



Self Drive in Aysén

7 D / 6 N

START / END

Balmaceda /
Balmaceda

WHEN TO GO

October-April

WHERE

Puerto Tranquilo
General Carrera
Jainimeni

OVERNIGHT

BordeBaker or Mallin
Colorado
Outpost or El Engaño

Why we love this trip!

From the moment you arrive, you will be captivated by the stunning landscapes of Patagonia with its vast old-growth forests, granite formations, massive glaciers, fjords, wild rivers, clear lakes and waterfalls. It is the epitome of natural beauty. An extremely sensorial experience that comes from the taste of glacial water, the impressive force of the wind, and the subtle color palette of the scenery, Patagonia will capture your heart. On this trip, you will spend over a week hiking, rafting, and cruising through the wilderness of Northern Patagonia and enjoying its incredible beauty by land and by water. Winding its way through the region of Aysén, the Carretera Austral is the “last frontier” that remains very sparsely populated, so this trip attracts both adventurous travelers and those in search of solitude.

Of note:

- Weather is extremely variable and it is not uncommon to have clear blue skies, rain, snow, wind and more blue skies all in the same day.

DAY-BY-DAY HIGHLIGHTS

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UPSCAPE

Day 1	Flight to Balmaceda / Drive to Puerto Tranquilo / Marble Caves / Drive to Borde Baker / Overnight at BordeBaker or Mallin Colorado
Day 2	Full Day Trekking in Parque Patagonia / Overnight at BordeBaker or Mallin Colorado
Day 3	Full Day Calluqueo glacier / Overnight at BordeBaker or Mallin Colorado
Day 4	Rafting in Baker / Drive to Chile chico / Overnight at Outpost or El Engaño
Day 5	Activity in Jeinimeni / Overnight at Outpost or El Engaño
Day 6	Activity in Jeinimeni / Overnight at Outpost or El Engaño
Day 7	Drive to Balmaceda airport with Ferry Crossing

TRIP DESCRIPTION

Day 1

From Balmaceda, a small airport that serves the region capital of Coyhaique, we'll drive along this paved section of the famous Carretera Austral, past lenga forests and towering, raw Cerro Castillo, so named because it looks like a castle) and through wild Patagonian landscape. In a few hours we arrive to Puerto Tranquilo, a small town on the Carretera Austral, and most importantly, on the vast azure Lago General Carrera.

From here we will visit the Capillas de Mármol (known as the Marble Caves in English), striated limestone "caves" which are in fact, large rocky outcroppings that have been worn away underneath by thousands of years of water lapping at them. We will meet at the office and walk to the pier located a few meters along the edge of the Tranquilo River. We will start with a technical safety talk and start sailing for about 20 minutes until the first marble formations. We will navigate the caves by small boat in what is our first (official) photography session. Sunset comes long and late in this part of Patagonia, and we'll have lakeside opportunities to catch it.

Meals: --

Accommodation: BordeBaker or Mallin Colorado

UPSCAPE

Day 2

Today we will drive to visit Parque Patagonia which is the product of 20 years of conservation work by the late Doug Tompkins and his wife Kris to protect 2.2 million acres they purchased as part of their Conservación Patagónica project. Located in the Chacabuco Valley, the park is home to the highest levels of biodiversity in the Aysén region – you'll likely spot huemul deer, pumas, condors, and many endemic plants. The Park not only has a focus on environmental sustainability, but also on community engagement; many of the park rangers and conservation workers are former gauchos who have taken specialized training to develop these new skills. We will learn more about this straight from the source, in Parque Patagonia, from the rangers themselves.

Pick which excursion you would like to do today:

La Vega Trail (low difficulty)

Head out to La Vega Trail, which starts behind the Lodge and winds through the valley before arriving at the West Winds Campground, the first main campground of the park. You'll stop at the organic farm and greenhouse, and pass by the historic Valle Chacabuco cemetery, which contains the graves of several past residents (human and animal) of this area. You can return by the same trail or take the road that leads to the campground. The hike in its entirety is approximately 7 km (4.5 miles).

Lago Chico Loop (intermediate)

In the eastern sector of the Chacabuco Valley, the Lago Chico area has spectacular views of Lago Cochrane and Mt. San Lorenzo. Drive up the valley approximately 45 km (28 miles) until you reach the second road on the right (south) side of the road. Take this road up the hill to a parking area approximately 7 km (4.5 miles). From there, head out on the 12-km (7.5-mile) loop trail around Lago Chico or enjoy a shorter stroll to a scenic overlook.

Lagunas Altas (difficult)

The 23-km (14-mile) Lagunas Altas Trail starts at the West Winds Campground, just a short walk from the Lodge. The trail climbs up the hill, close to Tamanguito Peak, before winding around numerous alpine lakes and returning to the park headquarters. The trail is marked with rebar poles, and trail maps are available at the office. Allow at least six to eight hours to complete this route, and bring a picnic, water, warm layers, and sun protection.

La Confluencia (low difficulty)

UPSCAPE

One favorite spot, found where the Baker and Chacabuco Rivers meet, lies very close to the park's western entrance. Round-trip will take about three hours and is a 3 km (2 miles) trail. Drive to the crossroads of the main park road and the Carretera Austral, find a spot to park, and head down to the beach at the confluence. The walk down is approximately forty-five minutes. This is a great place to swim and relax.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: BordeBaker or Mallin Colorado

Day 3

We'll continue taking the road south-east from Cochrane, is located Calluqueo glacier, whose extraordinary beauty and imposing waterfalls, glaciers, lakes and mighty rivers, accompany the path to see the highest summit of Patagonia, the majestic San Lorenzo mountain, which marks the border with Argentina. Once arrived at kilometer fifty, the excursion will begin, located in the terminal moraine of the glacier. Equipped with the necessary implements we move towards the pier through small rocks dragged by glacial action until reaching the first formations of the terminal moraine left by the glacier. We will visit caves, cracks and formations made by the erosion of ice and water, which they shape the Calluqueo glacier day by day. It will be a 5 hour round trip hike, with arrests, time for photographs and to enjoy a wonderful experience on ice.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: BordeBaker or Mallin Colorado

Day 4

Rafting in Baker River. Rafting consists of descending through waters called white on inflatable rafts where rapids of different graduations are found depending on the difficulty.

Our service consists of rafting down the Baker River in class 2 and 3+ rapids mainly. This activity is carried out in the first 6 kilometers of the Baker River, starting from Lake Bertrand where the equipment that makes the descent is tuned.

According to our experience, this activity is suitable for people who like adventure, including family. The difficulty depends largely on the preparation of the team that makes the descent.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Outpost or El Engaño

UPSCAPE

Day 5

Full Day Hike Reserva Jeinimeni. This morning we'll make our way to the Jeinimeni National Reserve, made up of 160,000-hectares and named after the Jeinimeni Lake, which is known for its bright turquoise color. The scenic landscapes include the area's four ecosystems: deciduous forests, evergreen forests, steppe, and high peaks.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Outpost or El Engaño

Day 6

Full Day Hike Cueva de las Manos. The highlight of the Jeinimeni National reserve is the Cave of the Hands which we're going to be exploring today.

Once inside the cave, which is situated on the northern slope of the hill, you will find outlines of human hands in both positive, made by direct print, and negative, made using the stencil technique. These hands prints are said to be 10,000 years old and left by the Tehuelche Indians, who were the indigenous people of Patagonia.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Outpost or El Engaño

Day 7

Drive to Balmaceda airport with ferry crossing

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: --

ACCOMMODATIONS

BordeBaker Lodge – 3 nights

Located eight kilometers south of Puerto Bertland, in the heart of the Chilean Patagonia, Borde Baker Lodge sits on the banks of the Baker River, the widest in Chile and one of the best fishing spots. Among fishing, guests can also enjoy trekking, rafting, horseback riding and birdwatching. The Lodge itself is surrounded by native forest full of a number of different species of animals and birds such as huemul (Andean deer), guanaco (Andean camelid), grey fox, puma, hare, condors, eagles, woodpeckers and more. Borde Baker has many activities for guests to choose from, such as trekking, sport fishing, rafting, horseback riding and birdwatching. With this in mind, the Lodge was designed to ensure sustainable development and encourage ecotourism. Even the kitchen supply of fruits and vegetables is organically grown by locals and dishes are drawn from authentic, Patagonian cuisine using traditional techniques, allowing guests to truly experience every aspect the Chilean Patagonia has to offer.

OR

Mallín Colorado – 3 nights

Mallín Colorado lodges its clients in cabins, with excellent views to the great General Carrera Lake, isolated and in a private and harmonious environment with the landscape. They are rustic cabins built with native woods, very comfortable and elegantly equipped, surrounded by a well-kept park of Native trees, to accommodate a total of 18 people.

The cabins have a vitrified parquet floor, the beds have a box spring mattress, natural pen down, wood stoves and huge windows with extraordinary views over Lake General Carrera.

On an area of 12 hectares located high above Lake General Carrera, Mallín Colorado has distributed its four cabins in a very independent way one from the other, guaranteeing privacy and exclusivity for those seeking to get away from mass tourism and enjoy silence and peace of the most rugged and virgin landscape.

Being in the cabin appreciating the spectacular views, it will seem the best way to rest. We guarantee a very good sleep and a better awakening.

Each client will also find in his cabin a white pure cotton robe, a pair of slippers to get up, two chocolates on his nightstand and amenities in the bathroom.

UPSCAPE

Outpost – 3 nights

Patagonia is considered by many to be the final frontier of the New World. Vast pampas dotted with the occasional estancia and trees molded by the fierce Patagonian wind form an isolated landscape. While tourism has discovered the more southern regions (and for good reason), the lesser-known region of Aysén, offers perhaps a little less accessibility and many more opportunities to get completely off-the-grid. Set on the shores of the Jeinimeni River, a legendary sportfishing spot, just a few hours drive off of the Carretera Austral, Outpost Patagonia is a pop-up camp, complete with kitchen and living room dome tents, private guest tents with living rooms and insulated sleeping pods and shared tent bathroom/showers.

OR

El Engaño – 3 nights

We have three types of buildings, which have been conceived with an architecture associated with the place, with clean forms, absence of eaves and a geometry that recalls the geometric regularity of the hills that surround Chile Chico. Our proposal values the landscape and light, as the main design search.

We have also opted for a constructive technique based on SIP Structural Insulated Panel, which allows walls of thickness of up to 20 centimeters with a polystyrene core allowing adequate thermal control in buildings which added to the use of thermo windows panel brings a pleasant feeling of shelter and warmth to our facilities.

UPSCAPE

What's included in our pricing:

- Car rental
- All overnight accommodations
- Meals as listed in trip description
- All experiences listed in trip description
- All entrance fees
- Ferry crossing from Chile Chico to Puerto Ibáñez

What's additional:

- International and domestic flights
- Travel insurance
- Tips for drivers and guides