

# ADVENTUREX

WITHOUT ADVENTURE... WHAT IS LIFE?

## Rafting The Futaleufu, Chile

Set amongst stunning views of snow capped peaks and temperate rain forest is one of the best whitewater rafting trips on the planet. The Futaleufu Valley, described by the locals as "a place so lovely it must have been painted by God", is definitely not an experience to be missed. Born in the Los Alerces National Park in Argentina the Rio Futaleufu flows west into Chile, through landscapes dominated by snow capped volcanoes and rich rain forest before arriving at the coastal town of Chaiten. Meaning 'Great River' in the local Mapuche dialect, the astonishingly clear waters of the 'Fu' flows through deep canyons and pristine wilderness to create explosive and untamed whitewater, unparalleled to anywhere in the world. This trip is designed to immerse you in the beauty, magic and culture of Patagonia as you relax on the balcony of your cabana in the sunshine with a good glass of Chilean red after an exhilarating day, and half a world away from the cold UK winter.

### Your Itinerary

#### Day 1:

You will arrive in Puerto Montt and be met by your AdventureX Guide. We will transfer to the charming little town of Puerto Varas and escort you to your hotel where you can unwind from your flight. Puerto Varas is on the edge of Lake Llanquihue and has amazing views across the lake to the perfectly shaped Volcan Osorno. You can spend the afternoon walking around town, swimming, relaxing or going into the fishing village at Puerto Montt.

(No Meals Included)

#### Day 2:

We will transfer you after breakfast back to Puerto Montt and we will take a small aircraft flight to the seaside town of Chaiten (40 minute flight). Our van will meet us and we will travel on the Carretera Austral south towards Lago Yelcho. The drive is spectacular with magnificent granite cliffs and steep glaciers bordering the lush temperate rainforest that we drive through. The Futaleufu river flows into Lago Yelcho, a world class trout fishing lake that is also home to the Coho Salmon that swim unimpeded up the Futaleufu to Argentina and back down to the pacific at Chaiten. We pass a few small farms that are carved into the ancient rain forest and get a glimpse of frontier living, Chilean style. We arrive at base camp for a late lunch and a swim in the Fu! (Nice!) We hold our pre-departure chat whilst sipping on sundowners and go over camp procedures

(Included :Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

#### Day 3:

It's the first day on the river! We like to opt for the slow start here to keep a holiday feel to the trip. A sleep in, followed by a filling brunch gets us ready to take on a pretty intensive 2-3 hour training stretch. Before we even get near the river your trip leader will give you comprehensive safety instructions and your individual guide will have you paddling like world champions! We start at La Passarella, one of many suspended rope bridges across the river that locals use to cross the river to and from their farms.

We are straight into fun with the 1000 wave rapid, and smash through 'Pillow wave' and into 'Mundaca' and take-out at the Futaleufu Bridge, the only bridge to cross the river. We return to our camp exhilarated after some amazing whitewater. And this is just the beginning....

#### Day 4:

We need an early start as the day is big. We drive to just before the town of Futaleufu where we put our rafts on and float away from civilisation down the Rio Espalon to meet again with the Futa. 'Inferno canyon' awaits with rapid after rapid and about 4 km of continuous adrenalin. Steep walls clear deep pools - a real remote feel as we make our way towards the Tres Nonas our landmark and reference point to aim for. Following Inferno canyon is a long flat section where reflection and bewilderment for the area can be enjoyed. However in the not too far distant future the roar of the infamous 'Zeda' "Z" comes into ear shot. This rapid is not commercially runnable and so the rafts are portaged through before we again take a leisurely float in preparation for the mighty "El Throno". Perhaps one of the fastest and most spectacular rapids in the world we may also opt to portage this rapid, depending on water levels, but not before marveling at kayakers trying to avoid "Toaster" as they negotiate this exciting course. No matter by which route, they will be at the bottom in a matter of seconds. Following El Throno we have a few more sections to run before we get to our camp at Rio Azul.

#### Day 5:

We leave camp after a hearty brekky with a few warm up rapids, before we reach 'Terminator', which depending on river levels, crew aptitude and nationality, we may need to portage this one..... its BIG!... actually its a bit BIGGER than BIG!!! Even if we don't raft Terminator there are plenty of BIG rapids to follow that will more than make up for it. The river changes down a gear where we run again the section we ran on day 2 down to our camp at Cara de Indio . We will get to celebrate International Pisco cola Day..... that occurs on completion of any day 4 on the Futa!! How convenient.....

#### Day 6:

Depending on how last night went, you can recover, fish or go for a horse ride. Read or go for a spectacular walk to see a high alpine lake. It's your trip and your day off... have fun!

#### Day 7:

Another big day! We start off with a wake up through the "Guts" run at Mundaca for breakfast and then head for the 'Fish bowl', the 'Aquarium wave' and then down to 'House Rock'. Following the 'Casa de piedra', we then set our sights and stomachs on a little yellow house where Asado, the Chilean equivalent to a Big Mac will settle the biggest of hungers! Cold beers and soft drinks are there to wash it all down.

(Included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner - Days 2-7)

#### Day 8:

An early start to meet the van that will take us back to Chaiten for our flight back to Puerto Montt and our onward journeys home.

(Included: Breakfast)

## The Details

#### What Is Included:

- Transfers to and from Puerto Montt to Chaiten and then to the river. If you provide us with your arrival details we will meet you at the airport.
- Accommodation the night before the river trip (Day 1) in a tourist hotel. This will be on a share twin basis with somebody else on the trip. Single supplements available.
- All transfers to and from the river.
- All meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 8. We can cater for any dietary requests, just let us know.
- All rafting equipment, including the best in buoyancy aids, helmets, shorty wetsuits and spray jackets.
- Tented accommodation whilst on the river.
- All camping equipment including thermarest style mattresses and chairs (sleeping bags *excluded*).
- Qualified and experienced guides and safety kayakers. We have a mixture of local and overseas guides who are extremely professional and are some of the most experienced guides in the world. These guys and girls make every effort to make your trip memorable and fun for you whilst at the same time ensuring your safety. They all hold advanced first aid qualifications and in the unlikely event of an injury they have the expertise and professionalism to deal with it.
- All necessary permits and licenses.
- A very cool AdventureX T shirt!

*Please Note:* Not included are flights, visas, departure taxes, travel insurance, inoculations, sleeping bags, video or dvd of your trip, alcohol, personal items or gratuities. You will also need to budget for meals in town which are not included in the price and any extra accommodation outside what is provided.

### Getting There:

There are a range of possibilities to get you down to Chile, plus plenty of bargains if you shop around.

#### *From the UK & Europe*

We recommend taking a flight with LAN Chile /Iberia from the UK to Santiago via Madrid. This may seem like a long route but we find this to be one of the best options for availability and price. Other options however would be American Airlines or Delta through the USA or with Air Canada via Toronto. We suggest you book your connection to Puerto Montt from Santiago at the same time as you will get the best deal. It is important to note when booking your return flights from Puerto Montt back to Santiago that you will not get back from Chaiten until 1300 hours at the earliest. Our team in the UK will happily offer advice and help you to find you the best deal.

#### *From the USA*

From the USA the principal gateways to South America are via Miami, New York City and Los Angeles. Daily flights are offered with LAN Chile, United, American, Aerolineas Argentinas or with Air Canada from Toronto. Once again we suggest you also purchase your Santiago / Puerto Montt tickets at the same time, as purchasing later will prove to be more costly. Please note that your return flight from Chaiten does not arrive in Puerto Montt until 1300 hrs at the earliest so please schedule your onward flights with time to spare.

### Exploring Chile:

Chile is rich with outdoor options for those inclined. The Torres Del Paine circuit is perhaps one of the most famous and spectacular trekking areas in South America with its dramatic granite peaks and glacial lakes it is internationally renowned as one of the most beautiful and remote areas in the world.

The resort town of Pucon with it's backdrop of the Volcan Villarica looming behind is set amidst National Parks and is not to be missed. And if you like heights then consider reaching the summit of Mount Aconcagua, the highest point in the western hemisphere...not for the faint hearted however.

The Atacama Desert is further north and is the driest desert in the world. The town of Pedro de Atacama offers many attractive facilities for tourists. On the other hand if you want to do more on the water the southern fjords of Chile offer great sea kayaking opportunities around Las Termas de Chillan. If you would like any further information please contact us or we also suggest checking out the Lonely Planet guide on Chile.

### Transport Services:

The Chilean bus service is quite good, especially if you speak Spanish, however, since Chile is a long slender country traveling to different parts can take some time. It can take two days to travel by bus from Chaiten, the port nearest to Futaleufu, to Santiago, so we would definitely recommend flying, especially if your time is limited. While in Santiago you can get around by taxi or by bus, or the subway is a clean, cheap and amazingly easy way to get around.

### The Jobs:

We recommend that you be immunized against Hepatitis A and Tetanus.

### Exploring Santiago:

If you have an extra day and night in Santiago we suggest you visit the Plaza de Armas in the centre of the city, where Augusto Pinochet ousted Salvador Allende in the now famous coup. Or check out Bellavista, where you can find longhaired poets reciting their latest creations, fishbowl size bowls of beer ('Shop', as it is locally known), and some crazy late-night discos. The subway system is an excellent and easy way to get about the city and is cheap.

### Exchange Rates:

At time of printing USD\$1 was worth 542 Chilean Pesos and GBP £1 equal to 995 Chilean Pesos.

### **Retail Therapy and Chilean Specialties:**

Chile is not renowned for its crafts (unless you want to take home a lump of coal or copper), however, being close to Bolivia and Peru, one can shop for beautiful alpaca sweaters and hats. For the red wine lovers, Chile offers some of the best red wine around. If you are a fish lover, we recommend the local Ceviche. Boasting the longest cold-water coast of any country in the world, Chilean Sea Bass is AMAZING!

### **River Flows:**

The Fu is a fairly high volume river with extremely large and demanding rapids. In December, when the water is highest, some of the rapids become too large to run. However the team at AdventureX like to give you the most thrilling but safe ride possible, so we run our trips from the end of December to February, which assures us (as much as possible – nature is unpredictable) of the best combination of water and weather.

### **Climate:**

January/February is summer down in the southern hemisphere so the days should be quite warm. Make sure to bring plenty of sunscreen and lip balm. The water, being glacier and snow melt, is cold but we supply shorty wet suits and spray jackets. If you have synthetic long underwear it wouldn't be a bad idea to bring it. The weather in Patagonia can change quickly so bring a rain jacket as well. The nights will be chilly, 15 - 20 degrees, so you should definitely bring something warm to slip into while around the campfire, like a comfy fleece and even a woolly hat if you feel the cold.

### **Fitness and Safety:**

The Fu is an extremely adventurous and rigorous trip, and a huge amount of fun! We recommend therefore that you are quite fit before the trip, to maximize your fun on this amazing river. Please let us know if you have any medical conditions or are taking any medications that could affect you throughout the course of the trip that you think we should be aware of.

### **Dress Code:**

Dress is casual around camp. Away from camp and in towns, conservative non-revealing attire is best.

### **Personal Equipment:**

After years on the river the guides have found exactly what is necessary to feel comfortable on the raft by day, cosy around the camp at night and totally in style in town before and after the trip. Therefore our equipment list will mean that you will be perfectly attired and outfitted for your whole trip and well under the baggage allowance. A full list of what we recommend will be sent to you after your booking confirmation. We find that most people already have in their possession what is needed for a rafting trip and very little if anything in specialized equipment is needed to be bought. Perhaps the only thing that we specifically recommend for Chile is PLENTY of sunscreen!

### **Finally...**

Please remember that things do change, prices go up and down, activities stop running or change format and weather can send the best laid plans out the door. AdventureX will do it's best to provide what is described above but please take into consideration the nature of the journey that you are embarking on and the country that you are travelling in and understand that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary!

You will absolutely love this trip and have the ride of your life. See you there !