



WWF *for a living planet*



WORLD
expeditions

small group journeys, adventures & expeditions

Orcas, Peaks & Penguins: Visit Patagonia 2006

... and help WWF-Australia raise \$30,000 to fight for the survival of endangered species in our Southern Ocean

19 Day Itinerary

2 days moderate day treks, 5 days moderate trek
16 nights hotels/lodges/refugios

The Adventure

This superb adventure begins in the cosmopolitan city of Buenos Aires before we fly south to the Peninsula Valdes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site for conservation of marine mammals and home to Magellanic penguins, and southern elephant seals. We also may have the possibility of spotting orcas and southern right whales as they journey south for the summer. We visit the Punta Tombo Penguin Rookery, home to the largest population of Magellanic penguins in the world. We fly to southern Patagonia and trek among the awesome peaks of the Fitzroy and Paine ranges. This part of the great chain of the Andes offers some of the most spectacular wilderness trekking found anywhere in the world. We also have the opportunity to visit the impressive Perito Moreno and Balmaceda Glaciers.

The Escape to Patagonia itinerary has been uniquely created with WWF. World Expeditions will donate \$1000 for every person travelling on the Escape to Patagonia 2006 Expedition to WWF to help the survival of species such as the Northern Royal Albatross for the WWF Southern Oceans program.

Itinerary at a Glance

TRIP DATES:

Trip 1: 5th – 23rd November '06

Trip 2: 12th - 30th November '06

Cost: \$6990 AUD

(Prices are based on a minimum of 15 paying passengers in twin share accommodation - for a group size of 11-14 passengers a surcharge of \$400 per person will apply)

If you are travelling as a single, then we will do our best to twin share you with someone of the same gender unless you specify on your booking form that you would like to occupy a single room. In the case of the latter, or if we are unsuccessful in matching you up with another traveller, we are obliged to charge a single supplement rate of AUD\$775.

We hope you can join us on this adventure of a lifetime and at the same time help support WWF to help the survival of endangered species of the Southern Ocean!

MONEY MATTERS

Your tour cost includes:

- * All flights from Sydney with Aerolineas Argentinas
- * Accommodation: on a twin-share basis throughout
- * Good quality 4 star hotels in capital cities on bed and breakfast basis
- * Quality Lodge accommodation in the National Parks or in refugio's as specified. At peak periods we may camp in Torres del Paine National Park to maximise group comfort
- * Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- * All internal ground transport by private bus
- * Bilingual local guide/s
- * All national park and site entry fees
- * Mini-trekking program on Perito Moreno Glacier and boat trip to Puerto Natales

Plus World Expeditions will donate \$1000 to WWF-Australia for every person travelling on the Escape to Patagonia 2006 Expedition!

Your tour cost does not include:

- * Cost of laundry and alcoholic beverages
- * Ticketable airport taxes & departure taxes in South America (allow \$400-\$500AUD,)
- * Travel insurance
- * Visas (none required for those travelling on an Australian passport)
- * Medical treatment
- * Excess baggage costs
- * Australian domestic flights if not originating from Sydney
- * Vaccinations

The Operator

World Expeditions is Australia's oldest adventure travel company and this year is celebrating 30 years of operations. World Expeditions has enjoyed operations in Patagonia with a local partner for the past 15 years with a range of trips from adventure touring to introductory trekking & some introductory mountaineering for those up to the challenge. The local staff in Patagonia are a vital ingredient of the programs success with many years of experience that has helped in developing an innovative range of itineraries that are well off the tourist track. World Expeditions has a strong commitment to environmental tourism. Putting something back into the communities where they operate is also an integral part of the culture of the company. This itinerary is one such example of World Expeditions combining its operational expertise with an environmental group to help raise awareness and much needed funding for one of the WWF's Australian projects. Compare the inclusions of this trip to others similar in the market place and you will see that it represents excellent value for money.

Raising funds for WWF-Australia

Australia is a neighbour of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. WWF believes we have a particular responsibility to look after this precious place. WWF's Southern Oceans program spans the globe to include Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina (Patagonia). WWF's vision is for the seas, islands and coasts of the Southern Ocean to be understood, valued and wisely used. It is important that the region is a safe home to recovering populations of albatross, great whales, seals and penguins that characterise these southern lands and waters.

The WWF Southern Oceans Program aims to address the four key threats:

1. Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fishing (unmask the problem and mobilise international attention on curbing illegal operators)
2. Invasive Species (such as rats onboard fishing vessels – they can displace native species and predate on albatross chicks and eggs)
3. Marine Pollution (such as discarded nets, rubbish and toxics)
4. Climate Change (which greatly affects the food-webs on which the Southern Ocean ecosystems depend, such as disturbing the balance of Krill in the ocean - tiny, shrimp-like crustaceans that are eaten by fish, seabirds and whales)

The endangered Royal Northern Albatross

The Royal Northern Albatross is an example of one of the endangered species, with populations estimated at 13,000 and decreasing. This majestic seabird breeds in New Zealand where populations have plummeted because of natural destruction of their breeding sites and cats taking eggs and chicks. That's why it's essential that these birds don't face further risks as they undertake circumpolar traverses in the Southern Oceans through Australian waters and as far as Patagonia. During this time they face risks from becoming entangled in hooks, lines and nets, and potentially struggle to find food as fish stocks are drawn down by fishing fleets or affected by climate change.

What is WWF doing to save our species in the Southern Ocean?

Addressing the threats of IUU fishing

Illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing in the Southern Ocean is responsible for pushing fish stocks to the brink of collapse – leaving seabirds like the Northern Royal Albatross without enough food to survive.

The method used to catch fish is also causing terrible damage. It is common for Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) vessels to drag miles of hooked lines behind their boats, without taking any measures to reduce accidental catches of seabirds and other creatures. Albatross swoop down to feed on the bait - become hooked through their bills and drown.

WWF is working around the world at the international, regional and local levels to help fishermen reduce bycatch of non-target species (so that they catch the fish intended and not dolphins, sharks or albatross). For example, WWF launched a global contest for the most innovative bycatch reduction technology with a prize of \$25,000 U.S. dollars.

Funds raised from the Escape to Patagonia trip will help support WWF and its Southern Ocean programme to continue our fight to make this region a safer place for all marine life.

Declaration of the Peninsula Valdes Marine Park

During your trip to Patagonia, you'll have a chance to visit the Valdes Peninsula. This area is marked by its vibrant coastlines, a stunning array of tall cliffs, rocky reef and exotic marine mammals, including the southern elephant seal, sea lion, southern right whale, and Magellan penguins. The area is also home to more than 60 species of birds.

WWF's associate organisation, Fundacion Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA), has recently signed an agreement with local authorities to promote conservation in the United Nations-protected Valdes Peninsula. They plan to establish a visitor's centre at the whale watching town of Puerto Piramide. WWF endorses carefully managed whale watching as a new way for communities who once hunted the world's largest animals to earn a living.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 Depart Sydney/Arrive Buenos Aires

Depart Sydney on AR1183 at 0930
Arrive Buenos Aires on AR1183 at 1305

On arrival into Buenos Aires you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel for the evening. Remainder of afternoon at leisure..

DAY 2 In Buenos Aires

In the morning we take a half-day tour of the city, including the Colon Opera House and visits to its main square and La Boca area, or the Recoleta Cemetery where Eva Peron is buried. The afternoon is at leisure. (B)

DAY 3 Fly to Trelew and visit Punta Tombo Penguin Rookery

This morning we will depart early for our flight to the Valdes Peninsula. On arrival you will be met at the airport by your guide (who will remain with you until the end of the tour) and we will drive south to the Punta Tombo Penguin Rookery. The Punta Tombo Natural Protected Area is home to the largest colony of Magellanic penguins in the world. Punta Tombo is a narrow and stony strip of land penetrating some 3 ½ kilometers into the ocean; its ample beaches offer a gentle slope where penguins can easily build their nests. In the company of our expert guide we have unique opportunity of becoming part of a penguin community, by walking among them, observing their activity, learning how they build their nests and raise their young among the bushes, and from a slightly greater distance, admire their swimming proficiency. In the afternoon we return to Puerto Madryn where we will check in to our hotel and rest for the evening. (B)

DAY 4 Full day to visit Peninsula Valdes

Today we have a full day to explore the Valdes Peninsula. The Peninsula Valdes was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 for the conservation of marine mammals, and gives visitors one of the best opportunities to observe sea life both on and offshore. We will have the opportunity to watch sea lions, Magellanic penguins, and southern elephant seals. We also may have the possibility of spotting orcas and southern right whales as well as a variety of dolphins, dusky, long-finned pilot, Commerson and Peale. Overnight Puerto Madryn. (BLD)

DAY 5 Fly to Calafate - Drive to Chalten

This morning we have an early flight southward to Calafate. We are met on arrival and travel by private vehicle for 4 hours across the vast Argentine pampas to Chalten, a village in the heart of Los Glaciares National Park. We will make our base here and spend the next few days doing day hikes in the Los Glaciares National Park. This is a long day; however our journeys end is rewarded with the spectacular granite peaks of Fitz Roy looming above our lodge, and the long summer nights which allow us to enjoy our first few hours on the edge of the Patagonian wilderness. (BD).

DAY 6-7 Los Glaciares National Park

From here, we make day hikes with options before us including Laguna Torre and the base of Cerro Torre or Fitzroy Base Camp. The valleys and mountains before us are all very individual in their beauty and we aim to contrast these views during our visit as well as appreciating the birdlife and flora. (BLD)

DAY 8 Drive to Puerto Natales

Today is a long day driving as we drive across the vast Argentine steppes to the Chilean Patagonia. Our stop tonight is at the fishing village of Puerto Natales situated on the Ultima Esperanza Fiord. (B)

DAY 9 Boat to Torres del Paine National Park via Balmaceda Glacier

A spectacular day cruising to the head of the Fjord to see glaciers tumbling down from the mountains, seals and abundant bird life. We continue on to the National Park by Zodiac. We skirt glacial blue lakes and pass herds of guanaco and rhea as we approach the towering peaks. The Horns of Paine are right before us, as is Paine Grande, the largest of this range. Our day ends at Refugio Tyndall, near to the zodiac arrival point on the Rio Serrano. There are superb views of the Paine Massif from this Refugio. (BD)

DAY 10 Hike to Refugio Grey

We transfer after breakfast to Pudeto and take a catamaran across the lake to Pehoe and the beginning of our "W" hike. On arrival we will meet our porters for the next couple of days walking. This morning is a 4 hour hike to view the awesome Grey Glacier and the snowy mountains beyond. We spend a night at the beachside Refugio Grey. (BLD)

DAY 11 Trek to Refugio Pehoe

It is worth walking to the Mirador for excellent morning views of the Grey Glacier before breakfast. Today we return on the same trail to Refugio Pehoe, past mountain lakes edged with wildflowers and stunning views down to the larger lakes below. Walk approx 4 hours. (BLD)

DAY 12 Hike to Refugio Los Cuernos

Today's hike can be relatively easy or more difficult depending on group preference. The easy option is to walk the direct route which will take 4-5 hours. However we recommend taking a detour up French Valley where you will experience fantastic views of glaciers, waterfalls and be surrounded by the granite peaks of Paine. The valley is exciting because you hear the thundering of the river, and the creaks and groans of the French Glacier. The views down to the lakes and forests below are also quite amazing. This side trip can be 4-5 hours in addition to the days walk, or you can venture half way up for most of the highlights. The refugio is set above the lake and has great views of the Paine Massif. (BLD)

DAY 13 Hike to Chileno Refugio

Our hike today will take 5-6 hours and follows the scenic Lake Nordenskjöld. A steep ascent takes us to the riverside refugio. Overnight Refugio / camping. (BLD)

DAY 14 Day walk to Towers of Paine

Early this morning we ascend the Rio Ascencio to the base of the towers of Paine to hopefully glimpse the towers as the sun hits them, changing them from grey to a vivid red. This will be a 3 hour return trek with some steep sections. We return to the refugio for breakfast and continue down to Refugio las Torres, effectively completing the "W" trek. Overnight Refugio / camping. (BLD)

DAY 15 Return to Calafate

This morning we take drive back to Calafate. The drive will take around 7 hours and we should arrive in Calafate by 6pm. (B)

DAY 16 Perito Moreno Glacier.

A full day mini-trekking tour to this impressive glacier that advances across Lago Argentino. We depart Calafate by bus and drive to the Perito Moreno Glacier Area. You will take a 15 minute boat ride across the lake before disembarking, hiking through a beautiful forest to the side of the glacier. Here you will be given a short lecture about the geography and how to walk in crampons. You spend about 1-3 hours walking through crevasses and exploring the peculiar ice landscape, before returning to the lake front via the forest, catching glimpses of the bright blue glacier through the trees. You then have the opportunity to drive closer to the glacier and viewing it from the miradores before returning to Calafate. Please remember to visit the supermarket in Calafate the night before for lunch provisions which are unavailable on this excursion. (B)

DAY 17 Trip concludes. Fly to Buenos Aires & connect with flight back to Australia

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to Buenos Aires and connecting flight to Australia. (B)

Depart	Calafate	on AR2892	at	1233
Arrive	Buenos Aires	on AR2892	at	1748

Connect with:

Depart	Buenos Aires	on AR1182	at	2359
Arrive	Sydney	on AR1182	at	0900(+2)

***PLEASE NOTE THIS ITINERARY INVOLVES STAYING IN LODGES and REFUGIOS WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARKS – PLEASE NOTE THAT SLEEPING BAGS ARE REQUIRED FOR REFUGIO ACCOMMODATION (WE CAN ARRANGE THIS FOR YOU IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A SLEEPING BAG). IN HIGH SEASON, WE MAY CAMP INSTEAD OF STAY AT THE REFUGIO IN TORRES DEL PAINE, ALTHOUGH FULL FACILITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE ***

THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

Argentina has a population of over 30 million. Its population grew with the European immigrants who arrived in large numbers at the beginning of the century, mostly from Spain and Italy. It has an area of 2,807,500 square kms and is the second largest country in South America (only Brazil is larger).

Geographically, Argentina is made up of 4 main areas - the Andes, the North, the Pampas, and Patagonia. The Argentine republic is a triangle which rests on the Andes to the west, the tropical jungle in the north and then narrows down to a finishing point beyond the strait that links both Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in Tierra del Fuego.

Its capital, Buenos Aires, has a population of approximately 10 million and is a very sophisticated city. There are parts of Buenos Aires that will remind you of Paris, some of the gardens resemble the severe Victorian English style and to the South, colonial patios evoke the old Lima. Even though it embraces all these styles, Buenos Aires has a personality of its own that captures newcomers totally. You will find the most sophisticated objects and clothes at the boutiques and at night, restaurants and nightclubs stay awake until the early hours of the morning.

CLIMATE

The climate in the north is hot (tropical and sub tropical); in the centre the weather is temperate; in the northern highlands, it's dry while the coldest conditions are experienced in the south, in the mountains of Tierra del Fuego and the Argentine Antarctic sector.

The trekking season lasts all year round. During winter it's possible to trek in the north, in the jungle and desert areas, and during summer in the south - Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego.

Summer - November to March	Buenos Aires	Max 30 - Min 17
	Patagonia	Max 15 - Min 9

TREK PROGRAM

Most of the tracks on which we trek are fairly well defined although on higher trails landslide damage can sometimes make sections of the trail quite difficult. Generally groups like to spread out over the trail, stopping for photographs, resting, bird watching or just ambling and taking time out to absorb the lovely surroundings. The only thing we ask you to remember is not to get too far ahead of, or behind, the main party and to keep your guide within view.

Obviously in the event of very bad weather or adverse conditions, the guide will keep the group as close together as possible.

ACCOMMODATION

In Torres Del Paine National Park (Chile), we stay in Refugio's, or mountain refuges or camping. The refugio's are basic but clean and heated with mostly hot showers and shared bathrooms. Accommodation is in bunks and rooms can sleep up to 6 people. You will need to provide your own sleeping bag (or hire one for US\$5 per night). Meals are provided by the Refugio's, including a lunch box which you carry with you during the day. When camping we will either take our meals in the Refugio or in our dining tent. There are always shower and toilet facilities available. You can purchase drinks including beer and wine, plus snacks from the refugios. In Los Glaciares National Park at Chalten, the accommodation is in comfortable lodges/hosterias on a twin share basis. In Calafate, Buenos Aires and Puerto Natales, accommodation will be on a twin share basis with private facilities.

TRANSPORT IN ARGENTINA & CHILE

Please note that travel in Patagonia requires long bus journeys over un-paved roads, which can at times be uncomfortable. However some of the best walking in the world and the most spectacular mountain scenery is found here making it well worth the effort.

FITNESS

Involves trekking through undulating country for up to eight hours a day at a steady pace. To undertake this level of trek you will need a good level of trekking fitness. As a minimum, we recommend 45 minutes of aerobic type exercise, three to five times a week for three months leading up to your trek.

CONSERVATION

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints", therefore we are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our effect on them.

Disposal of rubbish. We ask that all participants thoughtfully dispose of wrappers and toilet paper by carrying out or placing in the proper receptacle. Batteries should be kept with you and disposed of in your home country. Where possible we recommend that you dispose of litter in the proper receptacle in the country where the packaging was purchased. It is also a good idea to carry a small plastic bag during the day for any refuse, sweet wrappers, tissues etc.

In September 2001, we were the proud recipients of the Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our *Responsible Travel Guidebook*. This detailed guide to responsible & sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website.

HOW TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Please telephone World Expeditions on 1300720000 to reserve your place on the tour. Please note that all reservations are subject to availability at the time of booking. Your booking will be held for seven days pending receipt of a non-refundable \$400 deposit per person and the completed booking form. The deposit is payable by cash, credit card or cheque (made payable to World Expeditions).

PRE DEPARTURE INFORMATION

On receipt of your booking form and deposit you shall receive detailed pre departure information. This will include such details as recommended clothing lists, vaccinations, documentation and all details to help you prepare for the trip ahead.

INSURANCE

Current comprehensive travel insurance is a condition of the acceptance of your booking. The cost of travel insurance does not form part of the advised price and must be paid additionally. We recommend Suresave. Alternatively you may have your own insurance company that you deal with frequently. Travel documentation will not be released to you until evidence of such insurance being in force is provided.

FINAL PAYMENT

Final payment by cash or cheque is due 60 days prior to departure. For further information please refer to the terms and conditions outlined on the back of the booking form.

SINGLE TRAVELLERS

The tour price is based on two people sharing a room. If you are travelling as a single, then we will do our best to twin share you with someone of the same gender. If you require a single room throughout the 'single supplement' charge will apply.

IF YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR NEAREST WORLD EXPEDITIONS OFFICE:

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Important Note:

These trip notes represent the most current information available for this itinerary, and supersede any information detailed in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise.

ENJOY THE ADVENTURE OF BEING ALIVE!

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