



# Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



## Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in El Chaltén, Argentina, located at 49° S 72° W.
- We have traveled 65,451 miles (105,376 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



## People and Culture

- The first recorded use of the word *patagón* was by Magellan in 1520 to describe the native people that his expedition thought were giants. It is now believed the Patagons were the Tehuelches (who, at the time, averaged 10 inches taller than the Spanish). There are approximately 4,300 Tehuelche people who live in the Patagonian region today.
- The Patagonia region is sparsely populated with many of the largest cities located along the Pacific coast. The total population of this area is approximately 2 million. This figure represents one-seventh of the average population density found in Argentina and one-eleventh of that found in Chile.
- The area's principal economic activities are mining, whaling, livestock, agriculture and the production of oil. Half of Argentina's 15 million sheep are located in Patagonia. Increasingly, tourism plays an important role in the economic health of the region.
- El Calafate, Argentina was named after a southern Patagonian thorny bush that grows in the area. According to legend, those who eat its fruit will return to Patagonia. It is often made into jam.



*Ushuaia, Argentina – the southernmost city in the world*

(source: [Flickr.com/Benjamin Dumas](http://Flickr.com/Benjamin Dumas))

### Cueva de las Manos

The “Cave of the Hands” is a series of caves located in the province of Santa Cruz, Argentina. The hand images are thought to be made by the forefathers of the Tehuelches some around 550 BC. Other hunting drawings are much older. The prints are made by spraying ink through a pipe made of bone.

source: [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org)



*Cueva de las Manos*

(source: [Flickr.com/Horacio Lyon](http://Flickr.com/Horacio Lyon))



*Perito Moreno Glacier (Argentina) from space  
(source: [NASA.gov](http://NASA.gov))*

## Magellanic Penguin

The Magellanic Penguin is a South American penguin, breeding in coastal Argentina, Chile and the Falkland Islands, with some migrating to Brazil where they are occasionally seen as far north as Rio de Janeiro.

source:  
[Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org)



*Magellanic Penguins on Punta Delgada, Argentina  
(sources: [Flickr.com](http://Flickr.com) / [Andrew Schaefer](#) and [Antoine Hubert](#))*

## Nature and Environment

- Patagonia is a region located at the southern end of South America. It is a territory shared by Argentina and Chile and includes the area from the southern section of the Andes Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.
- The Patagonian Desert is a semiarid region within Patagonia. It is not a desert of sand or gravel, but rather a thorny, tree-less plain. It makes up roughly two-thirds of the Patagonian region. The Patagonian Desert is the seventh largest desert in the world. It has a long winter and short summer. The average temperature is a cool 37°F (3°C).
- Glaciers occupy the valleys of the southernmost area of Patagonia. In general, these glaciers flow into lakes towards the East and into Pacific Ocean fjords towards the West. The Perito Moreno Glacier in Argentina contains the world's third largest reserve of fresh water, is one of just two glaciers in all of South America that is growing. This phenomenon is unusual because most of the world's glaciers are shrinking.
- The guanaco (lama), cougar, Patagonian Fox, Patagonian Hog-nosed Skunk and the Magellanic Tuco-tuco (rodent) are the most characteristic mammals of the Patagonian plains. Bird-life is abundant in many parts of Patagonia.

## Our Plans

- We are in El Chaltén to begin our next trek in Argentina's Monte Fitz Roy area.
- After this we will move into Chile and to Torres del Paine National Park, also in Patagonia.
- What would you like to know about the Patagonia? Send us your ideas and we will try to include them!

## More Information

- <http://www.wwfblogs.org/travel/2010/11/26/facts-about-patagonia/>
- <http://www.kidscantravel.com/statetravelguides/patagonia/funstuffkids/index.html>
- <http://geology.com/records/largest-desert.shtml>
- <http://www.savebiogems.org/patagonia/fastfacts.html>
- <http://www.patagonia-argentina.com/i/content/historia.php>
- <http://www.pbs.org/edens/patagonia/>

## Monte Fitz Roy

Monte Fitz Roy is a mountain located near El Chaltén village in the Southern Patagonian Ice Field between Argentina and Chile. It was first climbed in 1952 by French alpinists Lionel Terray and Guido Magnone. It remains among the most technically-challenging mountains on Earth to climb.



*sources: Wikipedia.org, Flickr.com/Geoff Livingston*

## Our Partners



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