

«Wild and boundless Patagonia expands into the horizon»

P a t a g o n i a E x p e r i e n c e

From glaciers to granite towers

Dates: Friday November 23 - Friday December 14, 2012 (21 days)

Guide: Thomas Dünsser qualified mountain-guide IVBV



Just before getting to El Chaltén: The Torre and Fitz Roy Group, photo: Martin Stettler

A trip through Patagonia is like a journey through no man's land. Endless brown-grey plains, only sparsely covered by tufts of grass and few bushes as far as the eye can see.

And yet this incredible emptiness which seems to represent a never-kept promise of freedom and infinity moves us deeply.



Cuernos Group in Torres del Paine National Park, Chile, photo: Martin Stettler

PATAGONIA

Patagonia is a sparsely populated region far away from the political centres of the countries it is part of (Chile and Argentina). Due to this vastness tolerance and readiness to help are highly valued by the population. On our trip we'll get to know the locals as truly amiable people.

TREKKINGS

On our two trekkings we rove through some of the most beautiful landscapes of South America. In the smallest possible space we encounter incredible contrasts and a fantastic variety: vertical granite towers and pinnacles, huge glacial areas, primeval forests, semi-deserts, turquoise lakes...

TORRES DEL PAINE

Torres del Paine National Park is situated in the south of Chile, about 140 km north of the city of Puerto Natales.

The area of the park comprises 2420 km² and is dominated by mountains as high as 3000 m, glaciers, fiords and big lakes.

The Torres del Paine are the landmark of the National Park. They are three huge granite pinnacles between 2600 and 2850 m. The highest mountain in the National Park is Paine Grande 3050 m.

Large areas of the National Park are glaciated. The best-known glacier is Grey Glacier calving into Lago Grey.



Exploring Los Glaciares NP with the Fitz Roy Group in the background, photo: Martin Stettler

HUEMUL-TREK

With only few people doing this trek it is still unspoilt. The starting point is El Chaltèn, a small village founded as late as 1985, near the Chilean border.

Here we explore the National Park of Los Glaciares in the Argentinian part of Patagonia. It comprises an area of about 6000 km². Since 1981 it has been registered as a natural world heritage site by UNESCO.

In the northern part the park is dominated by the granite giants of Cerro Torre and Fitz Roy.

EXPERIENCING AND DISCOVERING

With this trip we would like to help you gain a number of varied impressions, experiences, contacts and adventures. We have put together our programme from this point of view and chosen our local partners and assistants accordingly.

We will hike at a leisurely pace. There will be sufficient time to take in the wonderful surroundings, be absorbed in our own thoughts or communicate with each other. We will do our utmost to help you experience Patagonia with all your senses.

RELAXING AND ENJOYING

Our trip offers an even balance between physical exertion and relaxation.

After a strenuous day of travelling with lots of visual impressions we rest at a



Fitz Roy at dawn, photo Martin Stettler

quiet and comfortable hotel or a friendly hostel, have a refreshing shower and recall an eventful day with a fine cup of tea.

On our trekkings we will be spoilt by a group of helpers accompanying us all the way.

Our kitchen-team provides us with plenty of drinks as well as nourishing and savoury dishes.

We have got time to enjoy the wonderful landscape, to recover and look after ourselves, to recall unforgettable days, to be together with our companions or local helpers. As soon as it gets cool we can retire to our common tent where we also have our meals.

We sleep in tents for two people (on request for single use).

We provide really comfortable high-quality mats and warm sleeping bags which will allow a well-deserved and restful sleep.

PROGRAMME

(Subject to alternation)

Day 1: Flight to Santiago

Individual flight to Santiago.



Day 2: Santiago

Arrival in Santiago, sightseeing

Day 3: Puerto Natales

Domestic flight Santiago – Punta Arenas, drive to Puerto Natales. Overnight stay in hotel. 4-5 hours' drive.

Day 4: Hosteria Mirador del Paine

After a free morning we cross the vast plains of the Patagonian Pampas in an easy two hours' drive, and then along Lago Sarmiento to the wonderfully situated Estancia Hosteria Mirador del Paine.

Day 5: Laguna Verde – Paine Park Administration

We walk to the entrance of the Park along various lagoons on easy paths with a view of the whole Paine Group. From here a Katamaran takes us to the luxuriously furnished Paine Grande Lodge. Hiking time 3-4 hours, descent 300m.

Day 6: Hike to Grey Glacier

On moraines along Lago Grey we hike to Grey Glacier which extends as far as the lake. Fantastic lookout point. Overnight stay at Paine Grande Lodge. Hiking time to Grey Glacier and back about 6-7 hours, 1200m up and down.

Day 7: Campamento Italiano, Mirador Valle Frances

Today we start for our southern tour round the entire Paine Group. Again and again we have breathtaking views of the bright granite colosses with pitchblack basalt peaks. Together with the turquoise lagoons, the green forests and the bright red firebush this is a magnificent scenery ! The ascent through the Valle Frances, finally leading up a steep slope full of rubble, is certainly worthwhile. Here we have a fantastic view of the entire lagoon landscape towards the southern tip of South America. Overnight stay in the pleasant Cuernos Hut, dormitory with mattresses. Hiking time about 6-7 hours, about 400m up to the Mirador.

Day 8: Albergue de las Torres

Through an equally beautiful scenery we continue at a leisurely pace to the southeastern end of the Paine Group. Overnight stay at the Albergue de las Torres. Hiking time about 3-4 hours.

Day 9: Mirador de las Torres

Ascent with varying scenery to the best-known towers of the Paine Group, Torre Central and Torre Norte. In the last part of the ascent uneven footpaths lead across a steep rubble slope up to the lagoon. Here we are rewarded with a magnificent

view: the granite pinnacles pointing skywards like arrows.

Overnight stay at the Albergue de las Torres. Hiking time 6-7 hours, 800m ascent and descent.

Day 10: El Calafate, Argentina.

Drive to El Calafate via Cerro Castillo / Cancha Carrera. Drive on generally sealed roads to Argentina. 200km, about 4 hours' drive. Overnight stay at the Michelangelo Hotel.

Day 11: Perito Moreno Glacier

The absolute MUST of every trip to Patagonia ! We get there by bus, and then a boat takes us quite near the 30m high edge of the glacier. Afterwards we have the chance to explore from close up the western tip of the glacier along 3km of raised footpaths. A real paradise for every photographer ! Overnight stay at the Michelangelo Hotel. About 3 hours' drive.

Day 12: El Chaltèn

Drive to El Chaltèn. The roads are now sealed, in former times it was an adventurous trip taking up double the time. Here we literally experience the legendary vast expanse of the Patagonian Pampas. Camping. A 220km drive on sealed roads, about 3 hours.

Day 13: Laguna de los Tres

The moment we start for Vuelta Huemul a first highlight is waiting for us. We follow a steep zigzag path to the lookout point of Fitz Roy, about 400 m up. On the way we visit the mountaineers' camp in the sheltering forests at the foot of the mountain. Then we hike along the Lagunas Madre and Hija to Thorwood Camp, the starting-point for various routes to climb Cerro Torre. Camping . Hiking time 7-8 hours, 400m ascent and 600m descent.

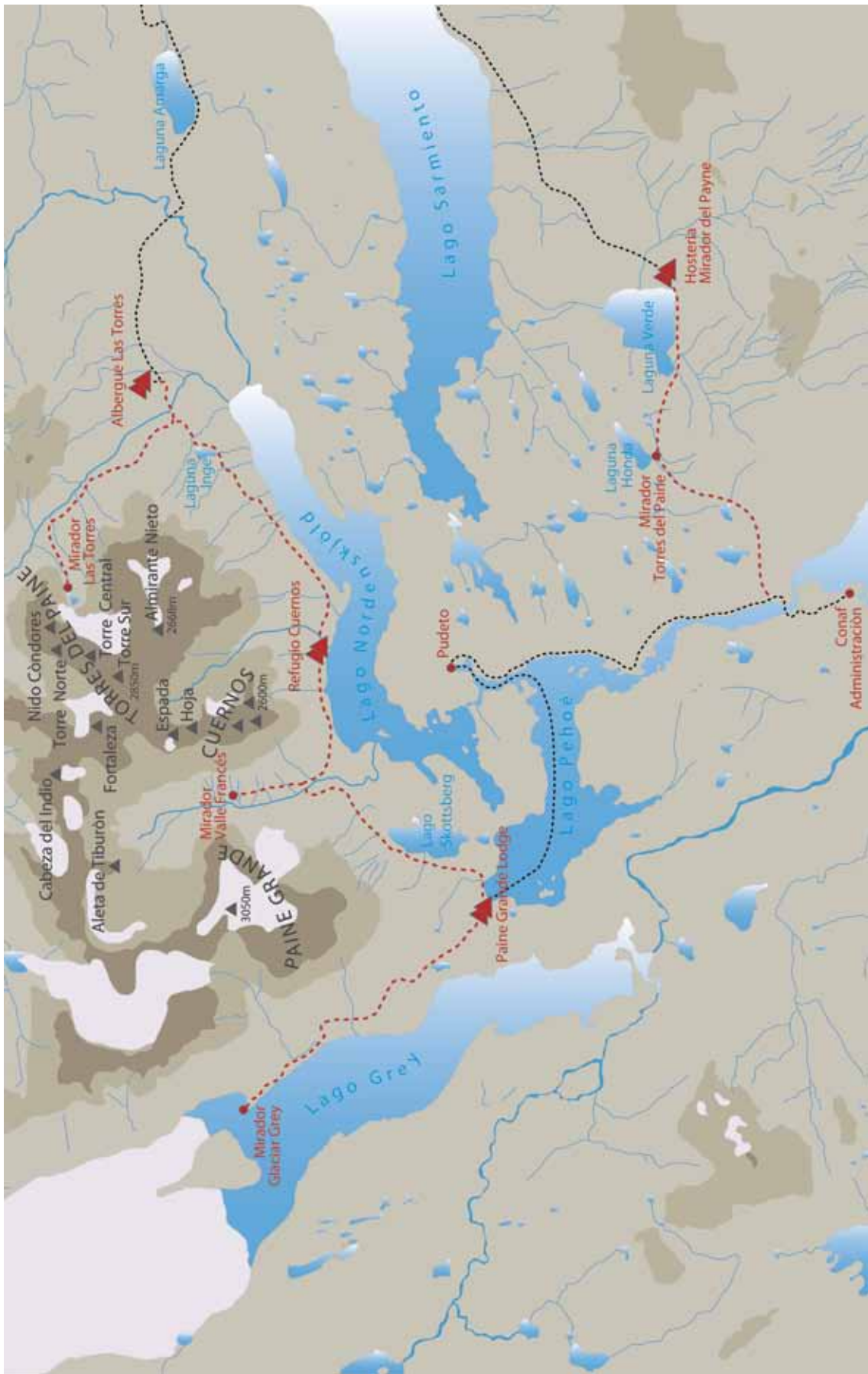
Day 14: Glaciar Cerro Torre

Today's destination is Cerro Torre Glacier. We traverse a river with the help of a tyrolienne. After that the path ascends slightly, then we descend across rubble before we can set foot on the glacier. Here we are as close as we can get to the most difficult mountain in the world !

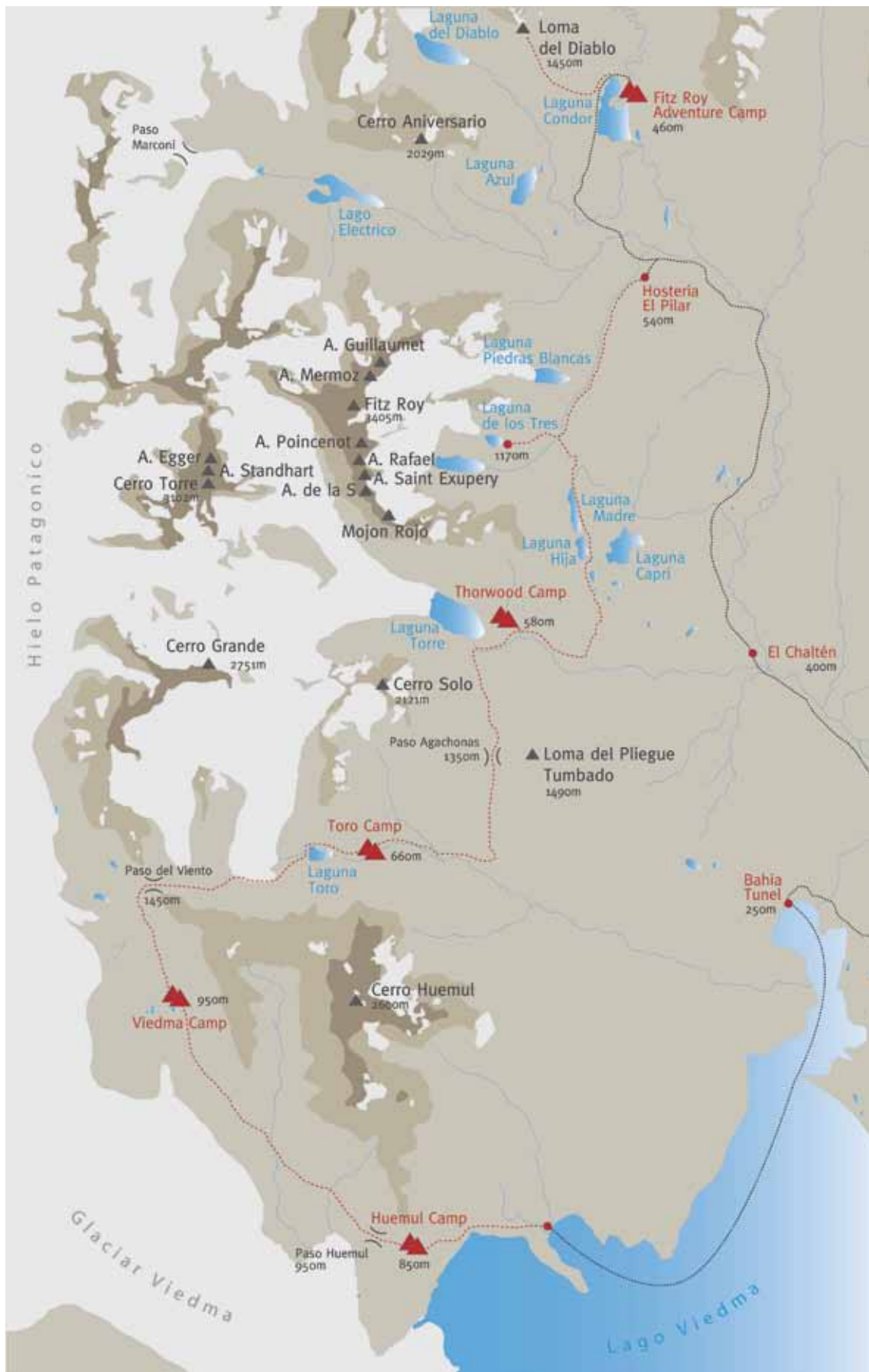
Camping at Thorwood Camp. Hiking time about 3 hours, 300m altitude to Glaciar Cerro Torre, about 150m return.

Day 15; Paso Agachonas

After traversing the river with the help of a tyrolienne we climb across loose rubble to Paso (Pass) de las Agachonas. After descending to Rio Tunel we camp at Campamento del Toro. Hiking time about 6 hours, 700m both up and down.



Torres del Paine - Trekking map



Los Glaciares Nationalpark - Trekking map (El Chaltén - Fitz Roy & Cerro Torre)



Tyrolienne at Laguna Verde, photo: Martin Stettler

Day 16: Paso del Viento

Today we cross a river once again, either on foot or with the help of a tyrolienne depending on low or high water. Following tracks along the glacier we reach the Paso del Viento in about 4 hours. As the name suggests strong winds must be expected most of the time. From the pass we gaze at the endless Patagonian inland ice, with its 13.000 km² surface the world's third biggest mass of ice. Camping at small lagoons close to the Glaciologists' Hut. Hiking time about 6 hours, 800m ascent and 500m descent.

Day 17: Paso Huemul

We hike round Cerro Huemul and traverse Huemul Pass. From the camp we enjoy a splendid view of the vast Viedma Glacier and the gigantic Viedma Lake. If we are lucky we can watch condors nesting nearby. Camping in the Campamento Huemul. Hiking time about 5-6 hours., 300m ascent and descent each.

Day 18: Lago Viedma – El Chaltèn

Today we hike steep down through dense bush to Lago Viedma. On the beach we have our lunch break right in front of swimming icebergs. We return to El Chaltèn by boat and by bus. Overnight stay at a hotel. Hiking time about 3 hours.

Day 19: Spare day, possibly Loma del Diablo (lookout point)

This ascent offers a new magnificent view of the eastern and northern side of



View from Camp Huemul of Lago Viedma and Viedma Glacier, photo: Martin Stettler

Fitz Roy. For the last time we enjoy the overwhelming quiet up in the Patagonian mountains. Camping. Hiking time 4 hours, ascent and descent 700m each.

Day 20: El Calafate – Buenos Aires

By private bus to El Calafate in about 3 hours, domestic flight El Calafate – Buenos Aires. Overnight stay at a hotel

Day 21: Buenos Aires

Sightseeing and farewell dinner. Nightcap in a legendary Tango dance hall..

Day 22: Return flight

Scheduled flight from Buenos Aires

REQUIREMENTS

Fitness level

Most of the time we hike on partly stony, but well trodden paths. The daily hikes vary between 4 and 7 hours. Our baggage is transported by mules and locals. Most of the time we carry a light daypack with the exception of two days in Paine National Park and three days on the Huemul Trek where we also carry a sleeping bag and a mat.



Caminito, La Boca, well-known workers' district in Buenos Aires, photo: Martin Stettler

COMPANIONSHIP

On a journey like this sincere companionship is essential. We expect participants to be tolerant and respectful towards each other, towards our local helpers and the native population.

WEATHER AND TEMPERATURES

Patagonia is well-known for its stormy winds. This, however, only applies to the inner parts of the massifs and their peaks. On our trekking it can also be windy and chilly at times. Every now and again there may be showers and big differences in temperature.

During the day the temperatures are normally about 15° C. The nights are chilly but not freezing.

EQUIPMENT

For our hikes we need the same equipment as for mountain touring in the Alps. We provide special individual equipment such as a down jacket, a comfortable and well-insulating mat as well as a warm sleeping bag.

A full list of equipment is enclosed in the documentation.

FOOD

We usually have full board. In the cities we have our meals in restaurants or in hotels. When on tour we stay and eat in a lodge (or hosteria, albergue). When



Caminito is also the home of the Tango, photo Martin Stettler

trekking we camp out, the team of natives accompanying us provide savoury meals. Because of the different individual preferences each participant is responsible for additional snacks between the meals, shopping locally is sometimes possible.

HEALTH

Individual preparation

For this journey a good state of health is required. We recommend to all participants to do a health check with the family doctor in time for the trip.

LOOKING AFTER PARTICIPANTS

The guide has the necessary knowhow and experience to take care of minor injuries and illnesses. We take a first-aid kit with us put together by a medical doctor according to the latest standards.

GROUP SIZE

At least 8, maximum 12 participants

BOOKING AND DEADLINE

We ask you to register early, if possible by June 30, 2012, using the form enclosed or online www.southamerica-trekking.com

PROGRAMME ALTERATIONS

In spite of minute preparations changes in the programme for this trip cannot be entirely excluded due to unforeseen events. They can be caused by the weather or short-term changes due to legal requirements, political decisions or health problems of participants etc. In such cases we do our best to carry through the programme within the bounds of safety or, if this is not possible, to offer an alternative, equally satisfactory programme.



TINU STETTLER, MOUNTAIN-GUIDE UIAGM, SWITZERLAND

I have been organising mountaineering trips and trekkings in various parts of South America, especially Chile and Argentina, for over 13 years. Thanks to my annual week-long stays, the many acquaintances and language studies at various schools I speak Spanish fluently.

Trip 2012 guided by Thomas Dünsser, mountain guide UIAGM

LOCAL PARTNERS AND HELPERS

For several years I have been working together with the same first-class local agencies. On our trekkings we are accompanied by a local cook and local porters.

COSTS

All travelling costs inclusive from Santiago CHF 6950.-

(Price and programme are subject to alteration)

WHAT WE OFFER

Included in the price:

- Your tour and trekking guide, a qualified Swiss mountain guide
- Domestic flight Santiago-Punta Arenas
- Domestic flight El Calafate-Buenos Aires
- All transfers according to programme
- Overnight accommodation: 7 nights in hotels (double rooms), 4 nights in a lodge or hosteria/albergue in rooms with several beds and shared bathroom, once in a hut (dormitory with mattresses), 7 nights in double tents
- Full board during the whole trip with the exception of alcoholic drinks



Along Lake Grey, photo Martin Stettler

Not included in the price:

- Individual flights to Santiago and back home from Buenos Aires
- Individual travel insurance
- Extra costs due to weather or other conditions beyond our control or to changes in the programme at participants' request
- Extra food
- Alcoholic drinks
- Extra charge for a single room in hotels
- Extra charge for a single room in a lodge/hosteria/albergue
- Extra charge for single use of double tent
- Tips
- Air fare increases when registering after June 30, 2011

CONFIRMATION OF REGISTRATION – DEPOSIT – PAYMENT

Upon receipt of your registration you'll get a written confirmation. After registration a deposit of CHF 1000.- is payable. 30 days before the start of the trip the full amount is payable.

GENERAL CONTRACT AND TRAVEL CONDITIONS (GTC)

We refer to our General Contract and Travel Conditions (GTC) you'll find in the annex.



The „Notro“ (firebush), common in Patagonia, photo: Martin Stettler

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of the journey home. A visa at least for Swiss is not necessary for Chile and Argentina.

VACCINATIONS

There are no regulations as far as vaccinations are concerned. Please check your protection given by vaccination and contact your family doctor or a specialist in tropical diseases. We recommend immunization against polio, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A and B and diphteria.

For recommendations world-wide please contact the Swiss Tropical Institute Tel. 0900 575 131 (Fr.2.69/min.)

INSURANCE

Participants are responsible for sufficient insurance cover. Please check your insurance cover for foreign countries. A cancellation insurance is obligatory. We recommend sufficient insurance for luggage and for breaking off your trip early.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE JOURNEY

After registration you will receive all the information for participants. In good time before the journey starts you'll get the necessary information about where and when we meet, the flight schedule, the list of participants, important addresses and last minute announcements.



Camp at the Refugio Paso del Viento, photo: Martin Stettler

PERSONAL INFORMATION

We are happy to give you more information personally about the trip/trekking and to answer your individual questions. Don't hesitate to contact us: Tel. 079 667 17 18 or mail@southamerica-trekking.com.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to this trip !

It will offer you unforgettable adventures and impressions of a superb and extraordinary nature and mountain world.

Have we stirred your interest ? We would be very happy to welcome you in our group!

Bönigen, November 2011

Registration Form for the Patagonia Experience from November 23 till December 14, 20112

Family / surname and first name

(Don't fail to give all the names registered in the passport)

Date of birth

Street/Nr.

Place of residence

Tel (private and place of work / mobile phone)

Fax

Email

To contact in case of emergency:

Name, address, telephone number

.....

.....

Occupation

Nationality

Passport number

Date of expiry / Place and date of issue:

.....

.....

Cancellation insurance (obligatory):

Name of the insurance company

I have taken note of and accept the General Contract and Travel Conditions.

Place / Date

Signature.....