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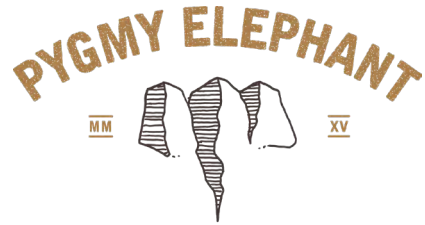


XV

PATAGONIA PACKING GUIDE



Patagonia Packing Guide



The Torres del Paine Park has some of the most popular long-distance hiking trails in Patagonia. The W-Trek is its most popular, followed by the O-Trek loop, which connects the ends of the W-Trek via the quieter and less busy backside of the Torres del Paine massif. Packing correctly for this hike will allow you to absorb the experience with minimal stress and worry

This general packing list for our Patagonia treks provides recommendations based on our experiences traveling and hiking. You may find that you don't need everything on this list, or that you need things we haven't mentioned. **Everyone's backpack will look different, depending on their situation.** If you need help deciding what you should and shouldn't pack, please contact us.

PRE-TRAVEL PLANNING

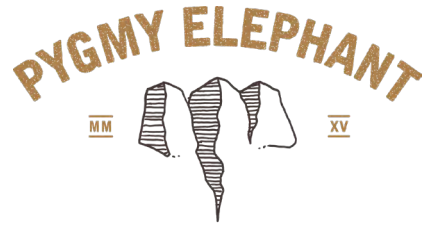
Before you start packing, there are several important planning tasks you should complete. These are related to your packing list and will contribute to a successful Patagonia trek.

- **Notify friends and family of your travel plans.** We recommend you develop a plan to make regular check-ins with at least one person while you are on the trail.
- **Notify your bank of your travel plans.** Notify them you will be traveling in Chile and Argentina and to allow transactions. Check with your bank about ATM restrictions, as well.
- **Notify your government of your travel plans.** This isn't strictly necessary, but your government can provide you with help in an emergency situation.
- **Ensure your passport is current.** Many countries require that your passport be valid for at least six months beyond the dates of your trip.
- **Obtain visas and travel documents as necessary.**
[Check for Chile visa requirements.](#) [Check for Argentina visa requirements.](#)
- **Purchase a travel insurance policy.** Your policy should cover medical expenses, evacuation, and repatriation and should preferably have no elevation or equipment restrictions.
- **Familiarize yourself with the terrain for your trek.**
- **Familiarize yourself with basic first aid and emergency procedures.**

DOCUMENTS

- **Passport and visas.**
- **Chilean immigration papers.**
- **Travel insurance policy documentation.**
- **Cash in Chilean pesos and Argentine pesos, depending on travel plans.**
- **Pygmy Elephant handbook.**
- **Guidebooks and maps.**

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CLOTHING

Patagonian weather is wildly unpredictable: in one day you may experience three or four seasons, regardless of the time of year. It's therefore important to dress and carry kit to suit a range of weather conditions. Dress in layers so that you can adjust to the temperature, wind, and precipitation. Choose a base layer that is made of synthetic material. Avoid cotton at all costs as it tends to not dry quickly. A mid-layer fleece should always be kept handy, especially when hiking over passes. Finally, a water-proof, breathable jacket will help you stay warm and dry during rainy weather.

- **Technical hiking pants** and/or **hiking shorts**.
- **Wool, silk, or synthetic base layer** and **underwear**.
- **Synthetic long-sleeved shirt**.
- **Fleece mid-layer** (or similar).
- **[Waterproof and breathable jacket](#)**.
- **Wool or synthetic hiking socks**.
- **T-shirts and comfortable layers for mountain huts**.
- **Long underwear tops and bottoms**.
- **!! Broken-in hiking boots**.

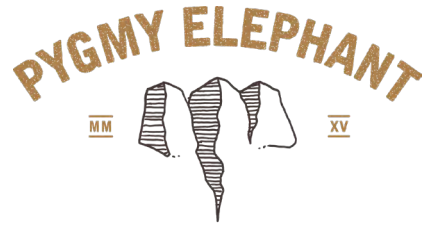
Note: It is important to break in your hiking boots before starting a long-distance trek, as new, stiff boots are more likely to cause blisters and foot pain. You should feel comfortable walking for 6 to 8 hours at a time in your boots for multiple days in a row. [Click here to learn more about how to choose the right boots](#).

ACCESSORIES & HYGIENE

Accessories covers a wide range of items highly subject to personal preference and mountain conditions. In addition to the items below, you might want a roll-top waterproof bag, or a waterproof backpack cover. One of the most important functions of the items below is protection from the elements. Sunscreen, for example, is one item that should be in every hiker's backpack.

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|---|---|
| ● Backpack (30–50 liters for day bag). | ● Sunscreen . |
| ● Duffel bag (for luggage transfers). | ● Flip-flops (for showers). |
| ● Camelbak or water bottle (≥ 2 liters). | ● Towel (quick dry). |
| ● Hiking poles . | ● Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss . |
| ● Hats (wool and with sun-bill). | ● Shampoo, soap, hand sanitizer . |
| ● Gloves (waterproof recommended). | ● Insect repellent . |
| ● Head lamp . | ● Blister plaster or moleskin . |
| ● Sunglasses . | ● Earplugs and eye mask . |
| ● Knife or multi-tool . | ● Slippers . |
| ● Compass . | ● Dirty clothes bag . |
| ● Sleeping bag liner . | |

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OTHER GEAR

The gear listed below may not be necessary for everyone, but it can significantly improve your quality of life on the trail and should be considered when packing your bags. Going without a good portable charger, for example, is practically unthinkable in the digital age.

- **Portable charger** (10,000 mAh)
- **Universal power adapter**
- **Gaiters.**
- **Hand warmers.**
- **Personal locator beacon (PLB) or satellite messenger.**
- **Whistle.**
- **First aid kit** (disinfectant, bandages, scissors, absorbent pads, protective gloves).
- **Thermal tarp or space blanket.**
- **Medicine** (pain-relief tablets, fever-reducing and anti-inflammatory pills, ointment for scrapes or burns, antihistamines, mineral salts, anti-diarrheal, anti-itch cream).
- **Survival kit** (sewing needle, safety pins, fire starter, duct tape, resealable plastic bags, iodine tincture to disinfect water, orange flagging tape, magnifying glass, parachute cord, emergency food).

FOOD

Although your meals will be provided for you on the trail, you may want to bring some snacks along to keep your energy up on the trail. Below is a small list of some of our favorite trail treats.

- **Chocolate** (especially dark chocolate).
- **Trail mix.**
- **Regional snacks.**
- **Fresh fruit.**
- **Granola.**
- **Energy bars.**
- **Sports drink powder.**
- **Calafate berries** (season-dependent).

Calafate berries grow on the Calafate shrub, *berberis microphylla*, which is native to Patagonia. The shrub can be identified by its red, spiny stems and small, glossy evergreen leaves. The berries are round and purple when ripe, with a sweet, sour pulp and tiny seeds. It is said that anyone who eats a Calafate berry will return some day to Patagonia. To our best knowledge, the Calafate has no toxic look-alikes; nevertheless, **do not eat anything you cannot positively identify.**