

BOLIVIA - LA PAZ TO SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA



TRIP CODE

LATSLPSP

DURATION

4 Days

LOCATIONS

Bolivia, Chile



INTRODUCTION

This 4-day tour exposes you to the unparalleled scenery of Chile and Bolivia. Discover the highlights of La Paz before flying to Uyuni to begin your drive across the world's largest salt lake, the Salar de Uyuni, one of South America's greatest experiences. The vast salt desert is a photographer's paradise - stark, yet hauntingly beautiful, a seemingly endless expanse of dazzling white interspersed with colourful mineral-rich lagoons. Your adventure ends in San Pedro de Atacama, an oasis in the world's driest desert - the Atacama Desert.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival transfer in La Paz

On arrival, please make your way through to the Arrivals Hall where our representative will be waiting for you to transfer you to your hotel. He/she will be holding a sign with your name on it. Please note this service is with a driver only. El Alto airport is the highest International airport in the world at 4,080 metres above sea level.



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DAY 1: La Paz

La Paz has a spectacular setting in a deep bowl surrounded by snow-capped mountains of the Altiplano. It lies in the shadow of the towering 6,438m high Mt. Illimani, always snow-covered and visible from many parts of the city. The city (from the main square) is 3,636 metres above sea level but the neighbouring city of El Alto where La Paz International Airport is located lies at over 4,000 metres. Some of the highlights of La Paz itself include Plaza Murillo, San Francisco Church and the "Witches Market" where vendors sell dried llama fetuses and frogs, dried llama dung, herbs, remedies and other ingredients used in Aymara traditions and rituals.



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DAY 1: La Paz City Tour & Valley of the Moon

This afternoon you will be collected from your hotel for a tour of the city. Discover the fascinating city of La Paz, visiting the Gold, Murillo and Costumbrista Museums and to the 'Mirador de Killi Killi' viewpoint, offering magnificent views over La Paz. You will also visit various street markets including a traditional market where agricultural products from the highlands, such as quinoa, tunta, chuño (dehydrated potato) and oca (sweet tuber) are sold and the Witches Market, where locals buy supplies for ritual ceremonies like the Ch'alla and offerings to Pachamama (Mother Earth). Take a ride on the Teleférico cable car, the highest in the world. Then continue by road to the Valley of the Moon, where a clay mountain has been impressively shaped by erosion resulting in a formation that resembles the face of the moon. On completion of the tour you will be taken to your hotel.



DAY 2: Transfer to airport for onward destination

You will be collected from your hotel at the appropriate time and transferred to the airport for your onward flight.



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DAY 2: Uyuni Salt Flats

Uyuni, founded in 1889 by Bolivian president Aniceto Arce, is still an important military base. It lies in south-western Bolivia, 3,670 metres above sea level and situated on the edge of the Salar de Uyuni, the largest salt flat in the world. The Salar de Uyuni covers over 10,000 square kilometres of the Bolivian Altiplano and is fringed by the mountains of the Andes. Beneath it lies the world’s largest lithium reserve estimated to be about 100 million tons and accounting for around 70% of the world’s lithium reserves. The salt in the salt flats is over 120 metres deep. The area is remote, arid and cold, stark, yet stunning, boasting extraordinary beauty and a silence that is captivating. Today we depart across the Great Salt Flats to Colchani village, to observe the methods of salt extraction and salt processing. The tour then continues to Incahuasi Island (better known as Fish Island) - an oasis with a unique and isolated ecosystem that is populated by giant columnar cacti up to 10 metres high, some over 100 years old. We continue our journey, travelling north to visit the pre-Columbian Pucara de Ayque fort and the nearby chullpares on the foothills of Thunupa volcano, then east to our hotel near Colchani (2 hours). A picnic lunch and dinner are included today.



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DAY 3: Colchani - Villamar

After breakfast, continue the road journey south crossing the town of Uyuni, visit the cemetery of old trains and then enter the southern highlands crossing the villages of San Cristobal Mine, Culpina K and enter the rich and high Andean Valley of Alota. Continue south passing great stone formations to finally arrive at Villamar. Picnic lunch and dinner included today.



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DAY 4: Villamar - REA - Hito Cajon - San Pedro de Atacama

We depart early this morning to the REA reserve. Covering an area of over 700,000 hectares, the reserve features salt pans, volcanoes, snow-capped peaks, thermal springs and geothermal geysers and is home to unique species of fauna that have adapted to the extreme conditions of the region. We visit Laguna Colorada (4,278 metres), declared a RAMSAR site due to the 30,000 Andean flamingos that nest here. Laguna Colorado is characterised by the red colour of its water and it is the most important flamingo site in the region. You may also see vicuñas, llamas and vizcachas. We also visit the “Sol de Mañana” geysers, with their active fumaroles and volcanic craters. The crater bottoms display boiling lava and the fumaroles emit spouts of mixed water and superheated steam that reach heights of 80 to 100 metres. We also visit Chalviri Lagoon and the natural hot springs of Polques. We continue through the high desert of Pampas de Dali until we reach “Laguna Verde” (3 hours), a beautiful green lagoon at the foothills of the Licancabur volcano where flamingos are often seen. A picnic lunch is taken on the way and the tour continues to the mountain pass of Hito Cajon on the border between Bolivia and Chile.



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DAY 4: Transfer Hito Cajon to San Pedro

You will be met at the border by your Chilean guide and be transferred to San Pedro de Atacama. Please note this service is with a driver only.



DAY 4: Atacama

The small oasis town of San Pedro de Atacama lies on an arid high plateau in the Andes Mountains in the heart of some of northern Chile’s most spectacular scenery. Overlooking the Licancabur Volcano, its dramatic surrounding landscape ranges from desert, salt flats, steaming geysers and hot springs to fascinating rock formations. The church, dating back to 1774 and featuring adobe, cactus wood and leather-bound beams and the Archaeological Museum are both worth a visit.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Standard
Inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services and meals included as mentioned in the itinerary • English speaking guides • All entrances fee • Private Service • Air Tickets - La Paz to Uyuni (OW) <p>NOT INCLUDED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything not listed in the itinerary • Tips • Airport taxes
Difficulty Rating	1 (easy)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	<p>VERY IMPORTANT:</p> <p>- During the rainy season (Nov/Apr) the visit to Uyuni salt lake & Isla Pescado will be possible only if weather conditions permit it.</p> <p>- In order to handle clients a correct information, we kindly request you to advice clients that hotels in the area of the “Uyuni Salt Flats” are rustic and sometimes services are very basic, due to the far-off location with distribution centers, although we always give the best possible accommodation. On the other hand, roads at the Uyuni Salt Flats are not paved and during raining season, the journeys can take longer. Please also remember that hotel classification in Bolivia is local standards, which do not always match international levels.</p>
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from

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the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.

2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.

3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.

4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.

5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structured to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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