

**How to start:**

If you are considering booking your own campsites in Torres del Paine here are some helpful tip that might help. Most people choose between doing the classic W trek (which gets its name from the southern area of the park that is shaped like a W), or the Full Circuit Trek which circumnavigates the entire Torres del Paine massive. The W Trek is the shortest at 3-5 days, the Full Circuit is meant to be trekked in 9 days comfortably. The longer you spend on either of these treks the more relaxed your trek will be, and the more nature and sites you will be able to absorb. Most treks will begin at Paine Grande or Las Torres and travel counterclockwise. The park rules dictate that you are not allowed to trek the full circuit (from Serron to Paso) clockwise.

**Choosing what camps are best for you:**

You might know which trek you would like, but campsite availability might end up dictating how many days you will be able to stay in the park. Often the campsites you want might not be available on the specific night you may want it. Booking these campsites in advance with help your odds of getting the camps you want. There are many combinations that allow for a great experience in the park, so don't get discouraged if you can't find exactly what you want right away.

**Check Availability & make your reservations:**

Before making your bookings, you'll need to check that every campsite on your route is available for your dates. You'll need to visit three different web sites to make reservations: Fantastico Sur, Vertice, and CONAF. If one date is unavailable, consider checking availability for nearby campsites. If you're running into problems, try your itinerary with a different start date, or from a different starting point. The full circuit can only be done counter clockwise so you may need to flip your itinerary and finish your trek on the W, or start with it - depending on your plan.

A small tip for booking the W camping sites - start by trying to book Italiano (a free Conaf campsite), Camping Frances or Cuernos (both Fantastico Sur). These are your options for the 'middle' days of your trek. If you can get a couple nights at these camping spots, then you can try to book the campsites on the West and East sides of the park. This way if you run into problems you can flip the itinerary (the starting and stopping points) and try again without losing your middle days. This is a little more complex if you are trying to book the full circuit as you starting and stopping points can only be via the Las Torres side (main entrance), or via Paine Grande (crossing Lago Pehoe on the catamaran). You NEED reservations for every camping spot with NO exceptions. You will not be allowed to stay if you do not have a spot booked in advance. Print out a copy of all your reservations to carry with you on your trek. You'll need to show proof of reservation to get past some of the checkpoints in the park. They check at the first main visitors centre, on the way out to the Dickson campground, and again if you are heading over the John Garner Pass.

**Not finding what you want?**

If you are missing only a day or two in an otherwise complete itinerary, there are a couple of options.

1) When you arrive in Puerto Natales head to the office of the campsite you still need and try to make a reservation directly with them in person. This often works, especially if your group size is not very big. There are often cancellations and spots can open up last minute.

2) Head into the park and ask at the camps along the way to radio ahead and check for reservations. Campsite staff will often check for you (if they are checking with one of their own companies sites). They do not (and can not) radio ahead to 'other' companies campsites.

3) If after all of your efforts you are not satisfied with the campsites that are available, many people choose to book an organised trek through a local guide service. This eliminates all reservation issues, equipment needs, transportation and all your meal prep on the trek. Organised treks are more expensive than organising your trek yourself, but does remove all the problems and bookings needed to complete a multi day trek in Torres del Paine National Park.