



# Northern Patagonia

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## Best Places to Eat

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## Best Places to Stay

- Fundo Los Leones (p314)
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- Patagonia House (p319)

## Why Go?

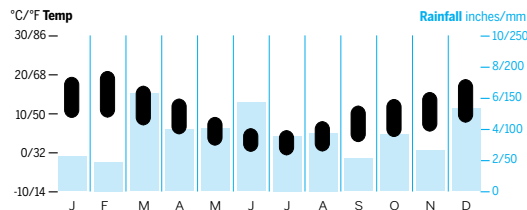
For a century, Northern Patagonia has been the most rugged and remote part of continental Chile, the place where scant pioneers quietly set forth a Wild West existence. While life here may still be tough for its residents, it doesn't lack for scenery. Exuberant rainforest, scrubby steppe and unclimbed peaks crowd the horizon, but the essence of this place is water, from the clear cascading rivers to the turquoise lakes, massive glaciers and labyrinthine fjords.

Southbound visitors often bypass Northern Patagonia on a sprint to Torres del Paine, but its backcountry treasures are pay dirt to the adventurous traveler.

The mostly gravel Carretera Austral rumbles from Puerto Montt to Villa O'Higgins, some 1200km south. Ferry connections are required for northerly roadless stretches where mountains meet the sea. Though sections north of Coyhaique are now being paved, the iconic challenge of driving the rest still remains.

## When to Go

### Coyhaique



**Nov–Mar** Warmest months and the best bus connections on the Carretera Austral.

**Feb** Festival Costumbrista celebrates pioneer culture; parties in most small towns.

**Jul–Aug** Blue sky days around Coyhaique, with nearby skiing and snowshoeing.

## Northern Patagonia Highlights

- 1 Paddle the misty fjords and trek the temperate rainforests of **Parque Pumalín** (p305).
- 2 Admire the rural farms, rushing rivers and hanging glaciers while tracing the length of the mythic **Carretera Austral** (p306).
- 3 Giddy-up into **pioneer Patagonia** (p311) on remote Andean trails.
- 4 Face a whirl of white water, rafting the world-class rapids of **Río Futaleufú** (p310).
- 5 Lose track of time dallying in cool **Calela Tortel** (p331), a seaside village set on boardwalks.
- 6 Scout for cave paintings and spy

