



# Trekkers Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

Finding lodgings is only difficult during the seasonal vacation rush between Christmas and mid-February. Book Parque Nacional Torres del Paine and El Chaltén accommodations well in advance. While larger towns

and tourist centers offer a wide range of accommodations, connecting villages on Ruta 40 or the Carretera Austral have mostly basic family-run accommodations and an expensive lodge or two. Most local tourist offices have an up-to-date list of lodgings and can check availability.

Never hesitate to ask to see a room before making a decision.

Some high-end establishments quote rates on US dollars, we have maintained these rates here.

## Camping

Organized campsites are widespread and generally offer good services, with flush toilets, hot showers and a grill or *quincho* – a common cooking shelter for rainy weather.

Campsites fill up quickly in the busy summer holiday season, and can get noisy. Argentina usually has a per-person rate (of around US\$5) while Chilean campsites usually charge per site (up to US\$20 for five people); ask for a discount if you're alone.

For camping in Chile, your best resource is Turistel's *Rutero Camping* guide, with maps and distances. Santiago's **Sernatur** ([www.sernatur.cl](http://www.sernatur.cl)) has a free pamphlet listing campsites throughout Chile.

## WILD CAMPING

The term 'wild camping' means pitching your tent outside established campsites or campsites. All Argentine and some Chilean national parks have now banned wild

## PRACTICALITIES

- For news in English, check out *Santiago Times* ([www.santiagotimes.cl](http://www.santiagotimes.cl)) or Buenos Aires Herald ([www.buenosairesherald.com](http://www.buenosairesherald.com))
- Argentina's *Clarín* ([www.clarin.com](http://www.clarin.com) in Spanish) or Chile's *El Mercurio* ([www.elmercurio.cl](http://www.elmercurio.cl), in Spanish) give comprehensive national news
- The electricity current operates on 220V, 50 cycles
- Gadgets plug into outlets that accept two rounded prongs (Chile) or three angled flat prongs (Argentina)
- Use the metric system except for tire pressure (measured in pounds per square inch)



camping, and only allow camping at park-designated sites along the trails. During the busy summer holiday period, when cheap accommodation is scarce, wild camping close to roads and towns is common among local backpackers, though it calls for some discretion – see Responsible Trekking (p36).

## Casas de Familia & Rural Homestays

There is no better way to steep yourself in local culture than staying at a *casa de familia*. Especially in the south, it's common for families to rent rooms to visitors. This is a great way to get off the gringo trail and enjoy rural hospitality. Guests do not always have kitchen privileges but usually can pay modest prices for abundant meals or laundry service. Tourist offices maintain lists of such accommodations, which are particularly common in Chile.

There are many organized networks in Chile's south, most notably in Chiloé, Lago Ranco, around Pucón and Patagonia. For options in Patagonia, check out Coyhaique's **Casa de Turismo Rural** (www.casaturismorural.cl). For countrywide options inquire at tourist offices.

## Hospedajes, Pensiones & Residenciales

Aside from hostels, these are Patagonia's cheapest accommodations, offering sometimes homey, simple accommodations, usually with foam-mattress beds, hard pillows, clean sheets and blankets.

Especially in high season, room rates may be the same for single or double occupancy, but singles can try to negotiate a price if there are many vacancies. Bathrooms and shower facilities are usually shared and a basic breakfast is usually included in the price.

## Hostels

A new generation of hostels in traveler hot spots offers budget travelers far more stylish and service-oriented lodgings. They usually set aside a few well-heeled doubles for couples that want a social atmosphere but greater creature comforts.

Independent backpacker hostels advertise in regional travel publications and pamphlets, like **Backpackers Chile**

(www.backpackerschile.com), with many European-run listings. Most places don't insist on a Hostelling International (HI) card, but charge a bit more for non-members. The local affiliates of HI are **Asociación Chilena de Albergues Turísticos Juveniles** (www.hostelling.cl; Hernando de Aguirre 201, Oficina 602, Providencia, Santiago) and **Hosteling International Argentina** (☎ 11-45118723; www.hitravel.com.ar; Florida 835, Piso 3, Oficina 319b, Buenos Aires). There are also many non-HI hostels.

## Hotels

In Chile and Argentina, the term *hostal* indicates a higher-end accommodation and not a youth hostel. However, there can also be very cheap hotels with few amenities, it's hard to judge by name alone. Patagonia's increasing popularity means that the range of hotels available has improved. Though mid-range hotels can be overpriced, the luxury category is quite decadent (and expensive).

## Refugios

Within some Chilean national parks, **Conaf** (Corporación Nacional Forestal; ☎ 02-6630000; Av Bulnes 285, Centro; 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-4.30pm Fri) maintains rustic shelters (*refugios*) for trekkers, which unfortunately lack upkeep due to Conaf's limited budget. In some of the more popular parks, most notably Torres del Paine, private concessions (franchises) manage comfortable and well-appointed *refugios* with bunks, mattresses, showers and even restaurants. Private reserves sometimes have *refugios* set up along their trails.

In Argentina's national parks, *refugios* are usually run by concessionaires and can be quite clean and efficient. Those around

## BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out [www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels). You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.