

Year in Patagonia

Travel and Logistics

Course Start

Arrive	Arrive in Coyhaique 1 full day before your course start date
Meeting place	Plaza de Armas (central square) By the Patagonia store Coyhaique, Aysén región, Chile
Meeting time	7 a.m. on course start date

Flight Destination

Airport	Balmaceda, Chile (BBA)
Date	Arrive 1 full day before your course start date

Flight Return

Airport	Balmaceda, Chile (BBA)
Date	Depart at least one full day after your course end date

Ground Transportation

From airport at arrival	Take the transfer bus to lodging in Coyhaique, this is easy to do after you pick up your bags. There would be some desks offering the service. This cost of \$ 9,000 Chilean pesos. You can use credit or debit cards.
From NOLS for return	NOLS will provide transportation from our base to Coyhaique on the afternoon of the last day of your course.

Accommodations

Before Course	You arrange: arrive at least the night before your course start date
After Course	You arrange: at least the last night your course ends

Holiday Break 12/22/2025 - 1/05/2026**Holiday Break Departure**

Holiday Departure Airport	Balmaceda, Chile (BBA)
Holiday Flight Departure Date	Depart at least one full day after evening of 12/21/25
Holiday Ground Transport	NOLS provides transport to Coyhaique Evening of 12/21/25
Holiday Accommodations	You arrange for entire break plus 12/21/25

Holiday Break Return

Arrive for 2nd Semester	Arrive in Coyhaique 1 full day before your 2nd semester meeting time/date
Meeting place for 2nd Semester	Plaza de Armas (central square) By the Patagonia store Coyhaique, Aysén región, Chile
Meeting time/date for 2nd Semester	7 a.m. 1/6/26

Prepare to Travel to Your Course

(Further details following)

1. Submit your health form on your [Dashboard](#) as soon as possible. Once NOLS clears it, you can start booking travel.
2. Book your travel.
3. Arrange ground transport - when your flight lands

4. Arrange accommodation for before and after course
5. Complete and submit Travel and Logistics form on your [Dashboard](#)
6. Consider Tuition Protection coverage (see [Dashboard](#), highly recommended)
7. For International Travel:
 - a. Check that your passport is valid for the appropriate dates
 - b. Arrange visa and/or parent letter if needed
 - c. Notify your bank/credit card company that you will be traveling internationally
 - d. Get cash in local currency
 - e. Prepare for important cultural considerations
 - f. Get inoculations as required
8. **Contact for NOLS Admissions:** 800-710-6657 / admissions@nols.edu (Save our contact info so you have it while you travel!)

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Welcome to NOLS Patagonia!

Your course will begin and end in the city of Coyhaique, the administrative capital of Coyhaique Province and the Region of Aysén. It is the largest town in the area, and provides the best launching spot for remote travel in this part of Patagonia.

Please use the information below to help organize your travels to and from your course. Begin your preparations as soon as possible, as it can take several weeks to obtain your passport and inoculations and to make travel plans.

Key Information

- **Flying:** Some flights to Balmaceda first stop in Puerto Montt for around 45 minutes, so please wait to get off the plane until you have arrived in Balmaceda.
- **Lodging:** We recommend you make your reservations ahead of time, because the airport transportation will drop you directly where you are lodging.
- **Passport/Visa:** You must have a tourist card for the duration of your stay in Chile and passport. NOLS recommends your passport be valid for at least 6 months after the course end date. Please see travel.state.gov for specific requirements for the country in which you will be traveling. Your tourist card is the PDI receipt you will get from the immigration officer while going through customs (**please, do not lose it**).
 - Please submit your passport information on your NOLS Dashboard using the Travel & Logistics Form

Other Travel Details

You will be responsible for arranging your own travel arrangements, including the ride from Balmaceda Airport to Coyhaique. Travel from Balmaceda airport is a 45-minute van ride for \$9,000CLP= about US\$10.00. You need to exchange money before you get to the Balmaceda airport because these vans (transfers) cannot accept US dollars. The van companies have stands right in the luggage claim area of the airport. Any one of them will work.

Precourse Travel

If you have the time and wish to see some of Chile, plan on doing it after your course. You can try to travel overland from Coyhaique to Santiago.

For further information on travel in Chile, there are Sernatur offices (Chilean tourist offices at www.sernatur.cl) located in all major towns and cities. They are excellent sources for publications and maps. Santiago has two Sernatur offices, one at the International Airport and the other downtown.

Flexibility with Arrival and Departure

The nature of airlines and long distance travel make it mandatory that you arrive in Balmaceda/Coyhaique a day prior to the starting time of your course. The flight from Santiago to Balmaceda takes about three hours with a stopover in Puerto Montt. We ask that students do not plan on leaving Coyhaique sooner than a full day following the course ending date. Although we will do everything possible, without compromising safety, to end on the date indicated, weather is an unpredictable factor. Unusual conditions could affect the ending date of your course. If you purchase a discount ticket with a penalty for changing dates, give yourself plenty of additional time at the end of the course as a precautionary measure.

If Delayed

If it becomes evident that you'll arrive late to Coyhaique and will not make the course starting time, please contact NOLS Headquarters in Wyoming immediately. If you are in Chile, call the NOLS Patagonia branch directly. You can also send an email to patagonia_managers@nols.edu. Be prepared to give your full name, course code, and your whereabouts.

Contact Information

NOLS Admission Office (Lander, WY, USA)

Ph: 1-800-710-NOLS – from within the USA

Ph: 001 (307) 332-5300 – from Chile

Fax: (307) 332-1220

Email: admissions@nols.edu

Website: www.nols.edu

NOLS Patagonia (Coyhaique, CHILE)

Ph: 011 (56-67) 2240040 or 2240041 from the US

Ph: (67) 2240040 or 2240041 – from Chile

Email: patagonia_managers@nols.edu

Course Meeting Time and Location

You will need to be at the Plaza de Armas (central square, near the Patagonia store), in Coyhaique, Chile at 7:00am on the day your course is scheduled to begin. Please be at the meeting on time, with your passport and tourist card, and with all personal business completed.

The First Few Days

We will pick you up at the location and time mentioned above. Please check out of your hostel/hotel before the pick-up time on the first day. Because the first few days are busy with preparations for the field sections of your course, we ask that all personal matters (phone calls, letters, email, travel arrangements etc.) be taken care of before your course begins. Likewise, if you have specific shopping needs that cannot be met by NOLS (see your equipment list), please be sure to take care of them beforehand. There won't be an opportunity to get to town once your course starts.

We will bring you to the NOLS campo, a farm of several hundred acres located 11 km. from Coyhaique, where we will have brief introductions and breakfast. The first morning you will receive an in-depth orientation to the course from your instructors and work with them on equipment and logistics for your expedition for the next two days. You'll camp and sleep at the NOLS base for the days of preparation.

The Last Days

At the end of the last section of your semester we will bring you back to the NOLS base, where you will return and clean equipment and complete post-course formalities. We will celebrate with some typical Chilean food for lunch. NOLS will provide transportation from the NOLS base to Coyhaique on the afternoon of the last day of your course. You will need to be prepared to provide your own lodging this evening.

You'll get more out of your experience if you are familiar with the geography, history, politics, culture, and language of Patagonia. We suggest you start by reviewing the Background Notes on Chile, available from the U.S. State Department web site: www.state.gov.

Customs and Immigration

You are entering Chile as a tourist, not a student. NOLS recommends your passport be valid for at least 6 months after the course end date. Please see travel.state.gov for specific requirements for the country in which you will be traveling. Again, if you haven't done so already, please submit your passport information on your NOLS Dashboard.

Visa Requirements for US Citizens

A visa is not required for U.S. or Canadian citizens to visit Chile. Upon entry, you'll be given a tourist card (the PDI receipt), which is good for 90 days. **Be sure to keep this card** and any other documents you receive from immigration. Your tourist card must still be valid on the day that you leave Chile, or you will incur substantial fines.

Extensions of the 90-day tourist card may be obtained by visiting the Gobernación office (in Coyhaique, Puerto Montt, Punta Arenas, Santiago, or other major towns) for a fee (presently US\$100). An alternative method is to leave Chile and re-enter to obtain a new tourist card. If you plan to obtain your extension by this method, you'll need to spend at least one night outside of Chile. There may be border restrictions that prevent you from crossing borders during COVID times.

Regardless of how you extend a tourist card (should that be necessary), it is your responsibility to make sure that your tourist card is valid for the duration of the course as of the course start date. A tourist card cannot be extended while you are in the field on your course. **You must plan ahead to be sure it will be valid for the duration of your stay in Chile.**

Non-US or non-Canadian citizens should check with the nearest Chilean consulate to see if they require a visa or not. We require that all students who need visas for Chile obtain one prior to their course. We recommend checking with your airline, too, to confirm which documents are required for entering Chile and to confirm that your travel dates will work. Please contact the Chilean Embassy for details and to get the latest requirements, because they are subject to change: www.chile-usa.org

Australian, Canadian, and Mexican citizens visiting Chile for the first time will be charged a Reciprocity Fee (currently \$160) upon entry into Chile. Save the receipt, as it is valid for the life of your passport.

Lodging

You are responsible for making your own reservations and the cost of lodging for the time before your course starts and after it ends. Your lodging while on your course is provided by NOLS, and you will be camping for the duration of the course. During your Wilderness First Responder section you will camp on the NOLS *campo*.

Below are some lodging options in Coyhaique. Contact these businesses directly for information on pricing and availability. (If calling from the USA, dial 011-56-67 and then the number indicated)

Lodging in Coyhaique

Low-priced Hotels

Hotel/ Hostel	Contact	Website
Esquina Patagónica Hostel & Café (has a good relationship with NOLS)	Address: Ignacio Serrano #621, Esquina Lautaro, Coyhaique Phone: +56-67-2230002 or +56-9-44101571	https://esquinapatagonica.cl/home/
Hostal Aldea patagonia	Address: Gral. Baquedano 872, 5952146 Coyhaique, Aysén Phone: +56942971289	https://www.instagram.com/hostelaldeapatagonia.cl/ Hostal Aldea patagonia
Casa Balmaceda Backpackers	Address: José Manuel Balmaceda 265, 5951381 Coyhaique, Aysén Phone: +56971029107	https://casa-balmaceda.hotelrunner.com/
HUEMUL PATAGÓN	Address: Ignacio Serrano 881, 5951556 Coyhaique, Aysén Phone: +56997606780 Email: contacto@huemulpatagon.cl	https://huemulpatagon.cl/

Mid-priced Hotels

Hotel/ Hostel	Contact	Website
Patagonia House	Address: Campo Alegre S/N , Coyhaique, XI Región, Chile Phone: 56-67-221-1488	www.patagonia-house.com info@salvajecorazon.com info@patagoniahouse.com
Hostal Belisario Jara	Address: Bilbao #662	

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	Phone: 56-67-2234150 or 2234155 Email for reservation: Reservas@belisariojara.cl	Hostal Belisario Jara
HUELLAS Y SENDEROS HOTEL	Address: Francisco Bilbao 178, 5951629 Coyhaique, Aysén Phone: +56672210743	Good option near the main Plaza. HUELLAS Y SENDEROS HOTEL

Premium Hotels

Hotel/ Hostel	Contact	Website
Hotel Diego de Almagro, Coyhaique	Address: Avda Ogana #1320 Coyhaique, XI Región, Chile Phone: 56-67-2215200 or 2215202 E-mail: Centraldereservas@dahoteles.cl	www.dahotelescoyhaique.cl
El Reloj	Address: Baquedano 828 Coyhaique, XI Región, Chile Phone: 56-67-2231108 or 2524691 E-mail: hlelreloj@patagoniachile.cl	www.elrelojhotel.cl
Dreams Hotel	Address: Magallanes 131, Coyhaique, XI Región, Chile Phone: 600 424 0000 E-mail: reservas@mundodreams.com	Dreams Hotel

Other Logistics Details

Luggage

You will be able to store some luggage with NOLS Patagonia while you are in the field. Please keep it to a reasonable amount, as our space is limited, and keep in mind that we cannot guarantee security.

Language

Spanish is the official language of Chile. Although there is some English spoken in Santiago and Puerto Montt, it is rarely spoken elsewhere. Learning basic Spanish will make traveling easier and allow greater cultural interaction. We recommend a Spanish-English pocket dictionary/phrasebook to use during your travels.

Money Exchange

The currency in Chile is the Chilean peso (CLP). The rate of exchange with the US dollar fluctuates daily. The following link can give you up-to-date exchange rates: www.xe.com/ucc/ \$50 and \$100 USD bills can be difficult to exchange. We recommend traveling with crisp, clean \$20s. Traveler's checks can also be difficult to exchange. You cannot change cash in banks, but in Coyhaique there are "Casas de Cambio" where you can exchange money.

Visa, MasterCard, and American Express credit cards are all accepted throughout Chile in many hotels, restaurants and supermarkets. Cash advance machines (ATMs) are common, very convenient for travelers in Chile, and often offer the best exchange rates. When withdrawing from an ATM it is necessary to select "Cliente Extranjero" ("Foreign Client") from the screen prompts.

Make sure you have Chilean pesos before you arrive at the Balmaceda airport. You can easily exchange US dollars or withdraw pesos at the airport in Santiago.

Personal Expenses

Once your course is in the field, there will be little opportunity to spend money. Former students have recommended bringing a small amount of travel money (20,000 – 30,000 pesos in small bills) for the drive to and from your course area. Once your course has begun, there won't be an opportunity for you to change money—make sure you take care of this prior to the start day. Your personal expenses pre- and post-course depend entirely on your style of travel. Chile costs about the same as the US for comparable tourist facilities.

During your course—from the morning of the start date until the afternoon of the final day of the course—NOLS will cover the cost of food, transportation, and instruction, as well as the group equipment indicated on the equipment list. You are responsible for the cost of lodging on the nights before the course start date and on the last night of the course. You are responsible for personal medical bills, any evacuation fees if you need to be evacuated from the field, and for bringing personal equipment listed as not available on the course equipment list. Tuition and evacuation insurance is available. Please contact the NOLS admission office for details.

Traveler's Health

Vaccinations

Currently, there are no vaccinations required by the United States or Chilean governments for exit or entry if traveling between these countries. Regulations and recommendations can change fairly often, however, so you and/or your physician should check with the US Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) for current information. The CDC also has a toll free International Travelers information line, 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747), to request information on diseases specific to international travel. The CDC information is available from their website or via fax. Even though none are required by the US or Chilean departments of health, NOLS recommends that all students traveling to Chile receive certain vaccines. As a series of inoculations can often take months, we suggest you begin early.

The following are NOLS' recommendations based on information from the CDC. We request that you consult your personal physician in this regard, as individual requirements may vary. If you are traveling to other parts of South America before or after your course, please be aware that requirements may differ.

Inoculation Recommendations:

- Tetanus and diphtheria toxins: You must have a current tetanus immunization for your course.
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella: Persons born after 1956 should have a documented history of immunization.
- Poliovirus vaccine: Immunization is strongly recommended for adults traveling in South America. Two types of poliovirus vaccine are available, and whether you require a booster or a full primary course will depend on your previous immunizations. Again, check with your doctor.
- Hepatitis A: either vaccine (Havix or Twinrix) or Immune Globulin.

- Typhoid: Vaccinations are recommended for travelers going off the usual tourist itineraries and/or those traveling for 6 weeks or more.

Vaccinations should be recorded in the official document "International Certificate of Vaccination," available from the U.S. Public Health Service or its equivalent in other countries, or from your doctor. This is also a good place to record your prescriptions, eyeglass needs, medical problems such as allergies, and any other information of a medical nature. Please record your blood type on the front page of this booklet.

Other Medical Concerns

Chile has adequate public and private health facilities. In all major population centers there are well-equipped hospitals with expert staff. By law, blood at these hospitals is screened for HIV (Chile has reported a very low incident rate of AIDS). Communications and infrastructure enable transfer of patients from regional hospitals to the large Santiago hospitals if the need arises. All of our instructors are trained in backcountry first aid to deal with emergency medical situations. Remember, however, we will be in remote locales where immediate medical attention is often many days away.

Echinococcosis

Echinococcosis or hydatid disease results from being infected with the larvae of the tapeworm *Echinococcus granulosus* and is found most commonly in dogs that consume the viscera of infected sheep. Infection results in the formation of cysts in the liver, lungs, kidney and spleen. This condition is also known as cystic hydatid disease and can usually be successfully treated with surgery. However in some cases it can be fatal. Humans are usually exposed to these eggs in one of two ways:

1. By directly ingesting food items or drinking water that is contaminated with stool from an infected animal.
2. By petting or having other contact with cats and dogs that are infected. These pets may shed the eggs in their stool, and their fur may be contaminated. They may also contaminate other objects, such as harnesses or leashes, which can also spread infection.

Three steps can help prevent echinococcosis and other diseases as well:

1. After handling pets, always wash your hands with soap and warm water. Do not pet stray animals.
2. Do not eat wild fruits or vegetables picked directly from the ground without careful washing or cooking.
3. Treat or boil all non-tap water.

Traveler's Diarrhea

Diarrhea is by far the most frequent health problem of travelers to South America. Traveler's diarrhea is caused by a variety of infectious agents and the spectrum of clinical illnesses varies considerably. This illness in travelers, however, is usually not severe, and complete recovery often occurs even in the absence of medical treatment. We do not recommend prophylactic use of antimicrobial/anti-motility agents (Lomotil, Imodium) due to the possible troublesome side effects. Instead of using an anti-diarrhea prophylactic, we recommend that you be careful of what you eat and drink. If problems occur, your instructors will be able to recommend treatment, or assist you in getting medical treatment.

Cholera

A cholera vaccine is not required for travel to or from cholera infected areas. Cholera is best avoided by following basic hygiene practices and avoiding fresh foods and untreated water in infected areas. North Americans living and traveling overseas in regions where cholera is present are at a very low risk of contracting the disease if they follow the recommended practices.

Communication

Mail

It is only possible for courses to have mail delivered at logistical switches between sections. We will make every effort to get mail to students on courses, but there is no guarantee. Friends and family should **not** send any kind of food or medications, cash or checks—they will not make it past Chilean customs. NOLS will not be responsible for paying duty when receiving letters or packages. Please keep the size and amount of mail sent to a reasonable limit.

Please use the following address if you decide to send/receive a FEDEX package:

Your Name and Course Start Date
NOLS Patagonia
Km 11 Camino Balmaceda
Coyhaique, XI Región
CHILE
Phone: + 56 9 75292502

Phones

There is cell phone coverage at the NOLS campo for students with international roaming on their cell phone plan. Beware: this service is expensive. NOLS does not provide Internet or telephone service to students at the campo. Students will have access to their phones only while they are at the campo during the first few days and on the last day of the semester.

Telephone Service

To call a landline in Chile from the USA, dial (011) for an international call, (56) for Chile, and the city code with the number. Coyhaique area code is (67). For cell phones, dial (011) (56) (9)—regardless of the city—and then the cell phone number. Chile has reliable phone service. Calls can be made through ENTEL, an international phone company with call centers in all major population centers. There are smaller call centers as well. Once your course begins, you will not be able to make or receive any phone calls, unless your course stops in a small town for a section change or for other logistical reasons, until the end of each semester. If someone needs to contact you with a true emergency message they can contact our International Headquarters in Lander, Wyoming: 800-710-6657. There is no guarantee you will be able to be contacted once the course begins.

Pre and Post Course Travel Considerations

Coyhaique is generally a safe city during the daytime. However, after dark we strongly recommend that you take a cab rather than walk.

In Coyhaique you are likely to meet other students from your course. This should be an exciting time to begin getting to know one another and share experiences. Consider that you are visitors to Chile and guests of its people and are expected to act respectfully in that role. You are also representatives of your country and of NOLS Patagonia. As such, we expect that you will refrain from drinking to intoxication when you are in Coyhaique before and after your course. NOLS has a good reputation in Coyhaique and we hope you will help us maintain positive relationships in our community.

One last recommendation. For your trip to Chile and to familiarize yourself with the language and history of Patagonia, we invite you to read the stories and trips in Patagonia by Nancy Pfeiffer, NOLS Instructor and a dear friend of our NOLS Chilean headquarters. We invite you to read [Riding Into the Heart of Patagonia](#). More details and [information](#)