



12
DAYS

ATACAMA & ALTIPLANO EXPEDITION *Chile's "Big North" and Bolivia's Salt Flats*

Atacama Salt Flat
Geology of the Atacama
Tatio Geysers
Laguna Colorada
Sol de Mañana Geysers
Uyuni Salt Flat
Isluga
Surire Salt Flat
Lauca National Park
Lake Chungará
Parinacota
Arica

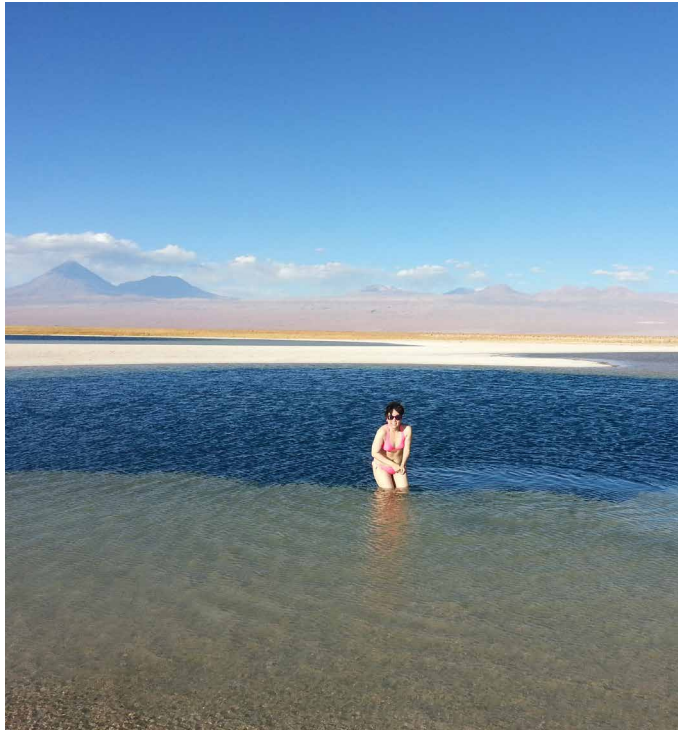
During this trip we seek to connect places of unmissable beauty on a journey that crosses borders to give you a truly complete experience of the Atacama Desert and the Altiplano. This expedition will take us through the vertical ecology of the Atacama and then we'll ascend to the Bolivian Altiplano where we will discover places like Laguna Colorada and Uyuni, a salt flat so large that it's visible from outer space. We return to the Chilean Altiplano to end up at the beach in Arica. This trip will take us to the Andean roots that give meaning to the cultural expressions that we find today in these regions of the American continent.

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**INCLUDES BASIC LODGINGS
IN BOLIVIA**

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DAY 01

CHILE, ANTOFAGASTA, SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Toconao village
- > San Lucas church and gardens
- > Atacama Salt Flat
- > Chaxa Lake
- > Cejar Lake (bathing)

Altitude 2500 meters.
Distance: 135 km.

Accommodations:
San Pedro of Atacama.
Meals: Breakfast at your hotel
+ Lunch.

09.00 hrs. (Duration 5-6 hrs)

We head south along the salt flat. On the way, we see the base camp of the astronomical observatory A.L.M.A. And then we cross the Tambillo reserve, a tamarugo tree forest planted in the 60's. We start our excursion in the village of Toconao, there we will see the San Lucas church, a national monument. Then we will discover a labyrinth of gardens in the middle of the desert.

We continue our journey towards the heart of the Atacama Salt Flat to see the flamingos that inhabit the Chaxa lake and observe the strange formations of the brine soil. Here we will enjoy a nice lunch.

Finally, we go to Cejar lake, a type of geological formation called cenote, on its coasts are crystallized salts and its crystalline waters are so salty that when you bathe in them it's impossible to sink. There are changers and showers here.

Return to your hotel in San Pedro of Atacama



DAY 02

CHILE, ANTOFAGASTA, SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Moon Valley
- > Great Dune
- > Amphitheater
- > Three Marys

- > Hierbas Buenas Petroglyphs
- > Rainbow Valley

Maximum Altitude 3200 meters.
Distance: 187 km.

Accommodations:
San Pedro of Atacama.
Meals: Breakfast at your hotel +
Lunch.

Moon Valley

09.15 hrs. (Duration 8 hrs)

We drive up the Salt Mountain Range. Its landscapes make us travel to other geological times; The bare earth shows the planet's enormous forces in a dramatic gesture of the elements. The folding of the soil produces a huge cut in the sedimentary fill of the Atacama basin, where the crystals forged in their depths appear. In the Moon Valley, the evaporite (salt) that covers it, gives it a lunar appearance. We will stop at the most attractive points according to your interests and capabilities.

Trek option: 4 hrs. Trek that begins at the Kari lookout, we enter this incredible panoramic view of the salt mountain range and we cross tunnels and deep canyons to reach the Moon Valley. We continue by car and visit its points of interest. 5 km.

Petroglyphs & Rainbow Valley

We keep climbing the Domeyko range where we visit the archaeological site of Hierbas Buenas. Here the ancient Atacameños speak to us through the petroglyphs carved in the walls of ignimbrite rocks, between the shelters of the "caravaneros".

We end with a visit to the Rainbow Valley, with its impressive plutonic formations that surface thanks to the movement of the tectonic plates allowing to flourish strokes of intense red, white and green colors and their combinations under a brilliant blue sky completing the rainbow. We have lunch outdoors with this landscape.



HIGHLIGHTS

- > Tatio Geysers
- > Putana wetlands
- > Machuca salt flat (Flamingos)

Altitude: 4320 m.
Distance: 200 km.

Accommodations:
San Pedro of Atacama.
Meals: Breakfast or Lunch in trek option.

05.30 hrs. (Duration 5-7 hrs; schedule varies with season)

We travel north directly to the Tatio Mallku geysers, this is the third largest geothermal field in the world. On the way back we enjoy vast and varied landscapes, we also witness the ancient activities of the inhabitants of the plateau; The sulfur mining, the gathering of the Llareta and the raising of llamas. We pass the Putana wetlands, brimming with life and a variety of birds. Then we see from the heights the town of Machuca and in its surroundings, llamas and a small salt flat with flamingos. In the descent we have a panoramic view of the Atacama Salt Flat. Excellent excursion to observe the variety of the highland fauna. Breakfast or lunch included depending on the time of departure.

Trekk option: 2-3 hrs. We start in the main part of the geothermal field and follow the river formed by the great White Geyser to its source. This low difficulty walk allows us to get close to nature and bathe in hot springs. Lunch in the White Geyser. 4.2 km.



DAY 04

SAN PEDRO OF ATACAMA - BOLIVIA

HIGHLIGHTS

- > National Park Eduardo Abarca
- > Lakes Blanca and Verde
- > Dali's Desert
- > Polques Salt Flat
- > Polques Hot Springs
- > Sol de Mañana Geysers
- > Laguna Colorada

Maximum Altitude: 5000 meters

Distance: 97 km.

Accommodations:

Refuge, Laguna Colorada .

Meals: Breakfast + Lunch + Supper.

09.00 hrs. (Duration 8 hrs)

We leave go through customs in San Pedro, about 45 minutes away we cross the Bolivian border at Hito Cajón. We'll change cars here as we'll need Bolivian 4x4. We head towards the Eduardo Abarca National Park. We begin by encircling the White Lake, populated by numerous species of birds, such as coots and flamingos. We continue to the Laguna Verde which, due to its composition, does not harbor life, but if we are lucky in the morning we can see the colors changing when the wind rises turning it turquoise green.

Then we'll travel through Dali's Desert where the mountains truly seem to become clocks of sand when as the sediments descend creating large banks of colors that are then carried by the wind painting the landscape. We continue to Polques where we can enjoy a thermal bath in front of a great salt flat, we'll have lunch here.

We drive through the desert ascending up to 5000 meters (16,404 ft.). Here we'll see the Sol de Mañana geysers (*Morning Sun*), colorful geysers of boiling mud that lie in sedimentary soil, as the bubbles explode they throw away mud particles forming deep pools of different colors. We go down through a great plain where we see a small settlement at one end, we continue to Laguna Colorada that appears with its exotic beauty, we go to a lookout where we can appreciate the true majesty of the lake with its enormous red expanse dotted with boron islands and populated by abundant James flamingos, you can often see on the sides of this lake wild vicuñas and large herds of llamas grazing. We return to the settlement for dinner and sleep.



DAY 05

BOLIVIA

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Stone Tree
- > Siloli Desert
- > Lakes, la Honda, Chiarkota, Hedionda and Cañapa
- > Chiguana Salt Flat
- > Uyuni Salt Flat
- > Chuvica Village
- > Night in a Salt Hotel

Maximum Altitude: 4550 meters.
Distance: 229 km.
Accommodations:
Salt Hotel, Chuvica.
Meals: Breakfast + Lunch + Supper.

09.00 hrs.

We'll have an early breakfast and get into the 4x4 heading towards the Stone Tree. Here we'll see blocks of ignimbrite stone exposed by the low winds that pick up small pebbles eroding the already narrow bases of these formations leaving the rocks delicately balanced.

We continue our expedition going through Siloli desert, beautiful mountains colored by the sulfur that covers great extensions. We continue to discover three beautiful lakes: La Honda, Chiarkota, Hedionda and Cañapa. Here we'll have an outdoors lunch near the flamingos.

We continue to travel along huge valleys of volcanic rock that still seem to flow from the volcanoes. From our high viewpoint we spot the Chiguana salt flat that begins to dominate the landscape as we go down. We then see hills painted with colorful quinoa plants, we skirt these hills until we reach the edge of the Uyuni salt flat where we find the village of Chuvica. Here we'll spend the night and have dinner in a hotel completely built with salt.



DAY 06

BOLIVIA, CHUVICA / JIRIRA

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Chuvica village
- > Uyuni Salt Flat
- > Incahuasi Island
- > Coqueza Village
- > Walk trough the extinct crater of the Tunupa volcano.
- > Cave of the Mummies

Maximum Altitude: 3660 meters

Distance: 90 km.

Accommodations: Hostel, Jirira.

Meals: Breakfast + Lunch + Supper.

09.00 hrs.

From the town of Chuvica we enter the dazzling whiteness of the Uyuni Salt Flat, we cross its vast extension to arrive at the island Incahuasi populated by numerous cardón cacti. We walk up a path to a beautiful panoramic viewpoint of the surrounding salt flat.

We continue exploring the salt flat towards the village of Coqueza where we'll have lunch. From here we start a walk up to a lookout at the edge of the extinct crater of the Tunupa volcano where we have an incredible view of the Uyuni Salt Flat. We go down to visit caves inhabited by ancient mummies and then we head to the village of Jirira where we have supper and spend the night.



DAY 07

BOLIVIA, JIRIRA / CHILE, REGION OF TARAPACÁ, COLCHANE

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Uyuni Salt Flat
- > Llica Village Market
- > Coipasa Salt Flat
- > Colchane

Maximum Altitude. 5687 meters.

Distance: 110 km.

Accommodations: Hotel, Colchane.

Meals: Breakfast + Lunch + Supper.

09.00 hrs.

We have breakfast and return to the 4x4 to travel west through the salt flat to the village of Llica, here we'll go to the market and buy Salteñas, typical empanadas of the Altiplano. Here we can see the colorful daily life of the ancient Aymaras.

We'll see several villages dedicated to the cultivation of quinoa and we cross the Coipasa salt flat where we can still see villagers hard at work, pulling out large blocks of salt from the ground by hand. We continue driving until the Chilean border, we arrive to Colchane where we have dinner and spend the night.



DAY 08

CHILE, REGION OF TARAPACÁ, COLCHANE / REGION OF ARICA, SURIRE

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Isluga Village
- > Isluga Church
- > National Park Isluga Volcano
- > Queñua trees
- > Surire Salt Flat
- > Hot Springs

Maximum Altitude: 4270 meters.

Distance: 97 km.

Accommodations: Camp in Surire.

Meals: Breakfast + Lunch + Supper.

09.00 hrs.

After breakfast we head to the almost deserted village of Isluga, which is part of the Isluga Volcano National Park. This place was a ceremonial site for the Aymara people and it's currently considered a National Historical Monument. Here we can appreciate an old 17th century Altiplanic church. We continue our journey through extensive wetlands where we can see abundant llamas and we then pass next to the Isluga volcano.

We continue along narrow mountain passes where the queñua tree grows, it's the tree that grows in the highest altitude in the world. Then we descend through wide valleys surrounded by mountains to the Salt Flat of Surire, here we set camp next to wonderful hot springs where we bathe. We have dinner and spend the night.



DAY 09

CHILE, REGION OF ARICA, SURIRE/ REGION OF ARICA, PARINACOTA

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Sunrise in the Surire Falt Flat
- > Surire Geysers
- > Walk on the Salt Flat
- > Lauca National Park
- > Volcanoes Guallatire & Parinacota
- > Chungará Lake
- > Cotacotani Ponds
- > Walk to Parinacota

06.00 hrs. (Depending of time of the year)

We rise at dawn to delight ourselves with an incredible landscape of geysers dotting the salt flat, steaming while the sun rises and we walk. We have breakfast and we make our way between the mountains and next to the active volcano Guallatire. We drive up a mountain pass and we go through border control near the Chungará lake in front of the beautiful volcano Parinacota that dominates the landscape with its harmonious symmetry. A little later in Cotacotani, we find a sinuous terrain formed by small mounds that rise from the water, from there we start a walk to the town of Parinacota where we'll have supper and spend the night.

Maximum Altitude: 4570 meters.
Distance: 129 km.
Accommodations:
Lodge in Parinacota.
Meals: Breakfast + Lunch + Supper.



DAY 10	CHILE, REGION OF ARICA, PARINACOTA / REGION OF ARICA, ARICA
<div>HIGHLIGHTS</div> <div><div>> Arica</div><div>> Arica Beach</div><div>> Fisherman’s cove</div></div> <div><div>Altitude: Sea Level</div><div>Distance: 170 km.</div><div>Accommodations: Hotel in Arica.</div><div>Meals: Breakfast</div></div>	<div>09.00 hrs.</div> <div>We eat breakfast and start the long descent from the Altiplano to the sea. As we go down, we observe how the different layers of the atmosphere give rise to different environments for different species of plants and animals. We see the sediments settle down each time lower until reaching the large green valleys amidst a calcined desert where agriculture is abundantly practiced. We finally arrive to Arica where we settle down in a hotel.</div> <div>Free afternoon in the capital of the region.</div>
DAY 11	CHILE, CITY OF ARICA
	<div>Take advantage of this day to enjoy the city and its beaches. It is recommended to go eat seafood at the fisherman’s cove and visit the Morro. Arica is also a free tax zone and a place of important commercial exchange between Chileans and Peruvians. This is a day of rest and margin in case of unforeseen delays.</div>
DAY 12	CHILE, CITY OF ARICA, FLIGHT TO SANTIAGO
	<div>Transfer to the Arica airport, Chacalluta for your flight to Santiago.</div>