

# Lagunas Altas Loop Trail

## A Challenging 23-km Hike with Panoramic Views

The Lagunas Altas trail begins at the Westwinds Campground, a few kilometers down the road from the main park headquarters. As you near the campground, you'll see the trail taking off to the left (up the hill). Follow an old *estancia* road for several kilometers, making your way steadily uphill. If you're ever unsure of your way, look for the red-and-white painted rebar poles that mark the way.

Soon after the road ends, the trail begins to switch-back, zigzagging across the hillside to gain elevation. You'll cross numerous small streams where you can refill water bottles. Toward the top of the uphill section, you'll enter the southern beech forest, making your way uphill through the young trees.

The uphill hike is certainly the most challenging portion of the route—the trail gains approximately 850m (2,800 ft) over the first 7km. Once you leave the forest, you'll find yourself at the top of the large plateau the trail traverses. The first lake is nearby—an excellent spot for lunch, a snack, or a swim, with excellent views east toward the border with Argentina. The next section of the trail meanders slowly downhill, with views down to the main park headquarter. A few sections require a bit of scrambling.

The trail winds around numerous alpine lakes and through beautiful sections of southern beech forest before arriving at a spectacular mirador at kilometer 13.8, where you can see the expanse of the Chacabuco Valley below. From there, you'll hike around one more lagoon before beginning to make your way back downhill, off the plateau. The trail can be steep in sections!

There are two possible end points for the hike. The first (less commonly used) lies up "Camino La Pepa," offering a slightly shorter hike but requiring someone to leave a vehicle. The second, on the road between the park headquarters and Camping Westwinds, gives hikers the option of returning either direction.

Since this hike is long and challenging, please leave prepared! Bring extra layers, including rain gear, a headlamp, plenty of snacks, water, and emergency supplies. Most groups take 6 – 10 hours to complete this hike.

Enjoy!

