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## **Wonders of Patagonia**

projected dates ~ November 13 - 21, 2024 • 9 Days • 2023  
pricing ~ \$6490

### **Optional Mysteries of Easter Island Extension**

Projected dates ~ November 21 - 25 • 5 Days • 2023 pricing ~ \$2490

In November 2023, we returned to Chile after an absence of almost 20 years. We plan to return again in 2024 but with change in the itinerary in Patagonia. Rather than cross the border into Argentina, which involved a multiple flights and a long day of driving, we are working on a small ship cruise into the Patagonian fjords.

Details should be available in early February 2024. Below is the projected itinerary based upon information currently available.

Travelers are invited to hold their spots with a refundable \$100 preregistration deposit.

Travelers who pre-register will receive a Priority Booking Invitation for full registration when the tour is finalized, which requires an additional \$200 (\$300 total registration).

**Tour Type:** Classic Curated, Small Ship Cruising

## OVERVIEW

Chile is a land of extremes! Hugging the southwestern corner of the South American continent, it's a long narrow sliver averaging just over 100 miles in width and snaking over 3000 miles from the north to its far southern tip at the bottom of the world.

Some of its deserts, the driest on the planet, have not seen rain for decades. Further south, however, rainfall is measured in meters and the largest icefields outside of Antarctica and Greenland store surprisingly high percentages of the world's fresh water. Its eastern flank is guarded by the soaring heights of the Andes; its western flank peers out over the Pacific, the world's largest ocean.

Our itinerary focuses on the Chilean Patagonia, in particular Torres del Paine National Park and a cruise on the Patagonian fjords.

The optional extension takes us to mystical Easter Island, famed for the massive, mysterious moai (stone heads) carved by the Polynesian Rapa Nui, the indigenous inhabitants of the island. We think you'll be surprised at the diverse attractions of this remote little island in the middle of the Pacific.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Torres del Paine National Park** - with 4 walks to explore natural wonders surrounding the "Blue Towers" and the Cuernos del Paine (Blue Horns) including the Blue Lagoon, Salto Grande waterfall, Nordenskjöld Lake, Pehoe Lake, and Grey Lake
- **Patagonian fjords:** A 4-night cruise sailing over 500 nautical miles through remote corners of Patagonia to discover the most beautiful, and least known, tide-water glaciers of the area. On walks ashore, we follow the footsteps of sailors and explorers, learn about the long-gone hunter-gatherer tribes who lived here thousands of years ago and experience the rich natural history of the fjords, channels, sounds, forests, and moorlands. A journey of discovery through one of the few truly pristine areas on Earth.
- **Easter Island** - with guided walks at Hanga Roa, Orongo Rano Kau, Rano Raruku, and an optional star-gazing evening in the Southern Hemisphere (optional extension)

- [Pre-Register](#)
- [360.260.9393](tel:360.260.9393)
- [Email Us](#)

## Adventure Pace

**Tour Pace:** 1 2 3 4 5

**Walk Challenge:** 1 2 3 4 5

[About Adventure Pace](#)

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the following factors on each tour.

**Tour Pace:** On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we've rated the following factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

**Walk Challenge:** This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

[Pre](#)

## Important Info



### Group Size

Maximum 24 travelers



### Accommodations

Strategically located Superior tourist class hotels or better. Accommodations aboard the M/V Skorpios III.



### Meals

Breakfasts included with a selection of lunches and dinners. Letters BLD indicate which meals are included.



### Airfare

Not included. Travelers on will fly into Puerto Natales and out of Santiago, Chile.



## Transportation

Included. We use coaches with a seating capacity of 40-55 seats, The *M/V Skorprios III* holds a maximum of 90 passengers on 5 decks and is built and certified to sail in ice-strewn waters.



## Traveler Age

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!

# Itinerary

Following is a projected itinerary based upon information currently available from partners in Chile. Updated dates and itinerary details are expected in early February.

*Click on each day to reveal more details.*

## WONDERS OF PATAGONIA

### [Day 1: Arrive in Puerto Natales, Chile \(D\)](#)

*Walk #1: Optional Estancia Patagonia Hike - 4 km, rating unknown*

Travelers arrive into Puerto Natales, Chile today from all over North America.

Once a sleepy fishing village, Puerto Natales has blossomed into the base for visitors drawn by the outdoor magic of Patagonia and Torres del Paine National Park.

Dinner is on your own this evening from our centrally located hotel, situated across the street from lovely Señoret Channel and the southern terminus of the ferry serving the phenomenal Chilean fjords.

### ***Optional Estancia Patagonia Excursion***

*Travelers who arrive a day early are invited to join us for an all-day excursion that starts after breakfast with a cruise across Last Hope Fjord to a Patagonian sheep and cattle ranch (estancia). Here, we enjoy a taste of Patagonia agriculture including a sheep dog demonstration and sheep shearing (merino wool), a hike through the forest, or alternately a horseback ride, and a sumptuous lamb (or vegetarian) barbeque. Price: TBD*

### [Day 2: Activities in Torres del Paine National Park \(BLD\)](#)

*Walk 2: Sarmiento Gate to Amarga Gate Walk - 7 km, rated 2B*

*Walk 3: Laguna Azul Walk - 6 km, rated 2B*

Established as a national park in 1959, Torres del Paine did not receive its current name until 1970, a name meaning “Blue Towers” in a mixture of Spanish and native languages.

Weather can offer all four seasons in a single day, but November is the dry season, and we hope to see the trademark towers of the Park, called “Cleopatra’s Needles” by an early foreign tourist.

Our first walk crosses the vast openness of the steppe below the towers. Encounters with wildlife are likely, including flamenco, gray fox, Andean condor, but especially the always-curious guanaco, one of four South American members of the cameloid family.

From Amarga Gate, we drive north to Laguna Azul (Blue Lagoon) for a picnic lunch and today’s second walk. The trail here skirts the northern bank of the laguna offering lakeside landscapes, views of the towers, and a sense of the end-of-the-world remoteness which drapes our every moment in Chilean Patagonia.

### [Day 3: Activities in Torres del Paine National Park \(BD\)](#)

*Walk 4: Salto Grande and Mirador Cuernas Walk - 6 km, rated 2B*

*Walk 5: Lago Grey Walk - 6 km, rated 2C*

We enjoy two more highlights of the Park today from two additional trails. Salto Grande is a dramatic waterfall on the Paine River, draining Nordenskjöld Lake into Pehoe Lake, and the first stop on the morning walk.

Our trail continues to a viewpoint of the Cuernos del Paine, the Horns of Paine, the Park’s second remarkable series of peaks with distinctive sculpted surfaces. Wildlife is ubiquitous in the park and viewings are likely again this morning.

Following a break for lunch, our fourth and final walk in Torres del Paine is at Lago Grey. Here, the trail takes us across a sandbank to circumnavigate a forested knob, the highlight of which is mirador Lago Grey, a viewpoint of the lake and the glacier by the same name at the north end.

We return to Puerto Natales having seen several faces of what is arguably Chile’s most famous national park. In Puerto Natales, we board our floating hotel, the *M/V Skorpions III*, our home for the next 5 nights.

### [Day 4: Cruising ~ Day 1 of Patagonian Fjord Cruise \(BLD\)](#)

*Walk 6: Mylodon Cave Walk - 2 km, rated 2B*

After breakfast aboard ship, we depart by bus to explore a nearby cave of archeological significance at Mylodon Cave Natural Monument. It was here that the best-preserved

remains of a *Mylodon*, a genus of a giant sloth (5000 pounds) that became extinct thousands of years ago, were discovered by a German explorer in 1895.

Early this afternoon, the *M/V Skorprios* sets sail on a voyage of just over 500 miles through the Magellanes region of tangled channels and fjords that are part of the Southern Patagonia Ice Fields. Combined with the Northern Patagonia Ice Fields, water locked in the ice here represents the third largest freshwater reserve on the planet!

After navigating through the Almirante Montt Gulf, we arrive in the Guadramiro Fjord where we transfer to smaller boats to visit a colony of elephant seals. This evening, we sail across the Kirke Narrows and through the Noria Vicuna, Union, and Sarmiento Channels.

#### [Day 5: Cruising ~ Day 2 of Patagonia Fjord Cruise \(BLD\)](#)

*Walk #7: Guillard Glacier Hike - 2 km, rating unknown*

We sail north, this morning, through the Pitt Channel, passing Chatham Island to enter the Guillard Fjord. Here, we disembark to hike in the vicinity of Guillard Glacier. After lunch back aboard the *Skorprios III*, we take to the small boats again this afternoon to explore a myriad of narrower channels around the Guillard Glacier.

Later this evening, we begin navigation to Sarratea Bay, where we again explore the fascination of the Southern Patagonia Icefield from small boats.

#### [Day 6: Cruising ~ Day 3 of Patagonia Fjord Cruise \(BLD\)](#)

*Walk #8: Amalia Glacier Hike - 2 km, rated unknown*

*Walk #9: El Brujo Glacier Hike - 1 km, rating unknown*

This morning's highlight is spectacular Amalia Glacier. After panoramic views from the ship, we disembark at a nearby beach to hike through virgin terrain to a viewpoint of this magnificent river of ice.

Late morning, we set sail for El Brujo Glacier. Upon arrival, and depending upon weather conditions, we disembark to explore the area, and view the face of the glacier from a rocky vantage point.

Mid-afternoon, we continue our Patagonia Fjords Icefield voyage to stunning Calvo Fjord, making landfall this evening in the fjord.

Our ship carries a smaller, icebreaking vessel christened *Captain Constantine* designed for navigating ice-strewn waters. An evening excursion aboard the *Captain Constantine* takes us to the face of at least three tidewater glaciers: Fernando, Capitan Constantino, and Alipio Glacier.

#### [Day 7: Cruising ~ Day 4 of Patagonia Fjord Cruise \(BLD\)](#)

### *Walk #10: Bernal Glacier Hike - 2 km, rating unknown*

Today's first experience is cruising through the Fjord of the Mountains, where four glaciers can be seen descending from the Sarmiento Mountains, two of which attract our further attention.

The small boats take us into the small bay where Alsina Glacier calves its ancient slivers of ice, with a backdrop of majestic mountain faces. Back aboard the *Skorpio III*, our second stop is Bernal Glacier further down Fjord of the Mountains.

Going ashore here, a short hike begins in the middle of pristine, native forest and crosses to a glacier lagoon, which we skirt to hike over the frontal and lateral moraines to the face of the glacier. Here, we anticipate the opportunity to actually touch the ice on the receding terminal face of the glacier.

This afternoon, we continue cruising the Fjord of the Mountains, stopping to reprovision the ship's water supplies from a glacially-fed waterfall. The evening route takes us past two more glaciers—Herman and Zamudio.

We cross the White Narrows this evening during the Captain's Farewell Dinner and Dance. Our vessel then navigates Almirante Montt Gulf during the night back to Puerto Natales.

### [Day 8: Cruise ends; Flight to Santiago \(BD\)](#)

We leave Patagonia today, saying farewell to *M/V Skorpios III* and her crew and bound for the Puerto Natales airport.

The timing of today's activities depends upon flight schedules back to Santiago. If an early flight is available, we hope to explore a bit of Santiago. More likely is that we'll have an early afternoon departure from Puerto Natales, arriving in Santiago in time for a relaxed Farewell Dinner at our airport hotel, preparing us for tomorrow's activities.

### [Day 9: Valparaiso Excursion and depart Santiago \(BL\)](#)

*Valparaiso Walk - 3 km, rated 2B*

*Vina Del Mar Walk - 1.65 km, rated 1B*

Travelers head in different directions this morning. Those continuing on the optional *Easter Island Mysteries Extension* fly west this morning to Easter Island (see below).

Travelers ending their Adventure on Chile's main land have flights to North American which depart from Santiago late this evening. This provides the perfect window of time to explore a different face of Chile's many and diverse blessings. We head, this morning, for the Chilean coast for an excursion of a completely different type; Valparaiso and Viña del Mar sit on Chile's Pacific seaboard, just over an hour away.

Viña del Mar is nicknamed the "Garden City" and is famous for its beaches and numerous

castles and 19th century mansions from its golden age. After a pleasant beachside stroll here, we turn south to neighboring Valparaiso.

Highlights in Valparaiso include a wide palette of multi-colored houses, off-beat architecture and street art, and a funky but functional system of forty-odd funicular elevators from the early 20th century offering public transportation up and down hillsides on which this “Jewel of the Pacific” is built. An included lunch and a 3-part walk here introduce us to different facets of this singular city on the sea.

Chile is also justly famous for its wine production. On our way back to Santiago, we visit a vineyard in the Casablanca Valley to experience a wine tasting and sample this unique slice of Chilean culture and agriculture. Last stop, this evening, is the Santiago Airport for late flights back to our northern hemisphere reality.

Thank you for sharing this exploration of the *Wonders of Patagonia*! We return home fascinated with this linear, pencil-thin land on the Pacific Coast of South America.

## **EASTER ISLAND MYSTERIES OPTIONAL EXTENSION**

NOTE: A 5 1/2-hour flight from Santiago to Easter Island and return is necessary and is not included in the above 2023 land price. WAI is currently reviewing the best way to book this roundtrip flight, as individuals or with a group booking. In 2023, booking as individuals was the most economical and ticket prices were between \$800 and \$1000. Current ticket pricing available at time of publication is between \$600 and \$800. Travelers will be notified of air purchase strategy at the time the tour is release for registration with final dates and pricing.

### [Day 1: Santiago to Easter Island \(BD\)](#)

*Walk 1: Hanga Roa Walking Tour and Ahu Tahai, 5.5 km, rated 2B*

A short transfer after breakfast this morning prepares us for a flight (not included) across the Pacific to a mythical island lost in the mists of a mysterious past. We land at Easter Island’s Mataverí International Airport, the world’s most remote airport, 2336 miles across the Pacific from Chile’s western coast.

Nearby is our hotel for the next three nights in Easter Island’s solitary town, Hanga Roa.

Upon arrival, travelers are invited for an orientation walk along the coast to see the Ahu Tahai moai (stone heads), followed by dinner back at our hotel.

### [Day 2: Activities on Easter Island \(BL\)](#)

*Walk 2: Vai Atare & Rano Kau Walk, 6 km, rated 3D*



*Bonus Walk: Ana Te Pahu Walk, 2 km, rated 1C*

After breakfast this morning, we head south to visit the island's largest volcano, Rano Kau. On the western rim of the crater are the ruins of a settlement called Orongo, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From the cliffs here overlooking the Pacific a strange competition was held over a period of about 150 years, the last race taking place in 1866 .

The annual contest conferred the title of "Birdman" on the winner, or the winner's sponsor. The odd race involved scaling the dangerous 1000-foot cliffs, swimming shark-infested waters to a small offshore island, and finding the eggs of an elusive bird called the Sooty Tern.

Our walk ascends an access road, skirts the rim of the crater circling to the western edge, then wandering a set of stone ruins on the cliffs above the Pacific.

After lunch, activities for the afternoon will be announced but we expect to explore moai and cultural sites on the western side of the island.

### ***Stargazing on Easter Island Excursion***

*There can be no darker setting from which to view the Southern Constellations than the uninhabited side of one of the planet's most remote islands. The experience begins with a presentation of Polynesian history, navigation, and basic astronomy. Next we drive to the remote side of the island to set up the telescope and get oriented to the Southern Hemisphere sky. Binoculars and the telescope will help magnify our understanding, and a second stop is on tap to try night photography with mysterious moai in the foreground. We return to the hotel from this extraordinary experience just before midnight. Estimated price: \$130*

### [Day 3: Activities on Easter Island \(BL\)](#)

*Walk 3: Trail of the Moai & Rano Raraku Walk - 6 km, 2C*

Today is devoted to the eastern side of Easter Island.

Our morning objective is another significant volcanic feature, Rano Raraku. This volcanic site provided the rough volcanic stone quarried to produce most of the island's moai. As such, it is an excellent place to see moai in various states of completion. By far the largest moai on the island are also located here since keeping them on site removed the challenging obstacles of transportation.

Our local guide has much to share about the history of the island and its moai during this visit which ends along the coast at Auh Tongariki, a remote area featuring 15 moai.

Following lunch, you have opportunities to see the northeast corner of the island, farthest away from our base in Hanga Roa. Stops include South Pacific beaches at Anakena and Ovahe.

The evening back in Hanga Roa is free to wander and have dinner on your own.

#### [Day 4: Activities on Easter Island \(B\)](#)

The morning is free to explore Hanga Roa and perhaps support the local economy with any last minute souvenir purchases. A 5 1/2-hour flight returns us to Santiago this afternoon for our last night in Chile.

#### [Day 5: Valparaiso Excursion and depart Santiago \(BL\)](#)

Flights to North American depart from Santiago late this evening. This provides the perfect window of time to explore a different face of Chile's many and diverse blessings.

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Thank you for sharing this *Easter Island Mysteries* optional excursion. We return home with a greater understanding and appreciation of this tiny Pacific island and its intriguing Polynesian heritage.