



GVI Expedition Itinerary

This is an example of what you may hope to expect on a 12 week expedition. Conditions vary depending on time of year and wildlife movements.

Research and Exploration in Patagonia

- Week 1** Meet the group in Buenos Aires before heading south on a 20 hour bus journey to Patagonia. You will travel through some of the world's most striking scenery. Upon arrival at base camp you will begin a comprehensive training programme. This will include fire lighting, navigation, and camp cooking. Experience your first nights under the vast Patagonian skies!
- Week 2** Phase 2 of training moves north to Lanín National Park. You will learn about the research projects in depth and develop your scientific survey techniques in the field. You will also be trained in emergency medicine and put through some practical scenarios including stretcher carries and river crossings.
- Week 3** The last phase of your training is a mountain skills school on Volcán Lanín, the highest peak in Argentine Patagonia. You will learn everything from the basics of kicking steps in the snow to ice axe arrests to cold weather survival skills. If the weather is right, you may be able to reach the summit of this volcano, the highest peak in Argentine Patagonia, which towers above surrounding mountains.
- Week 4** Launch into the first research programme. You'll be participating on an important project investigating the impact of exotic animals on temperate forests of Lanín National Park in northern Patagonia. You will spend long days tracking signs of Jabalí (Wild boar) and study their seasonal migration using photo trapping. All of this will be conducted in the shadow of Volcán Lanín.
- Week 5** Your studies now shift to a smaller forest inhabitant – the Cachaña (Austral parakeet). Amazingly little is known about their behaviour and you will take part in some of the first ever studies of these beautiful birds - climbing trees to monitor their nests and following their flight patterns. You will learn more about the ingenious relationship that this bird has with the Araucaria tree (Monkey Puzzle).
- Week 6** Drive 300km south to the second project – the Andean Condor – the largest flying bird in the world. Using your skills learnt in the training period you begin to study in depth the habits of this bird. You will be located in the transition zone between the Andes and the Patagonian plains where the extremes of temperature have literally shattered the rocks into incredible formations.
- Week 7** The condor project requires you to monitor the condor roosting sights every hour of daylight, and so you spend your days taking in the fascinating scenery, and looking up at the stars at night. You make a basic bunker from which to monitor. You will stay here, drinking tea with the other group members until last light, when you complete your final census and trek back to the base in the dark.
- Week 8** Back in Lanín National Park there is a new project to complete. Combining trekking with research, you trek around 15 of park's smallest and most remote lagoons in order to monitor the abundance of waterfowl. This project is to establish the impact that the invasive American Mink is having on the Patagonian wildlife.
- Week 9** You learn to recognise 36 species of waterfowl and their Latin names before starting the field work. Then you set off on the 10 day trek, carrying everything that you will need in your backpack. The conditions are tough but the thrill of seeing your first bird for real that you learnt
- Week 10** After a short break between phases, it is now time for your group to head off on trek. You journey to the start of the route and meet your two GVI mountain guides. You then set out carrying all of your personal rations, tent and climbing equipment – a very heavy pack! You spend the first few days reviewing your mountain skills and having fun learning more techniques in 'snow school.'
- Week 11** By this stage you have developed your own routine for looking after yourself in the wind, rain, snow and ice and can now really relax into the trek. You take in the breathtaking scenery, recognise the wild boar tracks in the snow along the way and spot an adult female condor as you reach the summit of one of the peaks along the way. All your knowledge from the past ten weeks is brought together.
- Week 12** You finish trek and have forgotten how good a warm shower can feel after 2 weeks! You spend a couple of days recovering and then join up with the whole group at basecamp to relax and enjoy an Argentine asado (barbeque) and a farewell party. You sleep out under the stars on the hill behind base camp, reflecting on the last twelve weeks - the things you have learnt, the highs and the lows, and the friends that you have made.

