

Patagonia O Circuit

Expedition Information Pack

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Why Choose Earth's Edge?

Our mission is to support you in exploring our incredible world and experiencing life-changing adventures in the safest way possible. We are passionate about protecting the planet and improving the lives of those we meet along the way.

- We are a **100% Irish-owned small business**. Our founder, James McManus, is passionate about adventure travel, and his extensive experience is an invaluable source of support for our office team in our day-to-day operations.
- Our **exceptional expedition leaders** are fully trained in wilderness first aid and true experts in their region. They are passionate about sharing their first-hand knowledge of the local culture, history, and geography, while ensuring that we consistently deliver unforgettable experiences.
- We keep **group sizes small** to minimise our environmental impact and to foster a strong group dynamic. Whether you're travelling solo, or with friends or family, our small group sizes provide the perfect opportunity to bond over shared experiences and create lasting friendships.
- We run a **pre-departure training weekend** two months prior to each expedition. It includes a detailed expedition brief, two training hikes, and expert advice from an experienced mountain guide. It's also a great opportunity to meet your fellow adventurers!
- We're here to **support you every step of the way**. Our friendly office team is available to answer any questions you have by phone, email, or video consultation. Each team member participates in an expedition every year, ensuring they can share up-to-date advice and insights drawn from their own firsthand experiences.
- Booking an Earth's Edge expedition entitles you to a discount from our **equipment partners** at [Great Outdoors](#), to ensure that you get the best gear for your expedition.

- **Responsible travel** is at the core of what we do at Earth's Edge. As a [certified B Corp](#) company, we are committed to using our business as a force for good - to support our communities both locally and worldwide, as well as creating more environmental awareness.

We run a number of **environmental programmes and community projects**, including:

- A [yearly scholarship](#) that gives porters the opportunity to become guides on Kilimanjaro
- We plant 8 trees in Nepal for every person who travels with us in partnership with [Eden: People + Planet](#)
- Our clients in Nepal help to remove waste from Sagarmatha National Park through the [Carry Me Back Program](#)
- We collect [clothing and gear donations](#) for our amazing porters on Kilimanjaro
- We are striving to increase the number of [female staff](#) across our expeditions

To read more about our sustainability practices, please visit our [responsible travel page](#).

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Description & Detailed Itinerary

Our **11-day Patagonia "O Circuit" Trek** takes you on a complete circumnavigation of the Paine Massif, a rugged crown of **granite spires, glaciers, and turquoise lakes** that form the heart of **Torres del Paine National Park**. This legendary route is one of the world's great wilderness treks, offering **true immersion** into Patagonia's untamed landscapes and elemental beauty.

Starting from the **lively gateway town of Puerto Natales**, our journey begins along the gentle curves of the Paine River before venturing deep into the remote northern valleys of the park. Over **9 days**, we hike through **ancient lenga and coigüe forests**, cross **suspension bridges** and **glacier-fed rivers**, and wake each morning to the **vast silence of Patagonia**. Each day reveals a new environment, from the **rolling grasslands of the Serón sector** to the **iceberg-dotted shores of Grey Lake**, and from the **mossy forests below Glacier Los Perros** to the **exposed alpine ridge of the John Gardner Pass** (1,200m), the highest point on the circuit.

Crossing the John Gardner Pass is a defining moment of the expedition, giving us the first glimpse of the immense **Southern Patagonian Ice Field**, stretching like a frozen ocean to the horizon. As we descend, we walk parallel to the fractured face of Glacier Grey, one of the park's most spectacular sights. The second half of the circuit leads us south past the turquoise waters of **Lake Pehoé**, through the sculpted **French Valley**, and beneath the towering **Cuernos del Paine**, where hanging glaciers and granite peaks dominate the skyline. The final ascent to the base of the Torres del Paine (the park's namesake towers) provides a fitting and unforgettable conclusion to our adventure.

Accommodation throughout the trek is a mix of **fully serviced campsites** in spectacular wilderness settings and **comfortable hotel lodgings** in Puerto Natales before and after the expedition.

Although it is a trek rather than a climb, the O Circuit is a challenging journey, with long hiking days, varied terrain, and rapidly changing weather conditions that are typical of Patagonia. For those with a good level of fitness and a love of wild places, it offers **one of the most rewarding trekking experiences on Earth**, a complete immersion in the raw, wind-sculpted landscapes that have captured the imagination of explorers for generations.

Please Note: *This itinerary is subject to change due to the unpredictable nature of adventure travel. Adjustments may be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances.*

Day 1: Arrive in Puerto Natales

Meet your expedition leader at your hotel in Puerto Natales for a full expedition briefing to ensure we're prepared for the journey ahead. Take the rest of the day to explore, relax and make final preparations. Overnight hotel.

Day 2: Trek Along the Paine River - Trek Las Torres to Serón, 6hrs

After breakfast, a private transfer takes us to Torres del Paine National Park (Las Torres Sector). After registering, we begin our trek with a gentle 4-hour hike following the Paine River. The trail winds across open terrain with striking views of Laguna Azul and the wind-carved cliffs of the Encantado Valley. As we approach Camp Serón, once a traditional post for local baqueanos (Patagonian cowboys), the vastness of the landscape opens before us. We settle into camp for dinner and fall asleep beneath the immense, star-filled southern sky. Overnight camp.

Day 3: Enjoy Glacier Dickson and Lake Paine - Trek Seron to Dickson, 6hrs

Today's journey takes us deeper into the northern wilderness of the park as we hike from Serón to Dickson. The day begins with a gradual ascent through open hillsides, passing a small lagoon before reaching a stunning lookout over Lake Paine. From here, sweeping views stretch across the mountains dividing Chile and Argentina, framed by the jagged peaks of the northern Paine Massif. The trail descends through marshland, crossing wooden boardwalks, before winding through ancient moraine valleys sculpted by glaciers long ago. In the distance, we catch our first glimpse of the immense glacier tongue flowing from the Southern Patagonian Ice Field. We arrive at Camp Dickson, beautifully set beside the lake, where we enjoy dinner surrounded by towering peaks and the sound of glacial meltwater nearby. Overnight camp.

Day 4: Guided Day Hike from Dickson, 4/8hrs

Today we enjoy a spectacular day hike from Camp Dickson, carrying only light day-packs as we explore one of the park's most remote and beautiful corners. The trail winds through dense forests, following the shoreline of Lake Dickson beneath towering peaks. As we move deeper into the valley, the landscape opens to reveal the tranquil Laguna Quemada, a perfect spot to

pause for lunch amid the silence of the wilderness. Along the way, our expedition leader shares insights into the region's unique glacial history, flora, and fauna, enriching our understanding of this extraordinary ecosystem. The highlight of the day is an up-close view of the immense Dickson Glacier, its icy face descending dramatically from the Southern Patagonian Ice Field. Depending on the weather and group interest, those who wish may continue along an old baqueano trail toward the remote border post shared with Argentina, where local officers often greet trekkers for a friendly chat. Overnight camp.

Day 5: Trek Through an Ancient Lenga & Coigue Forest - Trek Dickson to Perros, 4.5hrs

After breakfast, we continue our journey along the circuit, hiking deeper into one of the park's most remote and pristine valleys. The trail leads us through an ancient forest of lenga and coigüe trees, whose roots have anchored this landscape since the glaciers first receded. The air here is cool and still, filled with the scent of damp earth and moss. As we gain gentle elevation, the forest thins and gives way to open terrain, revealing the dramatic moraine at the base of Glacier Los Perros, a striking wall of ice descending from the mountains above. We arrive at Camp Perros, beautifully situated beneath the glacier, and settle in for the evening surrounded by the raw power of Patagonia's wilderness. Overnight camp.

Day 6: Cross the John Gardner Pass - Trek Perros to Grey, 11hrs

We start the day with a steady climb toward the highest point of the circuit, the John Gardner Pass (1,200m). As the trees thin, the landscape opens to rugged slopes with views of Glaciar Amistad and Cerro Blanco Sur. Reaching the pass, we're rewarded with one of Patagonia's most spectacular sights, the immense sweep of Glacier Grey and the Southern Patagonian Ice Field stretching to the horizon. We then descend toward Campamento Paso for a short rest before continuing along the trail with views of Lake Grey and the glacier below. Several suspension bridge crossings bring us to Camp Grey, where a hot meal and well-earned rest await. Overnight camp.

Day 7: Hike to Lake Pehoe - Trek Grey to Paine Grande, 4hrs

We begin the day with a relaxed morning at Refugio Grey, with time to rest and enjoy the stunning surroundings. For those who wish, there's the opportunity to join an **optional ice hike or kayaking excursion on Glacier Grey** (see the [Add-Ons section](#) for more information).

Those not taking part in the optional activities can enjoy a slower start to the day or explore one of the shorter nearby trails leading to glacier lookout points, offering spectacular views without the need for a long hike.

In the early afternoon, we depart for Paine Grande, following a scenic 11 km trail along the shores of Lake Grey with magnificent views of Glacier Grey and the Paine Massif reflected in the turquoise water. Our route ends at the beautifully situated Camp Paine Grande, beside the vivid blue waters of Lake Pehoe. Overnight camp.

Day 8: Explore the French Valley - Trek Paine Grande to Cuernos, 7hrs

Today's route leads us into the heart of the French Valley, one of Torres del Paine's most

celebrated landscapes. After hiking to Campamento Italiano, we leave our heavy packs behind and continue with daypacks into the valley itself. The trail climbs through forest and across moraines to reveal a spectacular natural amphitheatre of hanging glaciers and towering peaks. After soaking in the views, we retrace our steps to collect our packs and continue on to Camp Cuernos (or Camp Frances, depending on availability), nestled between mountains and lake. Overnight camp.

Day 9: Trek Along Lake Nordenskjöld - Los Cuernos to Torres Central, 4.5hrs

We begin the day hiking along the southern shore of Lake Nordenskjöld, with sweeping views of the Cuernos del Paine rising sharply above us. The terrain undulates gently as we make our way toward Camp Central, passing glacial streams and windswept ridges. The setting sun paints the peaks gold as we arrive at camp, where we rest and prepare for the final ascent to the park's famous towers tomorrow. Overnight camp.

Day 10: Trek to the famous Towers, Return to Puerto Natales, 8hrs

Our final trek is one of the most memorable of the journey. We ascend through the Asencio Valley, climbing steadily through forest and rocky moraine to reach the iconic viewpoint beneath the Torres del Paine, to see the three soaring granite spires reflected in a glacial lake below. After taking time to celebrate our achievement, we descend to Camp Central, then take a shuttle to the park entrance and connect with the bus to Puerto Natales. After arriving back in town and having a shower, we regroup at a nearby restaurant for our celebratory farewell dinner, the perfect way to toast an unforgettable Patagonian adventure! Overnight hotel.

Day 11: Departure

Depending on your onward plans, check out and transfer to the airport for your return flights, or continue your travels in Chile.

Expedition Costs

Total Cost: €4,999

- A **deposit** of EUR/USD/GBP 399 is taken at the time of booking to secure your spot
- A **part-payment** of EUR/USD/GBP 1,000 is due six months prior to departure
- The **final balance** can be paid in instalments, but is due 90 days prior to departure

For up-to-date prices in GBP and USD, based on today's exchange rate, please visit our website.

Flights

Return flights from Dublin to Punta Arenas/Puerto Natales typically range from €1,400 - €1,900, depending on season and airline. We'll share recommended routes and timings approximately 10 months pre-departure.

Please consult us before booking your flights to ensure that you arrive in time for the expedition briefing on the first day. It's essential that you do not miss this meeting.

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Expedition Inclusions & Exclusions

Expedition Costs Include:

- Training Weekend
- Experienced expedition leader
- All accommodation based on twin sharing in hotels in Puerto Natales and tents on the trail
- All meals and drinking water (except in Puerto Natales where accommodation is on B&B)
- Tents, a sleeping mat, and a sleeping bag while camping
- All group transport throughout the expedition
- Entrance fee and permits for Torres del Paine National Park
- A celebratory dinner at the end of the expedition
- An Earth's Edge buff for all participants

Expedition Costs Exclude:

- International Flights
- Training Weekend accommodation and food
- Personal travel insurance
- Medical vaccinations
- Tourist visas
- Personal equipment
- Your tent, sleeping bag and sleeping mat will be provided at each camp. You will be required to carry your personal items unless you opt to pay for a porter
- Tips
- Expenses of a personal nature, such as drinks during lunch and dinner
- Any costs arising out of unforeseen circumstances which affect the itinerary, such as bad weather, landslides, road conditions, and any other circumstances beyond our control

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Spending Money & Tipping

Spending Money

We recommend that you put aside **USD300** in spending money for this trip. This includes the **recommended tip amount of USD100 per person**. We suggest that you exchange a small amount of your spending money to the local currency, Chilean Pesos (CLP), either at the airport or upon arrival in Chile, for purchasing small items like snacks on the trail or before/after your trek. There are ATMs available in Puerto Natales where you can withdraw cash using a credit/debit card.

Please note that U.S. dollar bills must be crisp and new as old, marked, or worn notes are often not accepted for exchange.

Whilst on the trail, hot showers are available at most camps for a small fee of approximately USD3, except at Camp Perros where no showers are available. WiFi is also available at some camps for a fee of approximately USD5–10 per hour, though connectivity is limited and often unreliable. Please note that many of the refugios accept credit/debit cards.

Personal porters are available to hire to carry up to 15kg of personal equipment. At the time of writing, the cost is approximately USD180 per day.

Tipping

Our recommended tip amount is USD100 per person. Please give your tip to the Earth's Edge Expedition Leader and they will distribute the tip among all of our Earth's Edge team in Chile. The recommended spending amount above includes the tip for the Earth's Edge Team.

Any gratuity is entirely at your discretion and based on your experience, level of satisfaction, and personal circumstances.

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Optional Add-Ons

On the morning of Day 7, while staying at Refugio & Camping Grey, there are two optional excursions you can take:

- **Ice Hike on Glacier Grey**

Part of the Southern Patagonian Ice Field, Glacier Grey spans 27km in length and 6km in width, making it one of the region's most impressive glaciers. From Refugio Grey, we make our way to Bigfoot Base Camp, where we take a short boat ride to Islatak Island and hike for about an hour across the glacial moraine to reach the ice. After gearing up with your crampons, ice axe, helmet, and harness, you'll enjoy an unforgettable 2.5-hour guided walk on the glacier, exploring crevasses, lagoons, and tunnels of brilliant blue ice!

Difficulty: Suitable for beginners with good fitness

Age Restriction: 16–65 years old

Price: €300

- **Kayak Excursion at Glacier Grey**

Fed by the mighty Glacier Grey, Lake Grey stretches 17km long and 4km wide, surrounded by the dramatic peaks of Paine Grande and the Olguín Range. From Bigfoot Base Camp, we embark on a 3-hour kayaking adventure amongst towering icebergs and along the glacier's eastern face. We paddle through this breathtaking landscape to the foot of the ice wall, where you'll pause to enjoy

a hot drink and snack while taking in the panoramic views. Weather permitting, there may even be a short visit to Nunatak Island before returning to base camp.

Difficulty: Moderate (Suitable for participants in good physical condition with basic paddling ability. The activity involves approximately 3 hours of continuous paddling in cold, open water, and may include some wind or wave conditions typical of Patagonia.)

Age Restriction: 16–65 years old

Price: €250

Please note that these add ons are subject to availability and must be booked and paid for a minimum of one month prior to the expedition date.

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Training Weekends

Before every expedition, we organise a Training Weekend where you'll have the chance to meet your fellow adventurers! Led by experienced guides, these weekends include a comprehensive expedition briefing, two training hikes, and invaluable advice covering everything from equipment to weather conditions. Not only are these events educational, they're also enjoyable, set against the breathtaking backdrop of Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. Please note that food and accommodation for this weekend is not included.

Safety Standards

At Earth's Edge, your safety is our top priority. This expedition is led by an experienced leader familiar with the locations of local medical facilities and hospitals. While our leader carries a comprehensive first aid kit, we ask all participants to bring a basic first aid kit as outlined in the equipment list. Always follow the guidance of your expedition leader to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

We recommend participants research local laws and customs before travelling to Chile. Up-to-date travel advice is available on the [DFA website](#).

On expeditions, the most common cause of illness is gastrointestinal upset, often caused by poor personal hygiene. The good news is that it is easily avoided by practising the following:

- Always **wash your hands** and apply **hand sanitiser** after going to the toilet and before touching food
- Always **use drinking water** to brush your teeth and avoid ingesting water while showering or washing your face

- Maintain a **healthy diet** and consider taking **multivitamins and probiotics** for one month before and during the expedition to help your body adjust to changes in your diet and keep you healthy throughout the expedition
- **Drinking water** is provided by Earth's Edge on each day of the trek. This water is boiled and cooled. You may also wish to bring your own water treatment tablets. If you wish to change the flavour of the water, it is recommended to use electrolyte tablets/sachets or add a concentrated flavour drink

To read more about our safety standards please visit our [safety page](#).

Special Offers

- **Return Customer Offer:** If you have travelled with us before, please visit our [return customer](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to
- **Refer a Friend Offer:** If you have a friend who wants to travel with us, please visit our [refer a friend](#) page for details on our referral programme
- **Group Discounts:** If you are booking as part of a group, please visit our [group discounts](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to
- **Couples Offer:** If you are booking with a friend or partner, please visit our [couples offer](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to

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Book Your Trip Consultation

You can now schedule a free trip consultation with a member of the Earth's Edge team! We're happy to talk you through the itinerary, preparation and training, equipment, and anything else you'd like to know. Book your [consultation here](#).

Expedition FAQ:

Do you have a question that wasn't answered in this information pack? If so, please visit our [FAQ page](#) for a full list of frequently asked questions. If you can't find your answer there, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

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