

Window Into Patagonia

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need a passport?

Yes, a valid passport is necessary with an expiration date 6 months beyond your trip return date.

Do I need a visa?

There is no visa required for Argentina. Chile does not require a visa from the U.S., but charges \$100 U.S. for entrance into the country. At small border crossings, this fee is occasionally forgotten or waived.

What about money?

It is very easy to use your credit card in Argentina and use ATMs to resupply yourself with cash—the best way to go. A four-digit PIN number is necessary from your credit card company. Oftentimes it is necessary to inform the credit card company of the international, travel destination and for how long you'll be in a country. There are no exorbitant usage fees in Argentina or Chile. There are NO ATMs in Futaluefu', Chile. If you are going to Futaluefu, Chile, bring sufficient U.S. dollars.

What about health issues?

It is easy to travel in Chile and Argentina. You can drink the water and food preparation is done with careful consideration of hygiene. If a medical need arises, there are excellent facilities in Buenos Aires, San Martin de Los Andes, and Salta. If you have a medical issue while in Futaluefu', Chile, there is a small hospital, while small, country clinics staffed by medical personal are in the countryside. Services must be paid in cash, and generally it is very inexpensive. Outside of these services, complex medical attention requires a two-hour trip to Esquel, Argentina.

Please disclose any special physical conditions, asthma issues, allergies, food allergies, or anything pertinent prior to departure. Travel in Chile is through fairly remote countryside. There are small, regional, medical clinics staffed by nurses. In addition, there is a radio network in some remote communities for emergencies. However, we can be at least a day's horseback journey at any given time from any medical assistance.

Will I need any vaccinations?

While there are no vaccinations required in Chile or Argentina, a valid tetanus shot is recommended. The water in both countries is potable. That said, bring along Imodium, a general antibiotic, aspirin, and any other personal medical needs. Please visit the Centers for Disease Control www.cdc.gov for further information.

How physically demanding are trips?

Generally, trips are at a moderate pace which allow guests to enjoy the beauty without becoming exhausted. Each group may include people with varied interests. Oftentimes there are opportunities for extra activities for a more physically challenged trip. Previous horseback or rafting experience is unnecessary. Trips can be tailored to fit your desired level of physical activity—from studying Spanish and living with a family, to 7-day horseback camping expeditions with the Mapuche Indians, or luxurious wine tours in the Andes. Much more than important than physical ability is a positive attitude and openness to accept and embrace the different cultures you will experience.

What about altitude?

Altitude can be a factor when hiking and climbing in the Andes. However, the altitude where we travel is generally less than 4,000 feet above sea level and does not pose a problem for the average person. There are exceptions if traveling or hiking in the northern regions of Salta, or Lanin National park.

Is there a group minimum?

There are no group minimum numbers. However, guiding fees will be adjusted based on client numbers, complicated logistics, and time in the country. My guiding fees are extremely reasonable and vary per group and destination. For quotes on specific custom journeys please contact Jill Lucas.

Are children allowed?

Yes, children are welcome on trips as long as they are physically capable of riding horses, hiking, and are able to adjust to an unfamiliar diet.

Do I need to speak Spanish?

Spanish is the primary language spoken in every South American country except Brazil. Many people speak English in Buenos Aires and Santiago, however, when traveling in the countryside few people will speak English. On most occasions I will be with you to help translate, however, to connect with the people it's polite to be able to express simple phrases in Spanish.

When is the best time to travel?

December through March is an excellent time to experience Patagonia, Chile. The comfortable travel season is extended in Patagonia, Argentina, to include November through April. Salta is a subtropical climate that can be experienced any time of the year.

Is it possible to travel to Chile and Salta in the same trip?

Yes! Both destinations have a unique culture, geography, topography and climate. Due to long distances, a trip combining both locations is best done over a two-week period.

What type of communication methods will be available?

Please leave word with a family member where you will be. Also, please provide contact information in case of an emergency. There are internet cafés everywhere in Argentina. While in Futalufu, Chile, there is intermittent internet service with several computers available.

Will I need voltage adapters?

Voltage is 220 in Chile and Argentina. Separate adapters are needed for each country if traveling with electronic equipment. Adapters and plugs may be purchased at any travel store or online at www.travelsmith.com.

What are the best options for flights to Argentina and Chile?

A U.S. departure from Miami to Buenos Aires using Aerolineas Argentina (www.aerolineas.com) is the best option for arriving in Argentina early the following morning. Further air travel within Argentina requires taxi transport between the international airport Buenos Aires Ministro Pistarini (EZE) and the domestic airport, Jorge Newberry (AEP). Schedule connecting flights at least three hours after arrival to process through customs, immigration, collect luggage, and transfer to Jorge Newberry. If traveling to Esquel, Argentina (EQS) and on to Futalufu, Chile, flights depart only three days per week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday at approximately 11:00 a.m. If traveling to San Martin de Los Andes and on to the estancia, flights depart to Chapelco (CPC) daily at approximately 12:00. There are four daily flights to Salta, Argentina (SLA).

Can I rent a vehicle?

Vehicle rental is approximately \$75 per day with an expensive drop fee if it is not returned to the original city. If renting a vehicle in Argentina and traveling on to Chile, be sure to explain this to the rental agency. Certain procedures and documents must be applied for and accompany you while crossing the border.

What about border crossings?

If traveling on to Futalufu, Chile from Esquel, Argentina, the customs office for both countries closes at 8:00 p.m. Occasionally during the summer months the customs office will remain open until 10:00 p.m. I can arrange transportation from Esquel to the border and the corresponding transportation from the border to Futalufu. For a reasonable charge, you'll be able to cross the border within two hours of arrival at the airport in Argentina.