

1. **Tipping:** Tipping is optional in Argentina and Chile. In restaurants, it's common to leave a tip of around 10-15% of the bill while in restaurants. In Chile you may see the suggested tip detailed on the tickets. It's not always included. For guides and taxi drivers, a small tip is appreciated, and for guides, it's typical to offer around \$5/10 USD per day per person. It's advisable to carry some cash in local currency (Argentine Peso and Chilean Peso) for tips or USD dollars are also well accepted.

I've attached a document with suggested tips for each type of service. Please note that these are entirely for **reference**.

- guidance per person on tips: a) when guide is with us all the time, like on private tour; when on shared tour; when local guide used in addition

It always remains at the discretion of the passengers and what they deem appropriate to leave, considering whether they are satisfied with the provided service.

When dining at a restaurant, the bill will include the suggested tip of 10%. They always inquire if the customer would like to leave it; if accepted, it's added to the bill. If unsatisfied with the service, customers can choose not to leave it.

- **Hotel Porters: USD 1 per bag.**
- **Guides on Transfers: USD 5 per passenger.**
- **Guides on a Half Day Tour: USD 5 per passenger.**
- **Guides on a Full Day Tour: USD 10 per passenger.**
- **Drivers on Transfers: USD 5 per passenger.**
- **Drivers on a Half Day Tour: USD 5 per passenger.**
- **Drivers on a Full Day Tour: USD 10 per passenger.**

As I mentioned before, this is subjective, and we recommend that it's left to the passengers' discretion, without seeing it as an obligation.

2. **Payment:** Credit cards are widely accepted in restaurants, shops, and taxis in larger cities like Buenos Aires and Santiago. However, in smaller towns and remote areas, cash might be more convenient.

You can use ATMs in Argentina and Chile to withdraw local currency. It's a good idea to have some local currency on hand for smaller expenses.

ARGENTINA:

Since the Argentinean government introduced some years ago tough currency change restrictions on its people, a black market on the USD and Euros has emerged meaning that there are two exchange rates you can access.

The official exchange rate is the one you get from the ATMs or exchanging money at banks; while the parallel or unofficial exchange rate, is the one you get for cash at currency exchange houses. The parallel rate A.K.A. the "Blue Dollar" rate varies on a daily basis and can be as much as 100% more than the official rate.

As Trips SouthAmerica we will always suggest exchanging your money at an official outlet for the official price. In case of are interested in going to an unofficial trader and getting it changed at the "blue" rate for more cash, ask at the reception of your hotel for directions, and be sure to bring large bills in good condition. One thing to keep in mind is that, since the dollar

Main number From USA
+54 11 525 40404 +1 904 6851 1586

www.trips-southamerica.com | info@trips-southamerica.com

 /tripsouthamerica  @tripsouthamerica  @tsouthamerica

Emergency Phone
+54 9 3757 61 4139

blue is not an official currency, it is not backed by any government or central bank. This means that there is always a risk that it could lose value suddenly if the demand for dollars decreases if the government takes steps to crack down on its use or if you get fake Pesos bills while on the transaction.

What we do suggest is to always have some Argentinean Pesos in cash since some towns and smaller shops around the country will ONLY accept cash as payment.

Calculator to see Dolar - Pesos Exchange Rate:

<https://usa.visa.com/support/consumer/travel-support/exchange-rate-calculator.html>

We recommend a mix of both, **bringing USD dollars to exchange in here, and bringing credit cards (commonly accepted: VISA :)**

3. **Safety:** Buenos Aires is generally safe for walking, especially in tourist areas. Exercise caution in crowded places and be mindful of your belongings. In smaller towns like El Chaltén and El Calafate, safety concerns are relatively low, but it's always wise to take standard precautions. 😊
4. **English:** In major cities and tourist areas, you'll find some standard level of English spoken, especially in hotels and restaurants.
5. **Tourist Information:** Yes, you can find tourist information offices in El Chaltén and El Calafate, offering maps and information about hiking trails. The length of hikes varies, with some shorter day hikes and longer multi-day treks like the W-trek. You can find further information in the [Drive Link](#) I shared.
6. **Self-Guided Hikes:** The starting points of self-guided hikes can vary. Some may be within walking distance from your hotel, while others might require transport. Taxis are generally available. We recommend arranging both routes at the hotel. There's not much signal in El Chalten at all.

I highly recommend downloading and using the **MAPS.ME app**, which has somewhat ugly maps for driving but is very useful for this trekking, as it also had all the references to know the times from one place to another.

So, once you've downloaded the app on your iPhone or Android, you can also download maps of Argentina. It's very easy and intuitive to do. Just search for the location, and it will prompt you to download the maps.

7. **Logistical Issues:** In the following days, you'll receive a Virtual Welcome kit with all the information needed for your trip such as the updated e-tickets; itinerary with pick up times; extra information about the destination that you'll be visiting and Emergency contact (e-mail/WhatsApp/calling number). It's the same number that will be joining your WhatsApp group. Please take note that it's mainly for Emergencies.
8. **Emergencies:** In case of an accident or emergency, you can dial emergency services in Argentina and Chile by calling 911. Cellular service might be limited in remote hiking areas, so it's advisable to hike with a group or inform the reception at the hotel about your plans every day. It's a common procedure for all self-guided trekkers.

You may then call our Emergency contact number and we'll do our best to deliver you to Health Assistance in destination.

Main number From USA
+54 11 525 40404 +1 904 6851 1586

www.trips-southamerica.com | info@trips-southamerica.com

 /tripsouthamerica  @tripsouthamerica  @tsouthamerica

Emergency Phone
+54 9 3757 61 4139

9. **W-Trek:** For the W-trek, you'll typically carry your own belongings for the duration of the trek. There is no bag transfer service. I already sent you the price for porter which is quite expensive. As you have fully equipped Shelter and all meals covered, it's not worth it. Be prepared with essentials like shampoo, and soap are included for the refugees along the route. You'll be given a quick-dry towel with the welcome kit for the Trekk.

10. **Luggage:** Most travellers prefer backpacks for the W-trek, as they are more convenient for hiking. However, for the rest of your trip, standard luggage or a combination of luggage and backpacks should suffice.

You'll leave your big luggage at the hotel in Puerto Natales and just carry the necessary clothes and items for the W Express on a bag pack.

11. **Currency:** It's recommended to carry some local currency in both Argentine Pesos and Chilean Pesos. ATMs are readily available in major cities. US dollars are generally accepted in some places, but it's better to use local currency for most transactions. Credit cards are widely accepted.

REFERENTIAL CONVERSION:

1 USD AMERICAN DOLLAR – 700 PESOS ARGENTINOS (Blue RATE) – 366 official rate (Referential rates by 28/September) it may change.

1 USD AMERICAN DOLLAR – 900 PESOS CHILENOS (Referential rates by 28/September) it may change.

Canadian dollar are not usually received it. You may change Canadian dollar into US dollar in your country to bring here.

12. **Hiking Poles:** Hiking poles are not strictly necessary but can be useful, especially for challenging terrains. It's a personal preference. You can ask them once you arrive at your hotel at El Chalten. They have rental items.

13. **Wi-Fi:** Wi-Fi availability can vary in Patagonia. While some accommodations offer Wi-Fi, it may be limited or slow in remote areas, such as during the W-trek and at El Chalten.

14. **Travel Advisory:** Indeed, Santiago de Chile will be hosting the Pan American Games during October and November. The city is expected to experience high demand. However, your accommodation and tour services are already confirmed. We simply recommend being patient in crowded areas and paying attention to your belongings, as you would in any capital city hosting major events.

15. **Safety in Cities:** Exercise standard precautions in cities. Stick to well-lit areas, avoid displaying valuable items, and be cautious in crowded places.

16. **Luggage Limit:** The luggage limit for internal flights may vary by airline, so check with your airline for specific details. Please find in attachment the measures and weight for both Aerolineas Argentinas and Sky Airlines (Chile) Carry-on luggage is a good idea for important items.

17. **Adapters:** Argentina, Patagonia, and Chile use Type C and Type L electrical plugs. You may need a universal adapter for your devices.

Main number From USA
+54 11 525 40404 +1 904 6851 1586

www.trips-southamerica.com | info@trips-southamerica.com

 /tripsouthamerica  @tripsouthamerica  @tsouthamerica

Emergency Phone
+54 9 3757 61 4139

18. **Free Time:** During free days in cities, you can explore local neighbourhoods, visit museums, enjoy local cuisine, or simply relax. Your local guides can provide recommendations.
19. **Visas:** Canada does not require a visa for Argentina, and vice versa. As previously mentioned, Australia and New Zealand do require a visa to enter Chile.
20. **Helpful Tips:** Stay hydrated, wear layers for changing weather, carry snacks for hikes, respect the environment, and embrace the local culture and cuisine. Stay flexible and be prepared for explore the Patagonia Charm!

You can watch these videos created by the National Park team that offers these programs to address some of your doubts”:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mevmukbi8yQ&ab_channel=ReservaLasTorresPatagonia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtcJI7E8B7w&ab_channel=ReservaLasTorresPatagonia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmgEt7647NU&ab_channel=ReservaLasTorresPatagonia

If you want to have more control and double check over your flights, you can download the app for both airlines and enter the provided booking codes to stay updated as well.

- You can also do web check-in 48 hours on the app, before each flight.

ESTIMATES RATES/PRICES

- average two-course standard meal: **USD 25/30 PER PERSON**
- bottle of Wine **USD 15/20**
- bottle of beer **USD 6**
- cup of coffee **USD 3**
- bocadillo **USD 10/15**
- museum entry (when not included in itinerary) **AVERAGE USD 10/12**

Main number **+54 11 525 40404** From USA **+1 904 6851 1586**

www.trips-southamerica.com | info@trips-southamerica.com

 /tripsouthamerica  @tripsouthamerica  @tsouthamerica

Emergency Phone
+54 9 3757 61 4139