



## **PATAGONIA FRONTIERS**

A Wilderness Education, Adventure,  
and Nature Conservancy Ranch

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# The Gaucho Way

7-DAY SUPPORTED TREK  
IN PATAGONIA, CHILE

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Discover a pristine and unknown part of wild Patagonia, famed for its untouched natural beauty.

Our wilderness home is located in the Soler Valley along the water's edge of Lago Plomo in the Aysén Region of Patagonia, Chile. The waters of Lago Plomo are the furthest western extension of South America's second largest lake, Lago General Carrera. Our ranches are situated in the center of an immense, wild terrain of crystalline lakes, deep blue rivers, clean mountain streams, broad valleys, ancient forests and spectacular, glaciated peaks. They are sentinel to nearly 2,000 square kilometers of navigable lake waters and a private gateway to a vast mountain topography encompassing surrounding national parks, the Northern Patagonia Icefield and numerous adjacent ranges.

Fill your lungs with fresh, clean air while listening to the natural rhythm of lake waves hitting rocky shores, and the soft thumping of horse hooves connecting with the earth. Participate in the custom of sharing mate, a local tea.

Enjoy a deliciously prepared meal in community with others. Share a glass of wine and stories around a campfire. Identify the Southern Cross amongst the night's sparkling stars. Cup your hands in pure, frigid water and enjoy the sweet taste of a mountain brook.

**The Gaucho Way** is our signature route. It follows traditional paths used by the Gauchos, Chilean cowboys who are friends and neighbors. On horseback, they herd cattle to market and return to their homesteads with flour, sugar, yerba mate and other sundries. The Gaucho Way denotes both their passage through the mountain landscape and their distinctive, gracious culture.

We hope that this sample itinerary highlights what this trip offers. Ideally, each trip is best crafted by working together with our guests to best meet their needs. Each trip's length, activity types, and skill level may be adapted to meet a party's goals and desires.

Whether you choose an established itinerary or create one of your own, our commitment is to accommodate your interests and to provide you with a thoroughly enjoyable, safe and memorable experience. We look forward to hosting you at our wilderness ranch home.

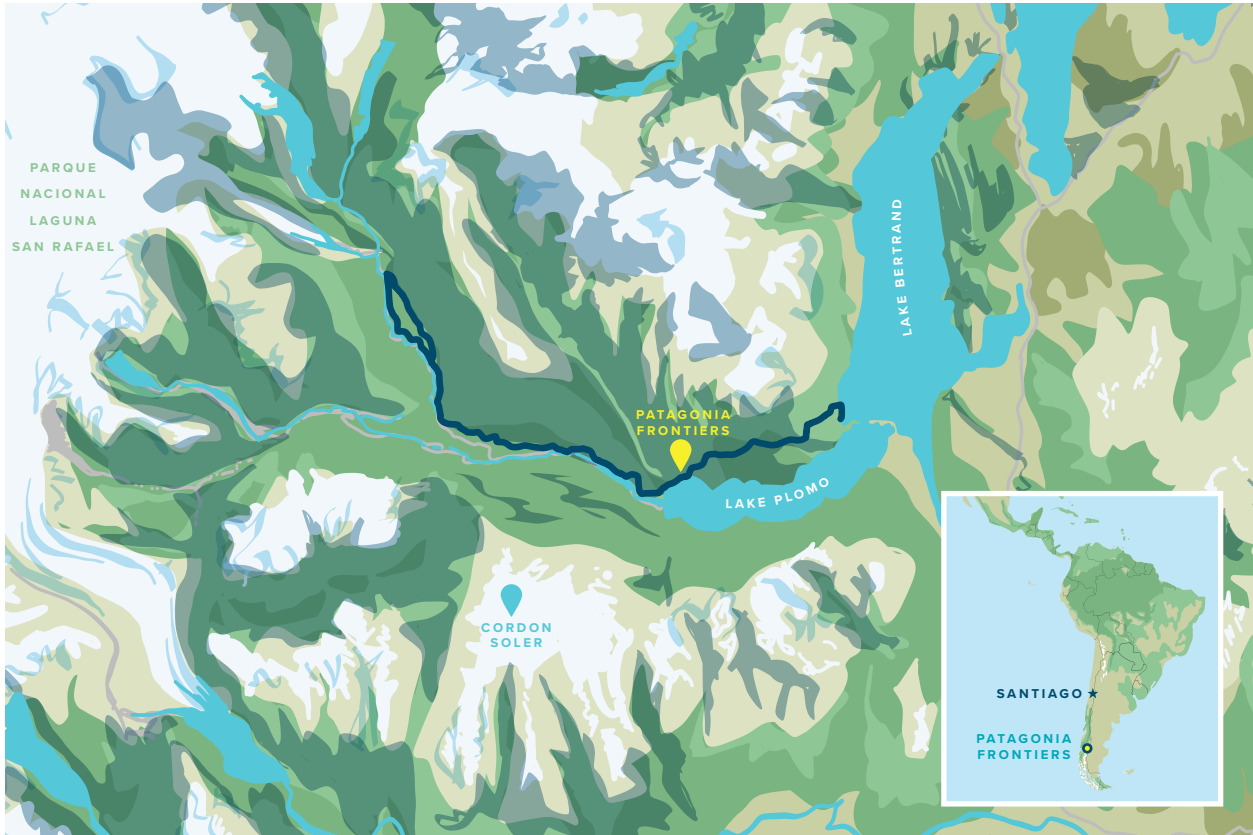
Our connection with the natural world, and who we share it with, is part of what we value most in life.

Prices in US dollars

[\\*See terms and conditions](#)

# The Gaucho Way

DAY BY DAY AT A GLANCE



Day	Accommodations	Summarized Program	Distance
		Depart country of origin on international flight to Santiago, Chile (SCL).	
1	Guest House, Main Ranch	Arrive Santiago. Domestic flight to Balmaceda Regional Airport (BBA). Private transfer to Puerto Bertrand. Boat shuttle to Patagonia Frontiers Main Ranch.	300 km. (6 hours), 16 km (1 hour boat shuttle)
2	Guest House, Main Ranch	Boat shuttle with full-day hike finishing at main ranch.	12 km. (7 mi.)
3	Tent Camp	Begin multi-day supported trek in Soler Valley and Cacho Valley.	12 km. (7 mi.)
4	Tent Camp	Trek to view Northern Patagonia Icefield.	12-18 km. (7-11 mi.)
5	Guest House, Main Ranch	Complete supported trek. Celebratory Patagonia BBQ.	12-16 km. (7-10 mi.)
6	Local Guest Cabin or Bed and Breakfast	Boat shuttle to Puerto Bertrand. Option for day hike or raft the Baker River.	16 km (1 hour boat shuttle)
7		Private transfer to Balmaceda Regional Airport. Domestic flight to Santiago. Begin international flight.	300 km. (6 hours)
		Arrive final destination.	



# Detailed Itinerary



Depart your country of origin on an international flight to Santiago, Chile (SCL).

## DAY 1

Upon arrival to the Santiago airport (SCL), you transfer to a domestic flight. Your driver will meet you at the regional Balmaceda airport (BBA) where you will continue your journey. You will travel south on the Austral Highway on paved and improved gravel roads. Within 300 kilometers of driving you will pass two small villages, Villa Cerro Castillo, at the foot of its impressive peak, and Puerto Río Tranquilo, a village on the shores of Lago General Carrera, Chile's largest lake, and South America's second largest lake.

You will continue south, poised between the deep blue waters of the lake and the sharp, snowy peaks flanking the Northern Patagonia Icefield. You will arrive at the tiny hamlet of Puerto Bertrand, located at the headwaters of the Baker River, Chile's largest volume river, a world-class fishery and the centerpiece of a dormant, yet contentious dam-building project by the Spanish Energy Consortium, Endesa.

Puerto Bertrand is your departure point for Patagonia Frontiers. You board a boat and travel 16 kilometers (10 mi.) across two connected lakes to reach our dock and main ranch. There are no roads here. Once you've met your guides and staff and had a look around you'll get settled into your accommodations in the guest house.

Driving time is approximately six hours, with a one-hour boat shuttle.

Note: If you are already in the area then we can begin the trip directly in Puerto Bertrand.

## DAY 2

After a boat shuttle, you will begin today's hike. The trail rises up intermittently forested slopes to a high shoulder overlooking the joining of waters between Lago Bertrand and Lago Plomo. These waters connect through a breach in the long, narrow moraine that forms a peninsula separating the two lakes. This short gap demarcates where the deep blue of Lago Bertrand abruptly changes to the jade green of Lago Plomo.

After the trail's initial ascent, you hike along rocky outcroppings, across high alpine valleys, and through enchanted forests of moss-covered beech trees. The glaciated peaks are at your shoulder, and the waters of the lake are below your feet. Keep an eye skyward in search of an Andean condor with its distinctively broad wingspan. Near the lake's end are spectacular views far up the Soler Valley and beyond to where the afternoon sun stands watch over the enormous expanse of the Patagonia Icefield summits.

Finish the day with a descent past a marble outcropping, sculpted by time and the elements, and walk across a forested pasture to the dock, boats, houses, and barns of the main ranch, all of which you've been glimpsing from a distance. It will be a long, satisfying day finished with a wholesome meal, a glass of fine Chilean wine, and falling asleep in the rustic, comfortable guest house accompanied by the sounds of the horses soft grazing on home pasture.

Trekking distance is approximately 12 kilometers (7 mi.).

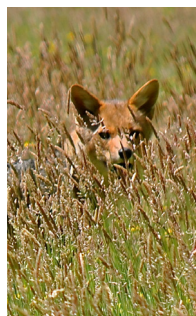
## DAY 3

Begin the day with yerba mate, a bitter tea sipped from a gourd through a metal straw. It is a traditional start to any Patagonia day and an important social custom. After a hearty breakfast, we will prepare for our trek up the Soler Valley, toward the icefield. You'll follow horse trails and carry only the essentials in your daypack. There are several short creek crossings so don't forget those sandals or water shoes.

The long valleys, lush temperate forests and mountain peaks offer a wide variety of terrain in which to trek and it's not uncommon to see soaring condors or even the elusive huemul, a small endangered deer that appears on the Chilean coat of arms. The varied terrain means that you'll be able to experience everything from craggy mountain trails to long, sandy beaches, and always with a backdrop of the majestic mountain panorama.

Tonight's destination is situated on the banks of the Cacho River. This tent camp is located just beyond the intersection of two large valleys facing each other across the Soler Valley floor. This is one of our favorite spots and we always sense energy here, be it from the massive peaks, the open space, the flowing water, or the pristine landscape. There's contentment here in an evening fire while enjoying good company and watching the horses graze against a slowly darkening backdrop that reveals southern stars above white, jagged peaks.

Trekking distance is approximately 12 kilometers (7 mi.).



#### DAY 4

Mate and breakfast are served around a campfire as you watch the long, creeping approach of the morning's sun slip down from the peak tops to the valley floor. Today, you will hike and explore an untouched depth of wild Patagonia that is seldom revealed.

If the day is clear, your views will encompass the surrounding peaks and glaciers, five and six thousand feet in elevation above you and the awe-inspiring and formidable Northern Patagonia Icefield, with Cerro Hyades standing firm at the head of the Cacho Valley. The difference in elevation between the valley floor at the far end of our Cacho Ranch and the summit of this monumental peak is 10,000 feet!

Along the way is the old-growth forest of Coigüe, or Dombey's beech, with its elegant branches and thick, lustrous evergreen leaves. The large Magellanic woodpecker is frequently seen or heard here, with its resoundingly deep echo reverberating through the air as it searches for grubs in the ruin of aged trunks. This is also home to the endangered huemul, or South Andean Deer, as well as predators such as the Geoffroy's Cat, Patagonian Fox, and Puma. Hidden in plain view, inconspicuous amongst the grandeur of the landscape, is a marble mountainside.

Weather, river levels, the group's pace, and energy levels will ultimately influence the furthest point of the trek. If conditions permit, it is possible to reach as far as the massive glacier's edge before returning to the tent camp for the night.

**Trekking distance may vary and is approximately 12-18 kilometers (7-11 mi.).**

#### DAY 5

As the morning sunlight edges toward camp, you'll sip yerba mate around a fire, and marvel as the light plays over the peaks of snow, ice and rock. There's plenty of time to take in the beauty before packing up camp and heading back home down valley. Upon departing, we will travel one of several routes back down the valley to the main ranch.

The evening will include a Patagonia barbecue. Guests, staff and neighbors traditionally all share in this feast over an open fire of meat, new potatoes, fresh salad from the greenhouse, bread and wine. Don't be surprised if you find yourself staying up late to listen to the strumming of a guitar and a soft, Spanish melody.

**Trekking distance is approximately 12-16 kilometers (7-10 mi.).**

#### DAY 6

Breathe in the refreshing, cool morning air. Spend the morning on a stroll along the beach, or through the orchards, gardens, and greenhouses. Take a walk in the pasture and share a moment with the horses, or relax as you prepare to say goodbye to the ranch before departing by boat to Puerto Bertrand.

The dock there is the departure point for a whitewater rafting descent of the crystal-clear powerhouse that is the Baker River. You can alternatively choose to have an additional day at the ranch relaxing and exploring or if you prefer more vigorous activity a longer day hike instead of rafting.

Overnight in a local guest cabin, or bed and breakfast.

**Additional add-on excursions and activities available upon request. \*pricing will vary:**

- Visit marble caves and chapel in Pto. Tranquilo, and Exploradores Glacier.
- Visit the Confluencia, the junction of the mighty Baker and Nef rivers, Chacabuco Valley, site of the newly formed Patagonia National Park, and frontier town of Cochrane.
- Visit town of Caleta Tortel, with its intricate boardwalks.
- Additional trekking days.

#### DAY 7

Depart for the Balmaceda airport, home.