

SOUTH AMERICA - 7 DAYS TREK IN ATACAMA DESERT



TRIP CODE

CLTS7AD

DEPARTURE

Mondays

DURATION

7 Days

LOCATIONS

Chile



INTRODUCTION

The Atacama Desert located in Chile's north is considered the driest hot desert in the world, occupying over 105,000 square kilometres. The desert also spreads into Argentina, Peru & Bolivia and encompasses an abundance of amazing flora and fauna species which have evolved to adapt to the unforgiving environment. The desert has become a hotspot for adventurous travellers to trek around these harsh lands and experience an amazing journey through the wilderness.

This trip involves a collection of the many experiences which the Atacama calls home. Seek out impressive rock formation of the Salt Mountains, see the Moon Valley and trek in between glorious sunrises and even more magnificent sunsets. As the trek progresses get bewildered by the starry Atacama sky by night and visit Indigenous cultures, the Rio Grande village, Atacama Salt Flats and the magical Tatio Geysers by day. This journey is truly the best way to experience the raw wilderness of the Atacama.

ITINERARY

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DAY 1: The Adventure Starts!

Arrival in San Pedro de Atacama, Chile. Arrive at Calama Airport and transfer to San Pedro de Atacama, driving past the impressive rock formations of the Cordillera de la Sal (Salt Mountains). Once in San Pedro you will receive a briefing over lunch about the upcoming days and in the afternoon, go on your first hike in the vast amazing Valle de la Luna. Afterwards, begin a trek over large sand dunes until reaching the viewpoint of one of the world's most beautiful sunsets, intensified by the warm colours throughout the Valley. Then return to town and stay overnight in San Pedro.



DAY 2: San Pedro to San Bartolo


After breakfast make your way to the Fortress of Quito and set off on a walk to the mouth of the San Pedro River, exploring its small canyons along the way. The path crosses the river at various points and there are strange geological formations to sight. Finally you will come to a small valley and the ghost town of San Bartolo - a former mining enclave, now abandoned. Camp in this wonderfully isolated spot and enjoy a night under the starry Atacama sky. Overnight at Camping San Bartolo.



DAY 3: San Bartolo to Rio Grande

Today will begin with a demanding trek, hiking a higher altitude as you leave the river bed and move towards the plateau. Here there are great views of the abandoned mines in the area, home to many legends. The trail continues through the river canyon and giant cacti emerge, in the midst of the arid, barren desert. There are some areas of the valley that are so dry that scientists have not found life, or even bacteria. After crossing a section of the canyon you finally arrive at Río Grande Village, one of the few remaining indigenous communities of the Atacameño people, where camp will be set up on the river banks. Overnight at Camping Rio Grande.



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DAY 4: Rio Grande to Machuca

Today is the most physically challenging day of the trek, as you head towards Machuca Village. The trail continues alongside small streams in narrow, beautiful valleys inhabited by indigenous locals and their llama herds. Continue climbing up steep desert canyons, gaining altitude, until you reach the wetlands of Machuca, full of local wildlife. From here you have an amazing view of Licancabur Volcano, the sacred mountain of the Atacameño people. At this point you are at 4,000m (13,000ft) above sea level, and will spend the evening relaxing and acclimatizing in the campsite next to a big 'bofedal' - wetlands where llamas graze. Overnight at Camping Machuca.



DAY 5: Machuca to Tatio Geysers & Copa Coya


After a hearty breakfast, leave Machuca for the Tatio Geysers. The geothermic field is truly incredible, from almost 900 metres below the earth, boiling steam bursts up to 40 metres over the earth's surface. From the geysers you begin the walk, lasting approximately three hours, towards a high Andean plateau with the same name as the trail - Copa Coya. On the way, sight Andean vegetation and maybe viscachas (similar to chinchillas) and stop to enjoy lunch with a view. At the end of the walk there's a steep uphill climb leading to a wonderful view of the Alto Loa villages, showing a different view of Atacama than normally experienced. After you descend from the Copa Coya, you can enjoy the Tatio Thermal Pool for a restoring bath.



DAY 6: Atacama Salt Flat & Lagoons

Rise feeling refreshed and with the satisfaction of having crossed the heart of Atacama. Today, drive to the amazing Salar de Atacama, home to astonishing birds like the Chilean Pink Flamingos. Then continue driving towards the marvelous Miscanti and Miñiques Lagoons, full of turquoise waters that beautifully contrast with the autumnal colours of the Altiplanic lands. Spend your final night in San Pedro.




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DAY 7: Adios Atacama

Take the final day of the trip to relax and wander around the village, visiting its handicraft shops, church and museum. In the afternoon, transfer to Calama’s airport to take your flight back to Santiago...Adios Atacama!



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS	
Accommodation	Hotels and Campings
Inclusions	<p>One expert English-speaking guide All ground private transportation as indicated in the itinerary 3 nights in 3 star hotel in San Pedro 3 nights camping Breakfast, lunch and dinner everyday. Except on day 1 not breakfast included and day 7 only breakfasts included.</p> <p>Exclusions</p> <p>Domestic flight tickets Insurance (it is mandatory you purchase appropriate insurance for this trip). Voluntary tipping of guides and staff Sleeping bags and mats Items of personal nature</p>
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request, contact us for more details.
Notes	<p>Camping: The tents arranged for this program are typical mountain tents with enough room for 2 people overnight in comfortable conditions. We provide all the camping gear, but you have to bring your own mat and sleeping bag. Our team will be responsible for setting up the tents in the camping site. There will be also a big and comfortable dining tent for enjoying breakfast and dinner.</p> <p>Price is based on groups of 4 or more people</p>
Price Dependent upon	Season and Availability

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SUSTAINABILITY

Being environmentally accountable is a crucial part of our organisation. Chimu is currently striving towards using less paper, taking several initiatives to do so and tracking our progress along the way. Our goal: A paperless organisation. For this reason, all information given to you will be sent electronically. We encourage those who choose to travel with us to support our aspirations and actions and ask that you reconsider printing out documentation. To view these documents, you can download them to your iPad or portable computer before and during your trip.

Chimu is passionate and dedicated to sustainability measures and understands the crucial part sustainability plays within the tourism industry.

We use local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprint. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting. Our guides are all highly qualified (most with university degrees) or equip with many years of experience and are paid above the standard wage. Whether it be our knowledgeable local guides, locally produced meals or the transport on tour, we do not use imported goods when local products are available. We aim to minimise our impact on the environment and give as much back as possible to the communities we work in.

While visiting the many national parks, heritage sites, museums and landmarks our travellers are encouraged to explore remain culturally aware and sensitive. We further encourage you to buy appropriate souvenirs and discourage the buying of anything wrongfully made or taken from the environment i.e. shells and endangered species products. Information on how you can be environmentally conscious, and travel responsibly will be made available in our Travellers Guides and provided during your travels by guides and staff.

For more information on our sustainability policies, including how we are striving towards being a paperless organisation, click [HERE](#)

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