lightly. We suggest you take plenty of good quality warm, waterproof and windproof clothing and a good quality four season sleeping bag as well as a sleeping bag liner.

Patagonia's peak season is the Summer (Mid November to February) the days are long, typically temperatures are around 20' C during the day, dropping to 8'C at night, though whilst generally warm in the summer, it can often be very windy, with rain. If you are travelling during the peak season be aware that activities and camp sites sell out fast and you will be sharing the trails with a greater number of fellow trekkers. Be sure to pack your waterproofs and even though it's summertime we recommend a good 3 season sleeping bag and warm clothes.

In the shoulder season the days are much colder, but often clearer and brighter, with fewer people on the trails, though be aware that some activities may not have opened fully. Springtime (October to November) brings the colourful spring blooms and is a great time to see the Whales at Puerto Madryn.

March to May is the best time to see the Autumn foliage and makes for stunning photographs. If you choose to travel at this time, be sure to pack a good down jacket and a 4 season sleeping bag and liner, as the nights can be very cold.

During the shoulder season there is an option to upgrade into basic cabins or hostels at some of the Camp sites that we stay in along the way, you should budget an extra 10-15USD per night for such upgrades.

Please note that due to the popularity of the region, we find that prices can increase significantly during high season.

## **PACKING LIST**

In Patagonia because the weather is so unpredictable, its best to plan for colder temperatures, and use the layering system. As you will spend a number of nights camping, we recommend ensuring that you have a good camping mat, sleeping bag and pillow to keep comfortable.

- 3/4 or 4/5 Season Sleeping bag with liner for added warmth
- Sleeping mat / thermo-rest
- Pillow
- Light towel
- Dry bag (keep your kit dry)
- Day bag
- Water bottle / hydration system (1.5l)
- Insulated / Down Jacket
- Windproof Jacket
- Waterproofs
- Hat, Gloves, Scarf
- Warm socks
- Sturdy Walking boots
- Sandles / flip flops
- Walking trousers / shorts x 2
- Thermal base layer
- Warm jumper
- T-Shirts x 2
- Long sleeve T-Shirt x 1
- Underwear x 3
- Swimwear
- Head Torch
- Power bank / electricals / adapter
- Camera / lens / dry bag / spare battery and extra SD cards
- Toiletries - wet wipes, sanitary products, dry shampoo
- A good book

### **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 enough to sustain them but not necessarily make them warm enough to feel comfortable. For example, with a 0°C bag, you should be able to stay in 0°C temperature but you will not necessarily be able to sleep 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.

## **PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

### **SOUTH AMERICA PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

South America is diverse continent, from high altitudes in the dry Andes, the steamy and humid Amazon, the cold moorlands of Patagonia, to the lush green pampas of northern Argentina. You should therefore be prepared for the full gambit of climates. There will be time for hiking and many other activities such as horse riding and white water rafting, and you will need to be reasonably fit to be able to participate in everything on offer.

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.

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available. If you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

## **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 read the information very carefully to make sure everything is clear and you aware of what you need to do. Please also be aware that rules surrounding visas do change, often suddenly, and without prior warning. This is why it is important that you also double-check the information we provide for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance, you may wish to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy or consulate. If you require any supporting documentation for your visa applications, Dragoman will obtain this on your behalf as part of your trip price - we will contact you to request additional information in order to make this application for you.

However, for trips that involve multiple visas, you may find it beneficial to use a specialist visa agency to assist you with your applications. While this does sometimes increase the cost, it usually makes the process much easier for you.

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.

Most countries require that your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your entry into the country.

For trips that are not yet guaranteed, you may find yourself in the position whereby you will need to start the visa application process prior to your trip being guaranteed - in this situation we still advise you **not** to purchase flights until your trip is guaranteed. However, you **can** start your visa application process, ensuring that when applying for your visas or letters of invitation that you allow several days before and after your entry into the country to allow for delays, availability of flights, etc.

## **BOLIVIA**

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and most EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Bolivia as a tourist for up to 90 days.

Citizens of South Africa and certain Eastern European countries **will** need a visa, and this can be obtained **on arrival** at all land borders and airports into Bolivia. At the time of writing (2015), the cost of a single-entry visa on arrival is USD65. Please make sure you check which documentation you need to bring to obtain a visa on arrival. Dragoman can help with hotel lists if required.

Citizens of the USA **will** need a visa, and this will have to be obtained **in advance**. We recommend that you obtain this at the Bolivian Consulate in Washington or one of the other five consulates in the USA - please apply through the website at <http://www.boliviawdc.org> and follow all instructions for a tourist visa. If this is not possible before you travel, and you are travelling overland into Bolivia, it is possible to obtain a visa at the Bolivian Consulate in Salta, Argentina or Cuzco, Peru (please be careful that you aren't due to be there on a weekend or national holiday). At the time of writing (2015), the cost of a single-entry visa is USD160 for USA passport holders. Please make sure you check which documentation you need to bring to obtain a visa on arrival. Dragoman can help with hotel lists if required.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required, and whether it will be necessary to obtain it in advance.

A valid yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travellers coming from [areas with risk of yellow fever transmission](#) (including transiting through an airport in an area of risk).

## **CHILE**

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and most EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Chile as a tourist for up to 90 days.

Please note that citizens of Australia will need to pay a reciprocity fee of USD117 (2015 price) upon entry to Chile. This will be valid for multiple entries to Chile over 90 days, and can be paid in cash or by card upon arrival.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

## **ARGENTINA**

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Argentina as a tourist for up to 90 days.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

## **FLYING TO CENTRAL OR SOUTH AMERICA VIA THE USA OR CANADA**

If your flight to Central or South America goes via the USA, then you **must** obtain an Electronic System for



Travel Authorization (ESTA) before travel (except for citizens of Canada, who will not require this). Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and most EU countries are part of the USA's Visa Waiver Scheme and are eligible to obtain an ESTA.

An ESTA must be obtained **online** and **in advance** via the following link and paying the appropriate fee - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/> - please note that you will be denied boarding your flight if you do not have this arranged.

If you are not eligible for an ESTA, then you will have to obtain a B-1/B-2 visa for temporary visitors, and you will need to obtain it **in advance**. In this case it would be advisable to book flights that do not go via the USA.

Please note that if you have travelled to Iran, Sudan, Iraq or Syria since March 2011, or hold dual-nationality with one of these countries, then you will not be eligible for an ESTA and must instead apply for a visa. There are some exceptions to this, please see the following link for more details - <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251577.htm>.

Similarly, if your flight to Central or South America goes via Canada, then you must obtain a Canadian Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA) before travel (except for citizens of the USA, who will not require this). Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, most EU countries, South Korea and Japan are part of Canada's Visa Waiver Scheme and are eligible to obtain an eTA.

An eTA must be arranged **online** and **in advance** - please go to <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/>, apply and pay the appropriate fee.

If you are not eligible for an eTA, then you will have to obtain a Temporary Resident Visa, and you will need to obtain it **in advance**. In this case it would be advisable to book flights that do not go via Canada. Please note that several Eastern European nationalities will need a visa.

## PERSONAL SPENDING

### SOUTH AMERICA CURRENCIES AND 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](http://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 and do not recommend that you bring them for your personal spending money.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. 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 **no more than 8 years old**. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Brazil can be difficult for changing money, so 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 USD50.

Please note that due to a recent counterfeit scam central banks in several South American countries

(Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile) have temporarily banned the circulation of USD100 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.

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. ATMs can be difficult to find sometimes in remote areas, especially in Patagonia. 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.

## PERSONAL SPENDING - SOUTH AMERICA

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent in South America, we recommend you allow between USD15 and USD30 per day. This amount is usually lower in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru but slightly higher elsewhere.

This will covers expenses such as your optional activities, drinks, meals whilst out and also when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

## WHAT ELSE YOU NEED TO KNOW

### Overland Lifestyle and Trip Suitability

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of 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, sometimes 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.

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### 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 between 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 wonderful aspects of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and the variety of people that you will meet.

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### 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 Cuzco and during the Inca Treks. This means a group starting a trip in Cuzco will embark on the Inca Trail at the same time as a group finishing in or travelling through Cuzco. In practical terms this means there could be more than 22 group members in Cuzco and on the Inca Trail at the same time.

Please note that there is also 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 a group starting their trip there. In practical terms this means there could be more than 22 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 8 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK, and then up to 6 months on the road as a trainee. Our crew are trained to manage and operate the trip safely and efficiently and their duties include: planning the trip according to the itinerary, driving and maintaining the truck, securing services of local guides, general logistics, health and safety, liaising with bureaucracy, dealing with issues where needed and offering advice and support to our customers. In addition they have a basic knowledge of the places visited and will be able to offer suggestions of things to do and see. Dragoman endeavours to provide the services of experienced crew, however, due to the seasonality of travel, situations may arise where your tour leader is new to a particular region or training other crew, new to the area.

On all Dragoman overlanding trips, we usually have 2 western crew but please be aware that there may be times when one crew member has to leave the trip due to unforeseen circumstances such as visa issues, illness of a group member, etc. On some of our trips we have 1 western crew and 1 local driver instead of 2 western crew. 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.

On the majority of our trips in Ethiopia, Sudan, Central Asia, China and South East Asia, in addition to our crew we will have a local guide on board who will travel with us for the entire duration of our time within one country. In these cases, the local guide becomes a third crew member and is able to offer their local knowledge as well as an insight into their country and the lives of the local people.

In most other areas of Africa, the Americas, India and Turkey, in addition to our crew we will employ local guides in specific locations of interest (for just a few hours up to a few days).

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 in hotels or hostels, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. 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 when staying in hostels, gers or yurts.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary greatly depending on what options are available at the time; hotels can vary from very basic rooms without electricity or running water to high standard hotels with good facilities! Generally in hotels most rooms will be single sex, twin-share, but in South America many rooms are triple/quad-share. Hostels, gers and yurts are nearly always multi-share and may be mixed sex.

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. One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will camp away

from the tourist crowds. Occasionally on some of our trips we are able to stay in villages or local homestays allowing us to get close to the indigenous population and ensuring that our money stays within the local community.

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## The Kitty

In addition to the trip price on our overland 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 whilst staying in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park or historical site entrances, excursions, etc.)

The kitty system is unique to overland and 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. 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. 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.

The kitty is payable in full at the start of your trip (in instalments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips). Alternatively you can pay in advance via a bank transfer 3-4 weeks before the start of your trip - please see [https://www.dragoman.com/files/Dragoman\\_Kitty\\_Document.pdf](https://www.dragoman.com/files/Dragoman_Kitty_Document.pdf) for more details - this information sheet will also be sent in your booking confirmation upon booking a trip and can be found on [www.dragoman.com/overland/planning-your-trip/money](http://www.dragoman.com/overland/planning-your-trip/money). Please also note that prepayment is not available for our trips to West Africa, Iran, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Alaska and any trip in Africa north of Nairobi.

If you are bringing the kitty out in cash, please ensure your USD notes (EUR notes if your trip goes through West Africa) are clean and undamaged and **no more than 8 years old**. If needed, your tour leader will be able to accept some of the kitty in local currency, 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. However, 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.

We cannot accept traveller's cheques on our trips.

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## 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, the 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 group's 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 using 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 them to 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.

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## **Dietary Requirements**

If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and tell 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, that you would miss from home, or because of an allergy would miss out on, it would be best to bring this 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.

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## **Itineraries**

Our itineraries are developed and published with the best of intentions, however 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 us. 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. We make operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources, including the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice, reports from other travel companies and local suppliers, leaders' reports from off the road and local contacts we have built up over many years of experience.

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## **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 advice rather than the advice of other governments. We will advise you of any significant changes in advice before travel or whilst you are overseas.

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. If there are any travel warnings present for the region you will travel to, as well as considering whether you are happy to travel despite the warning you must also check to ensure that it is not invalidating your travel insurance. Here are a few useful addresses:

UK - [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

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

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

United States - <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>

Canada - [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries\\_pays/menu-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp)

We also recommend that you check out the UK Travel Aware website before you travel at

<https://travellaware.campaign.gov.uk/>. This website offers straightforward travel advice, top tips, and up-to-date country information to help you plan a safe trip.

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## 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. You must also declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase and provide evidence to us prior to departure that your pre-existing medical condition has been declared to your insurers. Failure to do so will mean that you are unable to join the trip.

## Extreme Environments

There may be periods of time within your trip when you meet extreme conditions, such as extreme heat, extreme wind, extreme cold, extreme humidity, extreme altitude, extreme crowds etc. Whilst our crew will let you know at the time when you are likely to meet these conditions, please ensure that you have read through the trip notes carefully and researched the local weather conditions at the time and that you feel that you are fit enough to cope with these conditions. If you have any doubts at all, please contact us to discuss your concerns prior to booking, and when on trip, if you find that the local conditions are causing you concern at any time, please be sure to let your trip leader know so that appropriate precautions can be discussed.

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## 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 report these as soon as possible, either to the tour leader or a medical professional.

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## 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

There is a risk of contracting malaria in some areas which we travel through. If your trip goes to a areas with malaria it is always best to get expert advice before travelling about the types of malaria pills available, whether they are recommended, and take any that are prescribed as instructed. Consult your GP or travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as yellow fever, dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika are continuing to spread and are becoming a bigger problem around the world. Mosquito bite prevention

is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases, as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available. Health professionals have issued warnings for pregnant women travelling to areas affected by the Zika virus. For more information about Zika please visit:

- WHO: [www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/zika-virus](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/zika-virus)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/zika](http://www.cdc.gov/zika)

The Anopheles mosquitoes that transmit malaria usually bite between the hours of dusk and dawn, whereas the Aedes mosquitoes that transmit yellow fever, dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika bite both during the day and the night. To prevent being bitten, it is recommended to cover up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light-coloured and buttoned at the wrists. Do not sleep without closing your windows, tent door, etc. and use a mosquito net in hotels or if sleeping outside where there are mosquitoes present. Use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing. Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permethrin solution also 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. For more advice on how to avoid bites please see: [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/38/insect-and-tick-bite-avoidance](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/38/insect-and-tick-bite-avoidance)

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## Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protections vary according to different regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest specific health advice on the regions and countries you are planning to travel in, so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel. The following websites are also a helpful resource:

[www.nathnac.net](http://www.nathnac.net) and [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://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.

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## 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.

Of course 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.

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## 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, a door, 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. The roof hatches can only be opened and the roof seats used with the express permission of the crew and you must never sit in the roof seats 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 and driving styles may be very unpredictable, so please remain very vigilant when near roads and vehicles.
- Crash helmets are often not provided with mopeds and motorbikes overseas – we do not recommend you hire these vehicles.

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## 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 if possible.
- 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, have dangerous gaps between the stairs and the wall, 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.
- 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 away from the tented accommodation/affected campsite.

## Other Campsite Safety & Security

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

- 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.
- 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 a reality of life in these regions. Therefore please think carefully about where you eat, what food you order and be aware of the risks.

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## 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. 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.
- Always remain aware and vigilant, and stay away from situations where you do not feel comfortable.
- Avoid carrying too much money.
- Always avoid carrying your passport, driving licence, air tickets, and other valuable items around with you unless this is essential. Instead, keep valuables such as this locked away in the truck's safe, or the safety deposit box in the room or reception of the hotel/hostel.
- If you are carrying cash, cards or valuables, use a money belt or neck wallet which are more easily concealed and more difficult to pickpocket.
- Do not take any valuable jewellery, watches, etc. away with you in the first place.
- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas.
- If possible avoid walking around on your own; it is always safer to explore with others.
- Always try to walk with confidence and purpose, which will help you avoid looking like a lost tourist!
- Take special care when walking to avoid spraining or twisting your ankle on potholes, cobbles and uneven ground.

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## Activity Safety & Optional Activities

You will have the opportunity to take part in many exciting activities and excursions, some of which are included (e.g. hiking the Inca Trail, trekking to see Mountain Gorillas, visiting the Taj Mahal, etc.), whilst others are optional (e.g. white water rafting in Uganda, zip-lining in Costa Rica, etc.). Some of these activities 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 and its activities to their fullest.

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

Please note that riding helmets are mandatory for all optional and included horse riding activities. This is an insurance requirement.

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.

Always ensure that your travel medical insurance covers you for all included and optional activities that you wish to participate in.

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## 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.

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## Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Please note that certain activities may not be available on your particular visit if they are overbooked, underbooked, out of season, or for any other reason - the list of activities is made according to our latest information and in the best faith, but please be aware that things may change between our last visit and your arrival. Please also note that it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, and it is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there.

Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated - again, these prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator - any prices listed are a guide only and certainly cannot be guaranteed.

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.

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## 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 £2,000,000 and for Cancellation and Curtailment of £5,000 (or the full cost of your trip). 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, tablets, phones, ipods, etc. Please note that Dragoman is not responsible for your personal effects and is not insured for their loss. Please note that you should be insured for trip postponement or cancellation purposes immediately upon paying a deposit.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel and make sure it covers any activity that you intend to undertake (whether included or optional). As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding, etc., 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 note that in the case of credit card travel insurance we will require details of the participating insurer, the insurance policy number and emergency contact number prior to travel rather than just the bank's name and credit card details. It is up to you to ensure that these policies have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas and many are not valid for travelling outside your country of residence or outside the EU.

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## **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.

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## **Out of Office Hours Contact**

We have an out of office hours number you can call which should only be used once you have left your home country to start the trip 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 you can not get through please leave a message with you name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you.

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.

**Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564**

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## **Luggage & Kit List**

Although you will not have to carry your main bag for 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 truck's back locker which will be inaccessible during a drive day, 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. We recommend that your bag be no larger than a large rucksack with a capacity of about 80 litres (approximately 70cm high, 40cm wide, and 40cm deep). The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is a maximum of 20kg.

Your 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 if your trip includes camping nights.

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.

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

### **General**

- Sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, sleeping mat and small pillow – if your trip includes camping nights
- Sandals or flip flops
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm sweater or fleece
- Swimwear
- Comfortable travelling clothes and a set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out
- If visiting places of worship on the trip, men should bring a pair of full length trousers and women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf
- Towel – quick dry, lightweight travel towels are best
- Toiletries including bio degradable wet wipes, sanitary products, hand gel, sun cream and insect repellent
- Day pack – essential for keeping things handy when on the truck, on short hikes, walking around cities, etc
- Assorted dry bags – to protect your kit from dust and damp
- Pouch or money belt
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre) – we carry drinking water on all of our trucks and actively encourage our customers to use the water supplied. Whilst away from the truck we encourage the use of a filter water bottle and we are able to offer Dragoman customers a 25% discount on Water to Go bottles and filters using the code DRAGOMAN25 on the link <https://www.watertogo.eu/dragoman>
- Head torch with spare batteries and bulbs
- Camera with spare battery and extra memory cards
- Electrical accessories such as charger, power bank, adapter, etc
- Carbon monoxide detector
- A good book, a diary or notebook and pen, a fun game for travel days
- Personal medical kit – see notes below

### **Cold weather**

For trips going through mountainous areas, deserts, high altitude regions and Patagonia, you should be prepared for cold weather, especially at night. Ensure you bring:

- 3/4 or 4/5 season sleeping bag with liner – see note on sleeping bag ratings below
- Thermal base layers
- Winter jacket
- Hat, gloves and scarf
- Warm socks

### **Hot weather**

For trips going through tropical areas you should be prepared for hot and humid weather. Ensure you bring:

- Loose fitting clothes with long sleeves and legs
- Mosquito repellent

- Mosquito net – not essential as our tents have mosquito netting but can be handy for hotels and hostels or sleeping under the stars

## **Trips with trekking**

For trips including treks, ensure you bring:

- Lightweight walking clothes suitable for the general climate
- Waterproof trousers
- Sturdy walking boots
- Walking stick(s) – not essential but can help in steep terrain; sticks can generally be hired or purchased en route

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## **Sleeping Bags**

A sleeping bag's rating typically indicates the lowest temperature at which it will keep the average sleeper warm enough to sustain them but not necessarily make them warm enough to feel comfortable. For example, with a 0°C bag, you should be able to stay in 0°C temperature but you will not necessarily be able to sleep 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.

## **Personal Medical Kit**

All of our trucks have a standard motorist's first aid kit on board for use in emergency situations only. The first aid kit is in compliance with UK standards for first aid provision within motor vehicles, and contain supplies to treat road side injuries. We do not carry prescription medications, 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 travel medical kits. They have been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contain everything you would need for any minor incidents and health issues. For more details please visit their website:

**Global Survival Kit** - <http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/p/2712/Global-Survival-Kit>

**Ultimate Medical Kit (POM)** - [http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/p/2909/Ultimate-Medical-Kit-\(POM\)](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/p/2909/Ultimate-Medical-Kit-(POM))

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## **Passports**

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of your 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 as soon as possible - however, please be aware that changing your passport can cause big problems if you need to apply for visas or permits (such as the Inca Trail or Gorilla Trekking) in advance.

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## Pre and Post Trip Accommodation and Airport Transfers

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.

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## Continuing Your Trip

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

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## 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.

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## 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 from the link below:

<https://www.dragoman.com/about-us/responsible-travel/policy-and-guidelines>

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### Water

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in the bottle, 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 on 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!

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## Electrical Equipment

Your vehicle will be usually equipped with a 12-Volt socket, so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12V 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 adapter for your specific charger.

For mobile phones, please note that most countries in the Americas operate at 850 MHz 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.

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## A Few Rules

It is one of our core values to treat all people we encounter with respect, including the local people who make our destinations so special. We have therefore set down a number of rules to which our customers must adhere.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, carrying weapons, or engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

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## 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](mailto: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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

## COUNTRY SPECIFIC NOTES

### BOLIVIA NOTE

Because of its nature, this itinerary may vary - occasionally the road conditions are too adverse during the rainy season (January-February) to make the crossing from Uyuni to Argentina, and we may have to change the route. During the winter months in Argentina and Bolivia, we will spend a higher proportion of nights in hotels and less time camping.

Kitty may be higher than expected and you should allow extra funds for this and personal funds for more meals out. There may well be snow and you should be aware that it can get very cold at night. Please ensure that you bring a decent sleeping bag and adequate clothes, including thermals.

We will also be travelling to very high altitudes (over 5000m if you take the crossing from Uyuni to Argentina or vice versa), so please be aware of the effects of altitude sickness.

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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 18/11/2019