

Patagonia

Pre-Departure & Travel Information

Reminders

Please make sure you have completed the following before your course departure date:

- Registration Form (needs to be submitted along with a deposit to secure your space on a course)
- Health Form (30 days prior to departure)
- Rental Equipment Form (30 days prior to departure)
- Release, Acknowledgment of Risk and Indemnity Agreement (30 days prior to departure)
- Travel itinerary to IWLS office (30 days prior to departure)
- Copy of Passport to IWLS office (30 days prior to departure)
- Paid in Full (90 days prior to departure)

Chile

Chile is a beautiful country with incredible diversity. It is located on the southern end of South America on the west coast. Chile is a very developed country that is politically and economically stable.

Santiago

Our travel arrangements will take us through Santiago and it is easy to arrange to spend time here before or after our trek. It is a large city of approx. 5 million people. It is colorful and full of interesting history, markets and parks. It is located in the central part of Chile and the climate is predominantly hot and sunny!

Punta Arenas

Punta Arenas is a coastal city, filled with fascinating history of the early settlers. It is also a major departure point for ships going to Tierra Del Fuego and Antarctica. Punta Arenas is well known for its unique architecture and excellent seafood! This is where we will begin and end our trip.

Puerto Natales

Puerto Natales is a small fishing village located in Southern Chile. It is a beautiful town surrounded by high peaks with glaciers that flow to the ocean. It is the last city that we will visit before entering Torres Del Paine National Park.

Arrival Information

Day 0: Pre-trip meeting at 6pm at Erratic Rock Hostel for Backpackers, Puerto Natales, Chile

Day 1: This is the start date listed on the website. Meet at Erratic Rock, Puerto Natales, Chile at 9:00 AM.

We will have an IWLS representative available for pickup the day prior to the start date of the course. If you are arriving early in the morning or late in the evening please contact us for special arrangements. Again, please notify the IWLS office of your expected arrival or flight information as soon as possible and let us know of any delays for changes.

Airline Tickets



Make certain that your ticket matches the full name on your passport. Plan your arrival in Puerto Natales no later than 6pm the night before your course start date. If time permits, we recommend arriving one day early to provide leeway for any flight or baggage connection trouble. Please make certain that we have your flight and arrival information so that we can meet you at the airport! Always reconfirm your flights within 72 hours of departure time.

Airline Routing and/or Other Travel Options

Most flights go through LA or Miami to Santiago, Chile then connect to Punta Arenas. It is also possible to schedule flights through Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Baggage

Typically you are allowed two 50 lb. bags at no extra charge. For bags weighing 50-70 lbs. there is usually an additional charge per bag. It is often cheaper to have two bags over 50 lbs. than a third bag. If you travel through other countries for a stopover you may be charged excess baggage fees for anything over 44lbs. (20 kilos) each flight. If possible, pack your backpack and gear inside a large duffel bag.

Photocopy all Documents

Make certain to copy your passport, airline tickets, credit cards, traveler's checks, immunization book, etc. This can be very helpful in the event that anything is lost or stolen. It is also a good idea to send an electronic copy of your documents to a personal email account.

Passport

A passport is required for all international travel with IWLS. Please make a photocopy of your passport and send it to the IWLS office. Check the expiration date of your passport and have it renewed. Some countries will not allow you to enter the country if your passport expires within 6 months of your return date.

Visas

No visa is required before arriving in the country. A visa will be issued upon your arrival and is good for 90 days.

Immunizations

There may be some suggested immunizations based on the location of your course. We recommend that you check with your doctor for the most current immunization information. Another good resource is the [CDC website](http://www.cdc.gov). If you have received immunizations, either in the past, or for this trip, make certain to bring your immunization book/card.

Arrival and Departure Taxes

There is an entrance tax of \$20 for U.S. citizens which is paid upon arrival. Leaving Chile you will be required to pay an \$18 departure tax. Both of these can be paid in U.S. dollars.

Currency

In Chile the exchange rate is 450-460 pesos to one dollar. Traveler's checks and cash are both easily exchangeable. ATM's with the Cirrus network are widely available and work well. You can usually withdraw up to \$300 a day from your account, check with your bank before traveling.





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Language

Spanish is the language of Chile, but English is common.

Sending Money

We recommend bringing at least \$500 USD for international courses and \$250 for domestic courses in cash or travelers checks. This money is to cover any personal expenses before or after your course. If you are planning on traveling in-conjunction with your course the suggested amounts above may not be enough. Always carry a credit card for emergencies as well, however they are not accepted in all locations so make sure you have enough cash for the necessary expenses.

Local Transportation

From Punta Arenas we will take a private van, or first class bus for the scenic, three-hour, drive through Patagonia to the hotel at Puerto Natales.

Time Zones

Chile is East Coast Time plus 4 hours.

Climate

Santiago is warm at this time of year with temperatures generally in the 80's and 90's, while trekking temperatures can vary from warm days, to cooler nights. In Patagonia there is always the chance of rain as well.

Photography

A small, lightweight, 35mm camera with three to ten rolls of film, depending on how much you like to shoot, is recommended. If you use a digital camera consider how many batteries and memory cards you will need to bring. Remember to keep the bulk and weight to a minimum.

Food

Approximately four days of our food will be in restaurants. Our food for the huts and while camping is brought from the U.S. The local food is quite good, as are the Chilean wines! Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions.

Drinking Water

All of our water will be treated with Iodine, water filters, or boiling. Be safe and treat all water, or drink bottled water before any big trip. The Polar Pure Crystal Iodine system is convenient and works well. Filters also work well, but are heavy and slower to use.

Medical

Please consult your physician and have them complete the health form provided by IWLS. If you require any personal medications, or, have any pre-existing medical problems, make certain to re-confirm with your guide upon arrival. Furthermore, IWLS requires that all students have their own health insurance. Individuals are solely responsible for any medical costs, including all associated rescue, evacuation, and transportation costs. Please take time to review



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your medical insurance policy. Make certain that your coverage extends to the location of your course, and that it provides coverage for any potential, associated, costs. Many policies will provide coverage for travel abroad for a small additional fee. AIG travel guard, listed below, offers temporary health insurance for an additional fee.

Medications

Please make sure you have the following medications for personal use on your IWLS course:

- All prescription and/or non-prescription medications you are currently taking.
- A broad-spectrum antibiotic prescribed by your doctor (this is required).
- Aspirin or Ibuprofen

The following high altitude medications are required, in conjunction with the general medications listed above, for all IWLS courses that go above 15,000ft. (Mexico Volcanoes, Ecuador Volcanoes, Aconcagua, Kilimanjaro, Nepal):

- Acetazolamide, also known as Diamox can be taken to help in the acclimatization process and/or to relieve the symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness or AMS.
- Dexamethasone, also known as Decadron can be taken to relieve the symptoms of High Altitude Cerebral Edema or HACE.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is required for international courses and highly recommend for domestic courses. In many case travel insurance will cover medical expenses, evacuation costs, lost baggage, travel delays, and other costs in the event you need to cancel your trip. We have worked with almost every provider of travel insurance and feel strongly that the Adventure Travel Protection Plan from AIG/ Travel Guard is the best one available. It is one of the only plans that covers high altitude climbing and has significant benefits if purchased within 15 days of making your trip deposit. Details can be found on [our website](#).



Lodging / Hotels

If you are planning on arriving in Punta Arenas early, or, if you wish to extend your stay after the trip, we would happy to assist you with hotel reservations. In Punta Arenas we stay at a comfortable Hotel with great food.

Will there be a place for me to store my things while I'm on the course?

Yes, we are able to securely store extra possessions at our hotel, Erratic Rock in Puerto Natales.

What should I bring on the first day?

All your personal clothing and equipment for your course.

Training and Fitness





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Your course will consist of long days of moderate activity which will require good aerobic (endurance) conditioning. You should create a well-rounded work out plan prior to your course which combines endurance, strength, flexibility and balance. Depending on the nature of your course the training program will vary slightly but the underlying principle should be aerobic conditioning. Examples of aerobic exercises include running, cycling, Nordic skiing, and swimming. Ideally you want to start your work out with a warm up of 5-10 minutes at 50-60% of your maximum heart rate, then continue for another 20-60 minutes at 65-80% of your maximum heart rate, and finish with a cool down of 5-10 minutes at 50-60% of your maximum heart rate. This should be practiced 3-4 times a week for up to eight weeks before your course start date. A strength-training workout (ie. weight-lifting) could be a good supplement to your work out plan, but not a substitute. Good conditioning will not only improve your chances for success but will also improve the quality of your course. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions on specific training programs. The possibilities are endless, so get creative and have fun!

Our Instructors

IWLS instructors are widely recognized as some of the very best in their field and have practical leadership experience from around the globe. They are well trained and have an uncommon enthusiasm for sharing their skill and knowledge, borne out of a passion for outdoor exploration. IWLS leaders are technically skilled, passionate about wilderness, and committed to each and every student. Their dedication insures each student an educational experience that will exceed their expectations!

In addition to the technical skills, IWLS instructors are equally experts in the “softer skills” of risk management, client care, and group dynamics. Not only will they insure a quality experience for each student, but will also work to impart this judgment to them.

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