

PATAGONIA

PEAKS, PENGUINS & PUMAS

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden
with Mark Fisher, Vice President of Facilities, Planning, and Sustainability
March 1-11, 2025



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Embark on a journey through nature's most breathtaking landscapes, to witness iconic species of Patagonian wildlife. Our quest begins in the southernmost tip of South America in the straits of Magellan and on the island of Tierra del Fuego, where we'll encounter the recently established and world's most accessible colony of the stunning King Penguin. In Torres del Paine National Park, we'll seek out the majestic Puma, known as the 'Lion of the Andes' in the shadows of the dramatic Paine peaks, one of the finest natural places on earth.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 nights with 3 full days of exploration in Torres del Paine National Park, searching for Puma and other wildlife.
- Visit the world's most accessible and only continental King Penguin Colony in Tierra del Fuego.
- Search for other cetaceans and marine mammals such as Peale's, Commerson's and Chilean dolphins; sea lions, fur seals.
- Observe abundant birdlife including Andean Condors, Magellanic penguins, birds on land, coast and sea.

ITINERARY SUMMARY

- Santiago Airport, 1 night
- Punta Arenas, 2 nights
- Porvenir, 2 nights
- Torres del Paine National Park, 4 nights

Activity: Moderate scenic walks of approximately 1 hour / 1.5 miles at a time, with an elevation change of 160-1,000 ft. at a gentle pace. Maximum elevation 1,000 ft above sea level.



YOUR HOST

MARK FISHER
Vice President of Facilities,
Planning, and Sustainability



As a graduate of University of Cincinnati Civil and Environmental Engineering program, Mark dedicated the initial twelve years of his professional career as a project manager at Turner Construction Company, with a significant focus on managing construction projects at the Cincinnati Zoo. In 2006, he transitioned to the Zoo, contributing to its transformation by reimagining its future. Mark's diverse role encompasses overseeing the execution of the Zoo's master plan, leading visioning efforts, supporting the operations of the Zoo's 800 acres of farmland in Warren and Clermont counties, supporting the Zoo's grounds and infrastructure maintenance teams, and fostering community relationships in Avondale.

Notably, Mark spearheads the nationally recognized sustainability movement at the Zoo, achieving remarkable success in implementing a groundbreaking green building program and reducing natural resource consumption. Beyond work, he enjoys exploring the American West's mountains with his wife and four children, actively pursuing personal goals of visiting every US National Park and climbing all of Colorado's 14,000-foot peaks.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

DAY 1 DEPART

Saturday, March 1, 2025

Independent departures from the US on overnight flights to Santiago, Chile. *Meals in flight*

DAY 2 ARRIVALS

Sunday, March 2

Early morning arrival at Santiago Airport Hotel with early check in. You'll be met upon arrival and assisted with hotel check-in. Take some time to freshen up, before we begin our exploration of Santiago. Lunch in a restaurant in Santiago. Afternoon Santiago city tour; Dinner in airport hotel restaurant included.

Holiday Inn Santiago Airport. Meals L,D

DAY 3 FLY TO PUNTA ARENAS – ANDEAN CONDOR

Monday, March 3

Early morning included domestic flight to Punta Arenas.

Drive to the Rio Verde in order to see one of the world's largest flying birds, the Andean Condor. Palomares Hill is a conglomerate rock promontory overlooking the Fitz Roy channel and the huge Riesco Island, where over a hundred Andean condors typically roost. From the top of the hill, we will have excellent viewing and photography opportunities as the huge birds soar around us, against the backdrop of this mighty scenery, an impressive beginning of our Patagonia exploration. After our condor session, we will drive back to Punta Arenas and check in at our hotel. Enjoy a welcome dinner accompanied by Chilean wines.

Hotel Cabo de Hornos Meals B,L,D

DAY 4 PUNTA ARENAS - MAGDALENA ISLAND'S MAGELLANIC PENGUINS

Tuesday, March 4

We'll set out early for an exploration by sea and land, travelling by boat to Magdalena Island, in the waters of the Straits of Magellan. This protected area holds a huge Magellanic Penguin colony of more than 100,000 individuals. Besides penguins, several other seabird species such as Imperial & Rock Cormorants, Dolphin and Kelp Gulls, Chilean Skua and South American Tern nest here. By 8.30am, we reach Magdalena Island and its imposing cliffs, teeming with wildlife. We will have one hour to explore the trail towards the center of the island, which ends at the lighthouse which is now a ranger station. The site of an immense numbers of penguins occupying every available spot of the island's surface and their raucous braying calls is overwhelming. We'll observe penguins coming ashore from their feeding trips, diving in for a bath or preening and resting peacefully at the shoreline while others can be seen walking with their characteristic gait towards their burrows to incubate the eggs or attend their chicks. South



American Sea Lions often patrol the coast looking opportunities to catch a distracted penguin.

Return to Punta Arenas by boat mid-day. Lunch in a local restaurant. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner on own. There are many choices of eateries in the town, which is easily walkable.

Hotel Cabo de Hornos. Meals B, L

DAY 5 PORVENIR – WILDLIFE BY SEA AND BY LAND

Wednesday, March 5

Check out of the hotel and transfer to the ferry docks located at the northern end of Punta Arenas. Boarding our ferry, we begin our 2.5-hour crossing through the mythic waters of the Straits of Magellan; these world-famous seaways are very rich in terms of history of exploration. Magellan, Drake, Cavendish, Bougainville, Fitz Roy and Darwin, among several other sailors and explorers, surveyed this region in what were mostly harsh and dangerous conditions. As we navigate, we will see an interesting array of seabirds, including Black-browed Albatross, Southern Giant Petrel, Southern Fulmar, Imperial Cormorant, Dolphin Gull and South American Tern. We'll be on the lookout for marine mammals such as pods of Peale's Dolphin and inquisitive South American Sea Lion.

Once again on land, we note that the vegetation of this part of Tierra del Fuego is dominated by flat windswept steppes and rolling hills, with tussock grass and low shrubs. We'll meet our local guide and driver and after a short stop in the town of Porvenir, begin a two-hour drive along the shores of Bahía Inútil (Useless Bay), where we expect to see a great array of wildlife including Guanaco, Southern Grey Fox, the ubiquitous Upland Goose, Chilean Flamingo and a diversity of waterfowl. Along the coastline, we may see albatrosses, petrels, gulls and skuas patrolling the turbulent waters of the bay.

Return to Porvenir, the tiny capital of the Province of Tierra del Fuego and check in at our family-owned accommodation, renowned for their warm hospitality.

Yendegaia House Meals B,L,D



DAY 6 PORVENIR - KING PENGUINS

Thursday, March 6

We continue our explorations to the east, along the lengthy coastline of Useless Bay (Bahía Inútil), where it is likely to find a wealth of seabirds and other aquatic birds. En route we will be checking for potential raptors including Variable Hawk, Aplomado and Peregrine Falcons. Magellanic Horned Owl nests in some ravines we pass. The main target of our visit to this scenic part of the island is the newly established King Penguin breeding colony: Reserva Parque Pingüino Rey, a private nature reserve that aims to preserve the only known continental King Penguin colony. We have ample opportunities to observe and photograph the penguins from a respectable distance. This splendid species congregates year-round on this site and they have successfully started to breed and raise young here. Along the route back to Porvenir, the shrubby slopes and moorlands of the Baquedano Hills are home to Rufous-chested Dotterel, Austral Canastero and the stunning White-bridled Finch.

Dinner on your own. The small town has a selection of eateries featuring fresh, local products.

Yendegaia House Meals B,L

DAY 7 MYLODON CAVE – TORRES DEL PAINE

Friday, March 7

Depart Porvenir and return to Punta Arenas by plane; this is a short, scenic, fifteen-minute flight over the Straits of Magellan provides an elevated perspective of the incredible glacial

action recorded in the last 12,000 years, which has carved these famous seaways as well as the coasts of both the mainland and Tierra del Fuego. From the air, we will see the distant peaks of the Andes, located in the southern part of the island. We continue by road to Puerto Natales where we stop for lunch.

Continuing our journey north, we visit the Mylodon Cave Nature Reserve, a massive natural formation of conglomerate rock. We will take one of the several trails and explore its largest cave, which in ancient times sheltered a variety of long-gone Pleisto-



cene mammals, including the Giant Ground-Sloth (or Mylodon), about 12,000 years ago when most of the surrounding area was covered by glaciers.

We continue our drive to Torres del Paine National Park, and check in at our hotel.

Hotel Las Torres Meals B,L,D

DAYS 8-9-10 TORRES DEL PAINE

Saturday, March 8 – Monday, March 10

Torres del Paine National Park, Patagonia's premier wildlife destination - a huge protected area of 560,000 acres. As we travel around the area, we'll make stops to take in the most incredible views of the Paine Massif and its many jagged peaks of granite and sedimentary rock. We'll see large herds of Guanaco, and the ostrich-like Lesser or Darwin's Rhea along the road.

The area comprised by the northern coast of Sarmiento Lake, Laguna Amarga and Laguna Azul is well known for holding one of the largest concentrations of pumas in the wild. We'll inspect the puma hunting grounds located in the eastern flank of the park and throughout the private property of Estancia Laguna Amarga, where we have privileged access and an excellent relationship with the owners. Pumas are normally quite active at night, early in the mornings and late in the evenings, and we'll schedule our activities to maximize opportunities to observe the cats patrolling their territory, hunting guanacos and other prey, interacting with their offspring or commuting from their hunting grounds to their dens, with an early morning and evening safari.

While the pumas are sleeping, we'll have opportunities for scenic walks between Pehoe and Nordenskjöld lakes, enjoying the waterfalls, the entangled vegetation and the breathtaking mountain landscape of the Horns, the most iconic peaks of the Paine Massif. We'll always be on the lookout for the ubiquitous guanaco, the local Andean Deer or Huemul, Patagonian Hog-nosed Skunk and the two canine species present in the park, Chilla and Culpeo foxes while enjoying southern beech forests. While exploring the valleys, we'll learn the geological origins of the dramatic backdrop of Torres del Paine, one of the finest natural scenes on earth.

Hotel Las Torres Meals B,L,D

DAY 11 DEPARTURE

Tuesday, March 11

After breakfast, we drive back to Puerto Natales for included domestic flight to Santiago and independent departures to USA. A local guide will meet you upon arrival in Santiago, to assist with international flight check-in. *Meals B*

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\$11,972 per person in a double room

\$14,547 per person in a single room

Deposit: \$1000 per person (non-refundable)

Balance Due: December 2, 2024

Register online at

www.conservancytravel.org/CZOPatagonia25



INCLUSIONS:

- ✓ Conservancy Travel Expedition Leader throughout your trip.
- ✓ Most gratuities (included meals, portage where available, local drivers, guides, puma tracker)
- ✓ 3 domestic flights: Santiago – Punta Arenas; Porvenir – Punta Arenas; Puerto Natales - Santiago
- ✓ All mandatory National Park entry permits, taxes and fees
- ✓ Bilingual (English-Spanish) Certified Naturalist Guides
- ✓ Private ground transportation throughout the journey
- ✓ Excursions as stated in the itinerary as included
- ✓ 9 nights' accommodations as described in the itinerary
- ✓ Meals as described in the itinerary: 9 breakfasts; 9 lunches; 7 dinners
- ✓ Specific items described as included on each tour

EXCLUSIONS:

- International airfare and baggage fees
- Excess baggage fees
- Passport fees (No visa required for US citizens traveling to Chile)
- Beverages with meals not described as included
- Trip Cancellation/Interruption/Emergency medical/Evacuation
- A la carte menu selections outside of group menu
- Specific items described as Not Included on each tour
- Laundry, internet usage fees, camera fees and any items of a personal nature
- Optional excursions



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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