



LAKES OF PATAGONIA GENERAL INFORMATION

CANCELLATION INSURANCE:

Many of our trips fill up and it is often difficult to fill a spot that is left vacant by a cancellation, especially at the last minute. If there is any chance you may have to cancel your trip, **you must purchase travel insurance for your protection.** Insurance will cover every aspect of your trip including: your deposit, lost baggage and unforeseeable medical emergencies and evacuation. **It will also cover additional transportation costs in case you have to be caught up to the expedition due to delays with your international flight.** Travel insurance information and an application form can be found under the Travel insurance information heading on the Lakes general information section of the web site (copyright c hidden link section). If you have any questions concerning trip insurance please call their office at 1-800-243-3174.

Important note: When filling out your insurance application, under account number/producer please put Earth River Expeditions #47201

NOTE: Completed travel insurance applications should be sent to: Travel Insured International, 52-S Oakland Avenue, P.O. Box 280568, East Hartford, CT, 06128-0568.

What's Included?

All Lakes trip prices include: ground transportation, shuttles, Hotel, meals, guides, instruction, and use of sea kayak for your described trip. Earth River transports you from Balmaceda to the Lakes at the start of the trip and back to Balmaceda at the trip's conclusion.

Note: A videographer will not be present on the Lakes Expedition so it is important for people to bring their own cameras.

What's Not Included?

International air to Santiago and inner country air to Balmaceda and other travel related expenses such as, but not limited to: entry fees, insurance, visas, passports, medical costs, airport taxes or other transportation costs resulting from a deviation from our itinerary are not included. End of trip gratuities to the guides are also not included. If you are delayed for any reason (missed flight) and unable to reach Balmaceda by the set meeting time, you will be responsible for any extra hotels and meals as well as the ground transportation necessary to catch you up to the trip (an Earth River agent will help you arrange these things). Trip insurance will cover these additional expenses. Leaving a day early and staying in a hotel the night before in either Santiago or Coyhaique (near Balmaceda) is the surest way to avoid problems. The Earth River office can help you with these arrangements (1-800-643-2784).

AIR TRANSPORTATION:

Airfare from the US to Balmaceda, Chile is **not included** in the trip price and must be arranged independently. Flights from the U.S. to Santiago range from \$1,000 to \$1,600 depending upon the time of year, availability and departure city. If you use Lan Chile, you are entitled to a discount on the portion of the ticket from Santiago to Balmaceda which is generally around \$225. When booking your flight you will need to arrive in Balmaceda no later than 3:30 P.M. on day two. On the return (at the end of the trip) you will be back in Balmaceda on Friday evening (hotel in Coyhaique) so you will be able to catch the morning flight (11:00 AM) flight back to Santiago on Saturday. International flights to the U.S. from Santiago seldom leave before 9:00 P.M. and national flights are rarely delayed so there will be no problem making any connections in Santiago if you decide to spend the day in Coyhaique. If you are not flying on Lan Chile and using American, Delta, United or airline miles down to Chile the Balmaceda portion of the ticket could run as high as \$425 per person. A much less expensive alternative is to purchase your r/t ticket from Santiago to Balmaceda through our local agency in Santiago (95% of our clients choose to do this). Purchasing the tickets this way will cost around \$250. The Balmaceda tickets will be waiting for you in the Santiago Airport at the national airline ticket counter. The name of the agency we use is Turismo Latrach. If you contact them by phone, ask for Myriam Lishinevsky. Phone # 011-562-751-2619 or 011-562- 751-2600. Probably the best way to contact her is through e-mail myriamk@turismolatrach.cl In order to book the tickets Myriam will need your credit card information, passport number (which you will need to show in Santiago to pick up the tickets) and flight information so she can coordinate your international flight with the Balmaceda flight. Make sure to be clear with Myriam that you are on a Lakes of Patagonia

trip and not a Futaleufu trip because although the arrival times are the same on both trips, the return flights are not. Myriam is also very familiar with different trip extensions and is a great resource if you need help organizing hotels, car rentals and other aspects of your extension in Chile. She can also help you with your international flight.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

As soon as you have secured your flights down to Santiago and connecting flight to Balmaceda, please e-mail this information down to Earth River's Santiago office at currie-r@vtr.net so we know your schedule. The e-mail should include; lakes trip date, date leaving US, flight # and arrival time into Balmaceda as well as the flight # and departure time leaving Balmaceda at the end of the trip.

Remember you must arrive in Balmaceda no later than 3:30 PM on the arrival date and should book your flight out of Balmaceda at the trip's conclusion on Saturday morning. *If you're arriving in Balmaceda a day early and staying in Coyhaique the night before the trip begins, you must e-mail our Santiago office the name and phone number of the hotel you're staying at in case we need to contact you. You will be responsible for getting yourself to the airport to meet the group the following day.*

***NOTE:** (The r/t flight from Santiago to Balmaceda, Chile *is not* included in the trip cost.) The hotels the last night of the trip is included.

ARRIVAL:

People often arrive into Balmaceda at different times and even different days which makes it difficult to meet everyone at the airport when they arrive. We would like everyone to meet us in the Balmaceda airport at 3:30 P.M. on day 2 of your trip (day one is the day you leave the U.S.). This will be Saturday afternoon. If you arrive a couple of hours early there is a small restaurant in the airport. If you arrive a day early we suggest staying at a hotel or bed in breakfast in the wonderful small city of Coyhaique, which is 45 minutes away. There are nice craft markets in Coyhaique where handmade sweaters and other things can be purchased.

MEETING PLACE:

We will meet in the lobby of the tiny Balmaceda Airport at 3:30 P.M. on *Saturday afternoon. (NOTE: If everyone is able to arrive on an earlier flight than we will contact you individually with the new meeting time). An Earth River

representative, *Maria* (cell: **0998-43-1820**) will meet you with an Earth River sign. Please give Maria your return flight information so your return flights can be reconfirmed.

***Important note:**

If you are delayed on your international flight and unable to make a national flight that arrives in Balmaceda by 3:30 PM, you will still be able to do the trip but you may have to overnight in Santiago or possibly even Puerto Montt which is on the way to Balmaceda. The Earth River guide in Balmaceda, Maria, will help take care of these logistics as well as catching you up to the trip when you arrive in Balmaceda the next morning. In order to catch up you will need to hire a taxi from Balmaceda to the lakes. In such cases you will be responsible for the cost of the taxi and your additional hotel and meals in Santiago. Remember, travelers insurance should cover the additional expenses due to a delay in flights.

CONDITIONING (Important):

Participants will be paddling sea kayaks for up to two hours on some of the days and hiking on primitive trails from 3 to 5 hours on other days. Although the hiking and paddling are near sea level, at least one of the hikes gains 2,000 vertical feet in a relatively short distance (2 miles) so participants should be in good physical condition. You will also be carrying a backpack on a few of the shorter hikes (up to three miles at a time.) If you are not currently in good condition, you should become involved in an exercise program prior to the expedition. You should be a good hiker able to negotiate trails which have uneven surfaces (Telescoping hiking poles are recommended) Safety aside, being fit will improve the quality of your experience.

EXPERIENCE

It is not necessary to have previous sea kayaking experience. We have had many first time sea kayakers join us on the Lakes of Patagonia Expedition.

****Note: Because Earth River can not screen the hiking ability and physical condition of participants prior to the expedition, the guides will ultimately decide if a participant is qualified to do a few of the more arduous hikes.***

PASSPORTS:

You will need a current passport for traveling in Chile. You do not need a special visa for Chile, Argentina, or Peru. If you plan on visiting Brazil, a visa must be secured before leaving the USA. If you are planning a side excursion and renting a car, you should consider acquiring an International Drivers License. The Automobile Club of America (800-222-4357) issues them for a nominal fee. It takes about one month to receive your license by mail.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL WITHIN CHILE:

If you have an additional week we highly recommend combining the Lakes with our spectacular Futaleufu Expedition. These two trips dovetail perfectly together forming the wildest, most diverse commercial expedition available in Patagonia. For more information on the Futaleufu Expedition please see our website. If you have less than a week there are a number of excellent possibilities under the Futaleufu index on the website including the Wine District, Easter Island, Torres del Paine National Park and the Lake District. For help in arranging an extension trip contact our Chilean Travel agent Myriam or the Earth River office.

FINAL PAYMENT:

The final trip balance is due 60 days prior to the trip's departure. Those people who paid their deposit with a credit card will be automatically billed for the balance on the card we have on file unless you call the office 60 days before the trip's departure with another credit card or send in a personal check. If you would like the final payment handled another way please call our office.

SINGLE ROOMS:

There is no single supplement charge for people traveling alone. Depending upon the odd or even number of guests, single travelers may be asked to share a hotel room with another traveler of the same sex. The same is true with the tree houses and cliff dwellings. If there is no one of the same sex to place you with you will end up with an individual cliff dwellings. On smaller trips individuals often end up with single dwellings. If you request a single room you will be charged an additional \$100. This must be paid prior to the departure of the expedition.

GEAR:

Earth River provides seak kayaks, paddles, tents and kitchen utensils. For a list of all additional gear you will need to bring for the expedition please see the gear list.

RECIPROCITY TAX:

The United States currently charges Chilean citizens \$135 to enter the U.S. Please be aware that upon entering Chile, U.S. citizens will be required to **pay a reciprocity tax of \$135 (credit cards and U.S. dollars are accepted)**. This is in addition to the airport departure tax of \$18 you will be charged upon leaving Chile.

ADDITIONAL MONEY:

Generally, \$500 per person will be adequate for the reciprocity tax, any shopping, airport taxes, and river guide tips. If you are planning a side excursion you will want to bring considerably more. Remember, Chile is **not inexpensive** and most things are similarly priced to the U.S. Car rentals and gasoline are considerably higher while public transportation much lower. You will be able to exchange money at the airport when you arrive in Santiago or at the airport in Balmaceda. The exchange rate at the airport is similar to what you will find at a bank, and much more convenient (banks often have long lines).

GRATUITIES:

Gratuities for the guides and help are not included. If you think the guides and help have done an **outstanding** job, 6 percent (approx. \$180) of the expedition cost per person is considered a generous tip. Usually a member of the group will collect the tip and hand it to the trip leader (head guide) who will distribute it evenly among the guides and employees.

ACCOMODATIONS:

The last night of the trip will be spent at a comfortable Hotel in the lovely, small Chilean city of Coyhaique. The expedition nights will be camping in tents on the lakes. The guides will prepare the meals.

***IMPORTANT PACKING TIP:**

Each season a few people (approx. 2 %) end up in Chile without their belongings. Once separated from your belongings it will be impossible to catch them up to you. Because this is a real possibility we highly recommend the following steps to protect yourself. Pack all necessary expedition gear (fleece, rain jacket, water shoes, hat, sun glasses, bathing suit, etc.) into your backpack and carry it on. This backpack, which you will be using on the expedition should be the size of the largest legal carry on bag. Pack everything else in a regular suitcase. This way if you become separated from you checked bag you will have the most important things for the expedition as well as the clothes on your back for camp.

GEAR STORAGE:

Because space and weight are limited, you will be allowed your backpack, which cannot weigh over 22 pounds. Any additional things needed for extension trips and the personal bag you flew down with can be left with the representative and safely stored until you return to the airport at the end of the trip. Remember unless you're spending additional time in Chile before or after the expedition, pack only what's on the Earth River gear list which will fit into your backpack. **NOTE:** Upon your return to Balmaceda, at the trip's conclusion, the bags you left will be waiting for you at the airport with the Earth River representative.

WEATHER:

The Lakes of Patagonia are in Cantral Patagonia and although February is a mild month, the weather can vary from sunny in the low to mid eighties to rainy in the sixties and even fifties. The nights are generally in the low fifties but can go into the forties and on occasion upper thirties. It can also be windy especially later in the afternoon when the glacier heat up. You have a high quality have high quality paddle jacket and or a rain jacket with a hood.

Note: It is not possible to get an accurate current or future picture of the weather for the Lakes of Patagonia area via the internet. Often what you will be seeing is the weather from Coyhaique which is not the same.

IT IS IMPERITIVE THAT YOU BRING ALL THE WARMS THINGS INCLUDED IN THE PACKING LIST IN CASE WE HAVE SOME COLD WEATHER WHEN YOU'RE DOWN THERE.

BUGS:

We purposely wait to run our lakes trip until after the middle of January when the horse flies are much milder (They are stronger in December). It is possible, however, to have some horse flies. If you think they might bother you a simple compressible mosquito head net would be worth considering.

HEALTH INFORMATION:

There are no required shots or health precautions that you need to take when traveling in Chile with the exception of a current tetanus booster, which is a good idea for any international travel. Although the water in the cities is generally safe to drink, we recommend that you drink either bottled water or soft drinks during the land portions of the trip. If you should need medical attention, there are modern clinics and hospitals throughout the country.

EMERGENCIES:

We carry a satellite phone and a helicopter can get someone to a modern hospital within a few hours from anywhere on the lakes.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

In case there is an emergency at home while you are away the following phone number should be given to a relative or friend: 845-626-2665 or 845-626-4361. The person should ask for Troy or Eric. Remember, this is a very isolated area and it may not be possible to get a message to you for a number of days and possibly not until you arrive back in Coyhaique at the trips conclusion. Remember, these numbers should only be used in case of an emergency. If you have a problem with a delayed flight while still in the U.S. contact Troy or Eric at the above number. Once you arrive in Santiago if you have any problems or flight delays please contact Maria Luisa at our Santiago office (# 562-296-0154.)and he Earth

River guide in Balmaceda, Maria (cell# 0998431820) Both Maria Luisa and Maria are fluent in English and can help catch you up to the trip.