Explore the Spectacle of Ice
Penitentes
These snow formations, named for the tall white hats of the Procession of Penance, are found high in the Andes Mountains. Extremely cold, dry air allows sublimation to occur, i.e., ice changes directly to vapor. When dirt blows onto the snow, these spots absorb more heat and melt, creating valleys. Solar radiation is trapped, allowing the valleys to melt faster than the peaks, where sublimation occurs.
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