

## PATAGONIA - SANTIAGO TO LA PAZ



### TRIP CODE

LATSSALP

### DURATION

13 Days

### LOCATIONS

Chile, Bolivia, Patagonia



## INTRODUCTION

Travel to South America and set off on an unforgettable adventure through the soaring Andes, meeting friendly locals and discovering the rich culture and breathtaking scenery of this remarkable region.

Starting in Chile's vibrant Santiago surrounded by an extraordinary set of snow-capped Andean mountains, travel to the expansive San Pedro Atacama and Salar de Uyuni where you will enjoy surreal landscapes and abundant wildlife, including wild vicunas and multi coloured lakes filled with flamingos.

Finish the adventure in colourful La Paz. This amazing trip is the perfect way to experience the best of this spectacular region.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1: Arrival transfer in Santiago

On arrival at Santiago Airport, please make your way through Customs and Immigration and only exit from the green doors marked 'Meeting Point'. Our representative will be holding a sign with your name on it and waiting for you outside this exit. Please only make contact with our representative. This service includes a driver and local English speaking guide who will provide you with any useful information needed for your stay.



NO IMAGE  
AVAILABLE

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## DAY 1: Santiago de Chile

Santiago, Chile’s capital and largest city, lies in a valley surrounded by the snow-capped mountains of the Andes and the Chilean Coastal Range. Founded in 1541, Santiago has been Chile’s capital since colonial times. It is a vibrant and cosmopolitan city and although it features many colonial buildings, it has grown into a modern metropolis and the cultural centre of the country.



## DAY 1: Santiago Panoramic City Tour

This morning, you will be collected from your hotel for your tour of Santiago. Visit both the old and new areas of the city. Highlights include the Plaza de Armas, the city's central square and the heart of the city’s old colonial core. The Plaza de Armas is home to the beautiful 18th century Metropolitan Cathedral, the early 19th century Royal Court Palace that houses the Natural History Museum and the Central Post Office completed in 1882. Will continue along the Government Palace and where we will have the opportunity to walk through some of the most traditional streets and neighbourhoods. Visit Cerro Santa Lucia, the hill on which Santiago was founded in 1541, now a park with fountains and stairs leading to a fort and panoramic viewpoint across the city. On completion of your tour, you will be taken to your hotel. Please note this is small group tour and only operates in the morning.



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### DAY 2: Full day Valparaiso & Casablanca valley

This morning you will be collected from your hotel and travel west towards the Pacific Ocean. Our first stop will be in the Casablanca Valley, famous for its many wineries and towns full of Chilean traditions. Vines were first planted here in the mid 1980's and the area is known for its cool climate white wines, most notably Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, as well as Pinot Noir. The region's world class wineries are mostly located along the road and we will visit one of them to enjoy a premium wine tasting before continuing on to Valparaiso. Valparaiso is a historic port and is known as the "Jewel of the Pacific" and the cultural capital of Chile with festivals every year and a number of street artists and musicians. Its charming, picturesque and colourful houses are set on cobblestone alleyways in the hills that surround the city, creating a natural amphitheatre. In the 19th century, Valparaiso saw an influx of European immigrants. The historic quarter of Valparaiso was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2003 based on its unique architecture and urban design. The city's system of funicular lifts was declared one of the world's most endangered historical treasures by the World Monuments Fund in 1996. A short drive along the coast will allow us to have a perfect view of the hills and the city. We walk around the town to discover hidden treasures such as art galleries, small cafes and breweries. Lunch is not included but restaurants will be recommended to you with time allowed for you to enjoy lunch. In the afternoon, return to Santiago and you will be taken to your hotel. Please note this is a small group tour.



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### DAY 3: Andes Day Lagoon

Discover the magic of the mountains! Cajon del Maipo affords spectacular views of the Andes where you can reconnect with nature in an environment of tranquillity and fresh mountain air. We visit "Embalse El Yeso", an amazing lagoon that sits at 2,500 metres in the Andes Mountains surrounded by stunning landscapes and vistas. The tour includes stops at historical landmarks, a waterfall and in the small town of San Jose de Maipo. Please Note: There are a couple of hikes to the viewpoint of San Jose Volcano and a visit to the hot springs that can be added into the itinerary - please advise if this is of interest. Tour subject to change due to weather conditions (rain or snow).



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DAY 4: Transfer to the airport for onward destination

You will be collected from your hotel at the appropriate time and transferred to the airport for your onward flight. This service includes a Spanish speaking driver only.



DAY 4: Arrival transfer in Atacama

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 a shared service with 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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## DAY 5: Archeological Quito & Tulo Tour

This morning you will be collected from your hotel for a tour of San Pedro de Atacama, the archaeological capital of Chile. The small oasis town is one of the main cultural settlements in Atacama located near the mouth of the main river that feeds the salt flat. It lies on an arid high plateau in the Andes Mountains in the heart of some of northern Chile's most spectacular scenery. During this excursion, visit the most important archaeological sites of San Pedro de Atacama. In the XII century aborigines built the fortress of Quito to defend their people to the attack of enemies, foreigners or border natives. Tulo village is the oldest archeological human establishment of the entire region and it was occupied between 300BC and 500AC. Also visit the ayllu de Coyo, most important part of the archaeological route. There you will find circular constructions, antiques Lickanantay's residences and can appreciate the original fauna and flora. On completion of the tour, you will be taken to your hotel. Please note this is a small group tour.



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## DAY 5: Moon Valley Tour

This afternoon, you will be collected from your hotel to travel across Cordillera de la Sal (Salt Mountain Range) to reach the Valle de la Luna (Valley of the Moon), one of the main attractions of this region. Located 19km from San Pedro de Atacama, the valley's landscape resembles the surface of the moon with small but sharp crested hills created by the wind. This tour is available only in the afternoon when the setting sun brings out the best of the valley's incredible colours. On completion of this tour, you will be taken to your hotel. Please note this is a small group tour.



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## DAY 6: Atacama Salt Lake & Toconao Tour

This afternoon you will be collected from your hotel to visit the Salar de Atacama, one of the world’s largest salt lakes and the most important lithium reserves in the world. At Chaxa Lagoon, we will be able to enjoy watching a variety of bird species, including the three types of flamingos that inhabit Chile -Andean, Chilean and James’- and the pink color of their feathers. The deep blue of the Atacama sky, the altitudes of the Andean volcanos and the red sunset will bid us farewell before returning to San Pedro de Atacama. En route to the Salt Lake, visit the town of Toconao. The houses in this small picturesque village are built from bricks of white volcanic stone and its friendly inhabitants are famous for their fine wool knitting skills. On completion of the tour you will be taken to your hotel. Please note this is a small group tour.



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## DAY 7: San Pedro de Atacama to Hito Cajon

This morning you will be transferred from San Pedro de Atacama to Hito Cajon, the mountain pass on the border between Chile and Bolivia. You will be met at the border by your Bolivian guide.



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DAY 7: San Pedro de Atacama - Hito Cajon - REA - Villamar

From the border we enter 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 Verde”, a beautiful green lagoon at the foothills of the Licancabur volcano (5,865 metres), where flamingos are often seen. We continue through the high desert of Pampas de Dali to Chaltviri lagoon, the hot springs of Polques and the geysers Sol de Mañana 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 have a picnic lunch and continue on through the desert landscape to 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. Finally we reach Villamar where we overnight. Dinner is included at the hotel.



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### DAY 8: Villamar - Colchani

This morning after breakfast, we continue across Valle de los Sapos (Frog Valley), a famous rock formation caused by wind erosion. We pass the villages of Alota, Culpina K and San Cristobal. Culpina K features artwork designed by the Bolivian artist Gaston Ugalde, including several metal trees. The town is built from natural materials and the houses painted with natural pigmentation. San Cristobal was relocated from its original location because of the zinc and silver deposits in the vicinity. The San Cristobal silver mine is one of the largest silver mines in the world. The colonial church was moved stone by stone from its original location. A picnic lunch is included. We also visit the cemetery of old trains on the outskirts of Uyuni. Uyuni was an important transportation hub and in the late 19th century, rail lines were built by British engineers and the trains carried minerals to the Pacific Ocean ports. After the collapse of the mining industry in the 1940's, many trains were abandoned outside Uyuni with the resulting Train Cemetery. The salt winds have led to the corrosion of the metal. At the end of the tour we continue on towards Colchani on the edge of the Uyuni salt flats. Dinner is included at the hotel.



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## DAY 9: Uyuni Salt Flat - Uyuni

This morning after breakfast we set off across the Great Salt Flats to Colchani village, where we observe the methods of salt extraction and salt processing. We continue to Incahuasi Island (better known as Fish Island) - an oasis with a unique and isolated ecosystem that features algae and fossils. The area is covered with giant columnar cacti up to 10 metres high, some over 100 years old. Against the backdrop of the salt flats extending to the horizon, this landscape makes for spectacular photos. After a picnic lunch, we travel north to visit the pre-Colombian Pucara de Ayque fort and the nearby chullpares on the foothills of Thunupa volcano. We then head east to Uyuni. 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.



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## DAY 10: Depart Uyuni

This morning you will be transferred to Uyuni airport for your onward flight.



## DAY 10: 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 10: 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 foetuses and frogs, dried llama dung, herbs, remedies and other ingredients used in Aymara traditions and rituals.



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## DAY 11: La Paz City Tour & Moon Valley (Full Day)

Today you will discover the fascinating city of La Paz, on a full day city tour with lunch included in a local restaurant. The tour takes you through 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). We take the "Teleférico" cable car that gives an excellent and beautiful view of La Paz. The tour then passes through the modern, affluent residential area of the city on the way 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. At the end of the tour you will be returned to your hotel.



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## DAY 12: Tiwanaku Ruins

Tiwanaku is a 1.5 hour drive from La Paz, located near the southern shores of Lake Titicaca on the Altiplano, at an altitude of 3,850 metres. Tiwanaku was the spiritual and political centre of the Tiwanaku culture that dates back to 1500BC - 1000AD. It was one of the most important pre-Inca civilizations and considered to be among the most developed at the time. The Tiwanaku people were outstanding in agriculture, hydraulics, architecture and medicine, as well as in social organization, but due to an economic crisis caused by a long dry season, Tiwanaku collapsed around 1,000 AD. The city of Tiwanaku was the capital of this powerful pre-Hispanic empire that dominated a large area of the southern Andes and beyond, reaching its height between 500 and 900 AD. Most of the ancient city, built largely from adobe, has been overlaid by the modern town. The monumental stone buildings of the ceremonial centre, however, survive in the protected archaeological zones. The main constructions visited during this tour include the Kalasasaya Temple and the Gate of the Sun constructed out of stone, Ponce and Fraile monoliths, the Pyramid of Akapana and the semi-underground temple. We also visit two local museums to view pottery and stone work and to learn more about the culture.



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## DAY 13: Transfer to airport for onward destination

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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS	
Accommodation	Budget

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<b>Inclusions</b>	Accommodation with breakfast everyday. Tours and transport as stated on the itinerary. Meals as per the itinerary. Domestic air tickets.
<b>Difficulty Rating</b>	2 (light adventure)
<b>Single Surcharge</b>	Available upon request
<b>Notes</b>	Contact us for more details
<b>Price Dependent upon</b>	Season and availability

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## 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 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 structures 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.