

Tracing Darwin's Path Course 2014-2015

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Currency: Are there recommendations on how much money students should bring during the TDP course to Chile? **I recommend \$300 minimum spending money and an additional \$100 for an emergency (not to be spending money). I've seen students bring up to \$1,000 and spend it all, but I've also seen students who bring less than \$300 and are able to manage. Students need money for souvenirs, snacks, sodas, etc., and a meal in the airport in Santiago each way.**
2. Should we get Chilean money before we go, or are there opportunities to change money in Santiago? **They can bring Chilean Pesos if they want, and there is a place to convert currency in the airport in Santiago, and an ATM from which they can withdraw Chilean Pesos. I would not recommend bringing much cash in US dollars or in pesos. If they do, they will want to change it all in the airport in Santiago. Debit or credit cards is the best way to go. They should not bring travelers checks at all.**
3. Is there a Chilean entrance fee we need to pay at the airport in Santiago? Can we pay that in US dollars? **US Citizens do not have to pay any fee now. This was changed in July 2014. Non-US citizens should consult entrance information with the consulate/embassy.**
4. What about visas? Do we need to arrange them in advance? **US citizens do not need to apply for a tourist visa in advance. Non-US citizens should consult entrance information with the consulate/embassy.**
5. There's apparently a 10 kilogram limit to baggage; is there a one-bag limit or is each bag limited to 10 kilos? In particular, students wondered if they could check their 10 kilogram bag but then also have a carry-bag that was somehow exempt from the 10 kg. They also wondered if they could carry-on things like cameras or binoculars to get around the 10 kg limit. **One 10kg bag. Yes, they should carry as much as they can in their carry-on bag or on their person to get around this limit, without being too obvious of course.**
6. What equipment do students need to bring for the overnight camping at Lake Robalo? **Students need to bring a sleeping bag rated to 0°F and hiking pack (these are the only big ticket items that they are required to bring). It might be that the university's recreation center has rentals. If not retailers such as REI rent packs, if students do not want to purchase them. I would recommend a medium sized, internal frame pack.**
7. On the ferry we take from Punta Arenas to Puerto Williams, any sleeping that students do will be in their seats, is that correct? **Yes, but they recline significantly and are pretty comfortable.**
8. A couple of parents have inquired about communicating with students; they want to know only that students have arrived safely in Navarino. I'm assuming there's no cell phone service there, so are there pay phones students can use to call home? **They can bring cell phones from the US, but they should check with their service provider for coverage and costs...it is very expensive even with international plans. There will not be a phone available to make international calls. There are options via Skype to make calls to the US from a Chilean**

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phone as though it were a local call (skype to-go, skype subscriptions, skype credit). I can help explain this if needed.

9. At the Field Station where students stay upon arrival in Puerto Williams, are there computers for student use to check email, or will we basically be out of touch for the three weeks? **There are not computers at the field station. It is recommended that students bring their laptops, if they have them. There will be internet at the hostel in Punta Arenas; they can send an email from there. Also, there are places in Puerto Williams from where they can send an email message.**