

ANDES MOUNTAIN EXPEDICIONES

HORSE RIDE PATAGONIA



Main highlights:

- Tour starts and finishes in Puerto Natales
- Accommodation in comfortable hotels and authentic estancias throughout
- Includes a boat trip up Last Hope Sound
- Includes four, full-day rides on Criollo-mix horses with Chilean tack
- Ride to the Glacier Grey beach, with optional boat trip
- Experiencing breath-taking views of the Torres del Paine Mountains
- Ride through woodland, over mountains, through rivers and around lakes
- Spectacular views everyday of the mountains, glacial rivers and lakes
- Eat typical Patagonian food and wine and meet some of the people who live in this beautiful place
- See many local birds, animals and plants

Brief day-by-day itinerary:

Day 1 - Arrive Puerto Natales between 3-4pm in café Spacio Kau. Transfer to Estancia Perales. 2hr ride to the

Estancia. Dinner. Night in Estancia. Hours in the saddle: 2.

Day 2 - Take cutter across fjords to Balmaceda. Meet horses for ride to Serrano. Night Hotel Rio Serrano. All meals included. Hours in the saddle: 7-8.

Day 3 - Ride to Glacier Grey viewpoint. Optional boat trip. Ride back to Serrano. Night Hotel Rio Serrano. All meals included. Hours in the saddle: 6-7.

Day 4 - Ride the Up and Over across the heart of the park to Laguna Amarga. Transfer to Laguna Sophia. Night at Country House Laguna Sophia. All meals included. Hours in the saddle: 7-8.

Day 5 - Full day ride around Laguna Sophia area. Transfer to Puerto Natales for onward travel. Breakfast and lunch included.. Hours in the saddle: 6-7.

Dates:

9th - 13th of each month - starting October 2013 until March 2014.

Prices:

2-3 clients: US\$3,199 per person

4-8 clients: US\$2,799 per person

*Single supplement: US\$420 for all clients wanting guaranteed single accommodation

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Suitability:

This trip suits experienced riders wishing to combine some local flavor and comfortable accommodations with their riding adventure. It is designed for those who prefer not to camp and who enjoy a mixture of riding, from technical to some fast riding. There are some days of approximately 8 or more hours in the saddle.

During long days riders will be asked not to ride their horses overly hard. We strive to be a humane company and keep our horses fairly treated. The holiday is a joint experience of the place and the riding. We expect the riders to treat the horses as though they were their own at all times.

Riders will experience a first-hand view of Patagonia estancia life, which includes the joys, threats and difficulties posed by farming cattle and sheep in the area. The route offers plenty of diversity with rides across open pampas, rides to wild glaciers and ice-berg filled lakes and peaceful rides through valleys and ancient beech forests. Throughout these long days in the saddle, the snow-capped mountains are never far away.

Accommodation:

The accommodation is a mix of authentic estancias and where this is not available, comfortable hotels.

Riding Experience:

Intermediate - Advanced. This holiday has some fast sections and some technical sections and some long riding days. Fitness and experience are essential. No beginners please.

Age Limit:

We can accept clients between the age of 12 - 70. Younger riders must be experienced and accompanied by an experienced adult. Older riders are welcome to join us on completion of a medical suitability questionnaire.

Trip Length:

5 days / 4 nights - 4 full days of riding and short ride on day one.

Group Size:

2 - 8 riders. Custom groups of any size: details available on request. On custom rides beginners are welcome. They will need to be fit and able to withstand 5 days of riding. They need to be prepared for some sore muscles!

Detailed day-by-day itinerary:

Day 1 / Arrive Puerto Natales between 3 - 4pm. Meet at Espacio Kau for briefing.

Transfer to Estancia Perales.

Arrive into Puerto Natales. Clients will need arrive today before 4pm. Meet in the comfortable café Spacio Kau for the trip briefing. Afterwards they will take a transfer to Estancia Perales where they will have a short ride to the Estancia house. Dinner in the Estancia. Night in the Estancia.

Day 2 / Boat to Balmaceda. Ride from Balmaceda to Rio Serrano. Night Hotel Rio Serrano.

After breakfast, guests will say goodbye to Estancia Perales and hop on the boat which will dock especially to take them for a great ride up the Last Hope Sound. Guests will enter the Bernardo O'Higgins National Park.

Shared by the regions of Magallanes and Aysen, this is the largest National Park in Chile and one of five of The most expansive in the world (over three million hectares).

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With access only via the water, the mountains or the southern ice field itself, it remains a remote and pristine corner of our planet. It also contains the third largest mass of ice on earth after Antarctica and Greenland, so the climate is understandably extreme.

We will disembark our boat here and enjoy the stunning views which combine old growth forests of evergreen and deciduous southern beech, fire bushes and cypresses - a stunning contrast to the snow capped peaks and glaciers in this region.

We will meet our new horses and have some lunch before setting out on a beautiful trail through thick forests passing pristine rivers and streams in the shadow of the Chacabuco and Balmaceda range of mountains. A fairly slow ride today gives us the opportunity to find our riding stride while enjoying the dazzling scenery on our route into the Torres del Paine National Park. Towards the end of the trail, we will cross the Nutria river and come out onto the pampas which marks the end of today's ride, as we approach our hotel for the night, Hotel Rio Serrano.

This hotel is only a few years old and offers very comfortable rooms and great views of the Paine Massif.

A large living/dining area with log fires and a comfortable bar and good restaurant. For early risers, it also offers some of the best sunrises in all of Patagonia! All meals included.

(Wine/drinks not included).

Day 3 / Ride to Grey Glacier and Lake. Optional boat trip. Ride back to Rio Serrano. Night in Hotel Rio Serrano.

After breakfast we will be meeting our horses and preparing for the pampas ride to Grey Lake. Our view will be dominated by the jagged peaks of the Paine massif as we ride out along the Grey river to the largest glacier in the park, Glacier Grey. On reaching the trailhead we will tether our horses and walk out across the swinging footbridge through the forest to Grey beach. The view that greets us is memorable - the pebbly shores of the beach form an almost surreal contrast to the blue of the floating icebergs that have calved off the nearby glacier. Glacier Grey protrudes off the southern ice field and is quite simply a wonder of nature. Measuring 28km in length and covering a total area of 270 square km with its frozen walls of blue ice towering almost 35 meters high, it never ceased to impress.

After some time walking along the beach and enjoying our picnic lunch, we will walk back to our waiting horses for the ride back to Rio Serrano.

**Note for those who would like to get up closer to the face of this marvel of ice, we can arrange a trip out onto the lake in the Grey II boat. This is an optional excursion available at the cost of approximately US\$96 per person.*

Return to Hotel Rio Serrano for the night. All meals included. (excluding wine/drinks).

Day 4 / Ride the up and over across the heart of the park to Laguna Amarga. Transfer to Laguna Sophia. Night in country house.

After breakfast in the hotel we will pack up and start our ride eastwards towards the heart of the park. We will now be riding directly towards the Paine Massif mountain range so the views are dramatic and beautiful.

Our trail skirts the southern edge of the mountains on a rarely trodden path as we pass azure and turquoise lakes with the huge granite mountain peaks standing behind. After a picnic lunch taken in one of the pretty valleys we will continue east onto the beautiful soft pampas of the Patagonian steppe. Arriving at Laguna Amarga a private transfer will be waiting and will take us to Laguna Sophia. All meals included (excluding wine/drinks).

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Day 5 / Ride to El Puesto (The Gaucho Hut). Transfer to Puerto Natales.

After breakfast we find our horses, check our saddles and begin our last, full day of riding to the Gaucho hut in Vega Señoret. Along the way we go around Laguna Sophia, bordering the Sierra Señoret, with great views of the mountains around us. Once we get to Vega Señoret we will see views of the Torres del Paine mountains one last time and Cerro Ventana (Window Hill).

By lunch time we will let the horses rest and we will have a nice lunch at the Gaucho hut, a small puesto located in the middle of the valley where gauchos stay during the summer time to look after their cattle.

Depending on the time available, and the weather, we may go for a further hour and half to a condor area, where we will be riding at the same altitude they are flying.

After these lovely views we are ready to return to Laguna Sophia where we will take a Transfer to Puerto Natales. Breakfast and lunch included.