



Rediscover the
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Tour Notes

Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia Explorer

Tour Duration – 28 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

- ✓ A remarkable adventure taking in remotes part of northern Argentina and Chile, followed by an in-depth journey across Bolivia
- ✓ An adventurous trip through some of the most awesome landscapes on the planet
- ✓ Experience the feeling of isolation in the deserts of the Puna and Atacama regions
- ✓ See amazing geological features in the Valle De La Luna
- ✓ Relish the colonial architecture of the UNESCO World Heritage cities of Sucre and Potosi.
- ✓ Follow in the footsteps of dinosaurs at Cal Orck'o, the world's largest paleontological site.
- ✓ Marvel at the stunning vista of the salt flats at Uyuni
- ✓ Catch your breath in the fascinating city of La Paz



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Tour Map



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Comfortable mid-range hotels and lodges (not luxury)
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum 12
Start Point: Buenos Aires – you can arrive any time on day 1
End Point: La Paz – you can depart any time on day 28
Transport: Minibus, 4WD vehicles, domestic and international flights as the per itinerary
Countries Visited: Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia



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Argentina, Chile and Bolivia Explorer

Come and discover the hidden beauty of the northern regions of Argentina and Chile, followed by an in-depth journey across Bolivia. After meeting up with your fellow travellers in Buenos Aires we head north to the charming city of Salta from where we explore Argentina's little visited Puna region and the Atacama Desert in neighbouring Chile. Discover an elevated plateau of wildly striking and desolate landscapes filled with the sights of salt flats, flamingos, ancient Inca trails, desert labyrinths and herds of llamas and vicuñas.

After flying from Salta back to the Argentine capital, the next day we take a short flight from Buenos Aires to the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Often overlooked in favour of its more famous neighbour Peru, Bolivia offers the adventurous traveller just about all you could want from a trip to South America, without the numbers of tourists found in other areas. We journey through a variety of landscapes from the steamy jungles of the Amazon to the desolate and foreboding salt flats of Uyuni. We visit the lovely Jesuit churches and pretty villages of the Chiquitania, region and the colonial cities of Sucre and Potosi with their amazing architecture, which transports us back to the days of the conquistadors. We also take time to delve into ancient cultures at Tiwanaku and embark on an adventure through the mountains of the High Andes, where the barren landscapes have to be seen to be believed. Bolivia is a hotbed of nature, adventure and culture that should be high on the list for any prospective visit to South America and is the perfect combination with a visit to Argentina and Chile.

Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour. Note that we travel in 4WD convoy on this tour depending on the group size and the guide will drive one of the vehicles, so we encourage clients to swap vehicles during the tour in order to spend time with the guide on the road.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Buenos Aires

Arrival at Buenos Aires and transfer to your hotel. Overnight Dazzler Recoleta Hotel or similar. No meals are included today.

Note: If you are arriving in Buenos Aires early, we would be happy to arrange any sightseeing activities or perhaps you may wish to take in a Tango show with dinner. Please contact us for details.



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Buenos Aires

This sprawling metropolis that glitters in the afternoon rays from the River Plate is home to over one-third of the country's population. Founded in 1580, Buenos Aires is today the largest city in South America. Also known as the city that never sleeps, its many and varied around-the clock attractions never fail to surprise and impress. Here, the tango lives on not only in the breathtakingly complex movements executed by professional dancers at tango shows or in the popular plazas at the San Telmo antiques market, but also in the sensuous sway of couples from all walks of life who gather at the city's many milongas to share their passion for the music. At weekends, the streets ring to a medley of different sounds. San Telmo, famous for its antique and knick-knack stalls; La Boca and the "Caminito" with its brightly painted walls where artists gather; Recoleta where hundreds of stands selling handicrafts fills its square; the gaucho market Mataderos where local groups perform songs from their native towns and the gauchos demonstrate their horsemanship skills. For art and culture lovers, Buenos Aires' 57 museums house not only some of the continent's most impressive private collections but also preserve the local heritage of customs and traditions from ornate silver mate pots to the fashion accessories of the 19th century.

The grandeur of the Colón Theatre, an opera house acclaimed world-wide for its balanced acoustic is a must for classical music buffs who will also find a surprisingly broad choice of concerts and recitals of choral, orchestral and chamber works of a very high standard at concert halls and churches throughout Buenos Aires.

Day 2: Buenos Aires - Salta (2:15 hour domestic flight – Salta Altitude: 1200m)

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Salta and check in to your hotel on arrival. This afternoon we will embark on a walking tour of the city visiting the Main Plaza and the historical colonial buildings in town, including the Cathedral, the Church of San Francisco, and the San Bernardo Convent. We will also tour the extraordinary MAAM (*Museum of High Altitude Archaeology*) to find out more about the High Altitude Sanctuaries of the Andes and the Inca footprint in Salta. Overnight Design Suites or similar. (BD)

Salta

Salta still has a distinctly Hispanic feel to it, an urban skyline distinguished by the colonial architecture of its original buildings and churches, which has also influenced more modern construction to the point where the main square is a charming monument to neo-colonial style. The streets in the old part of the town run between old Andalusian houses with their tiled roofs, thick whitewashed walls and wrought-iron balconies brightened by scarlet and fuchsia geraniums. A recently completed restoration of the old city centre with new restaurants has added life to the austere structures after the sun goes down. Another new addition to Salta's attractions is the Archaeological Museum which has many fine relics of Inca civilization including ones found in 1999 at an Inca sanctuary and temple near the Lullailaco volcano in the heart of the Andes mountain range. Archaeologists discovered the exceptionally well-preserved bodies of three children who had been part of a ritual sacrifice to Incan deities and, lying next to them, an astonishing collection of over 100 gold and silver statues, ornaments, ceremonial garments, and ceramics which are now on display at the Museum.

Day 3: Salta – Tilcara – Humahuaca – Purmamarca

Journey to the Quebrada of Humahuaca, a long valley that ends near the border with Bolivia, located in the Jujuy Province, the most Andean territory of Argentina. It is famous for its beautiful, coloured mountains, its geological formations, and historic villages. During the journey, enjoy the best of the authentic atmosphere of this area of Argentina including the food market of Humahuaca, a small hike in an amazing hidden red gorge and the Sacred Garden of Cardones situated at 3200m. We explore the towns of Tilcara, Purmamarca and Humahuaca with their colourful craft markets, before returning to Salta. Overnight Manantial Del Silencio or similar. (BL)



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Distance: 320 km paved road - 70 km gravel road

Altitude: Highest point 4.300 metres / 14.108 feet – Purmamarca: 2.192 metres / 7.192 feet

Estimated driving time: 6 hours.

Day 4: Purmamarca - Cuesta de Lipan - Salinas Grandes - Susques - Paso de Jama - San Pedro de Atacama

Revel in a fantastic drive on a perfectly paved road navigating us across the Andes, through dry salted lakes, volcanoes, groups of wild vicunas, and the almost endless landscape of the Puna Plateau. Visit the Salinas Grandes, a salt mirror stretching for more than 30,000 acres and the old capital of the Puna, Susques with its church dating from 1598. Cross the border into Chile at the Jama Pass. At sunset, we will arrive in San Pedro de Atacama, after a thrilling 50 km downhill drive with expansive views over the Atacama Desert and the perfect cone shaped Licancabur Volcano. Overnight Hotel Terrantai or similar. (BLD)

Distance: 430 km paved road

Altitude: Highest point 4.700 metres / 15.420 feet - San Pedro de Atacama: 2.475 metres / 8.120 feet

Estimated driving time: 6 hours.

Day 5: Full Day Tour to Geysers del Tatio and Sunset in Valle de la Luna

A very early departure today will take us to Geysers del Tatio. El Tatio Geysers Field (locally known as Los Geysers del Tatio) is located within the Andes Mountains of northern Chile at an altitude of around 4200m. With over 80 active geysers, El Tatio is the largest geyser field in the southern hemisphere and the third largest in the world. Return to San Pedro de Atacama for some rest and in the afternoon, we experience the sunset at Vallecito at Cordillera de Sal, in the Salt Mountains Range. Overnight at Hotel Terrantai or similar. (BLD)

Distance: 30 km paved road - 190 km gravel road

Altitude: Highest point 4.200 metres / 13.780 feet - San Pedro de Atacama: 2.475 metres / 8.120 feet

Estimated driving time: 5 hours

Day 6: San Pedro de Atacama - Lagunas Miscanti & Miniques - Paso de Sico - Pucitán - Desierto del Laberinto - Tolar Grande

Today will be one of the most intense days of the whole Trip. We follow one of the ancient routes made by llama's caravans trading goods between the Oases of the Puna. Over Sico Pass, Miscanti & Miniques lagoons offer dramatic scenes, with dark blue water under a cobalt sky, flamingos, and sacred Volcanoes. Back on the Argentine Plateau, the landscape changes. The labyrinth Desert, a fossil dunes desert, made by clay and gypsum crystals, is the only maritime sediment deposit of the Puna. This area is studied for its similarities to other planets physical characteristic (Planetary Geology). Arrive by late afternoon in the tiny village of Tolar Grande, one of the most remote places on earth. Overnight Casa Andina or similar. (BLD)

Distance: 110 km paved road - 250 km gravel road

Altitude: Highest point 4.600 metres / 15.092 feet - Tolar Grande: 3.500 metres / 11.483 feet

Estimated driving time: 6 or 7 hours.



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Day 7: Tolar Grande - Ojos del Mar - Hidden Dune - Tolar Grande - Caipe - Sunset in Tolar Grande

The morning is dedicated to exploring the surroundings of Tolar Grande. The Ojos del Mar are Blue Holes in the middle of a white salt lake, where in Feb. 2009, researchers discovered a huge colony of living stromatolites. The surroundings of Tolar Grande offer opportunities for small hikes, the best one being a hike to a hidden sand dune in the middle of the desert. From the top of the dune, be rewarded by a 360° view over the area, from the Sacred Macon Mountain to the Lullaillaco Volcano, where National Geographic discovered in 1999, situated at 6.735 meters, an Inca treasure including the bodies of 3 Inca children perfectly preserved by ice and the arid atmosphere. We head back to Tolar Grande for lunch and afterwards we will have time to relax at the hotel. This afternoon, continue to Caipe. Caipe has an old railway station where minerals processed in the Mine city were carried by cargo train and then transported to Salta. From the abandoned station, enjoy views of the giant Salar de Arizaro. On our return to Tolar Grande, we will stop on top of a hill just outside of the village where weather permitting, we will enjoy a beautiful sunset and some of the Puna's best scenery. Overnight Casa Andina or similar. (BLD)

Note: Casa Andina is the only Hosteria in Tolar Grande. It may be necessary on some tours to stay in local homes, but these will also have private facilities.

Distance: 140 km earth track

Altitude: Highest point 4.000 metres / 13.123 feet - Tolar Grande: 3.500 metres / 11.483 feet

Estimated driving time: 2 hours

Day 8: Tolar Grande - Cono de Arita - Oasis de Antofallita & Antofalla - Antofagasta de la Sierra - El Peñón

The crossing of the Arizaro salted dry lake resembles the ancient journey of the *Arrieros* (shepherds guiding caravans of animals to Chile). Arizaro meaning *Vultures Cemetery* comes from a period when many animals (cows and horses) perished during the crossing of the salt flat. Antofalla is an important and spectacular example of a Puna Oasis; in the middle of a high altitude desert there is a green valley, thanks to a natural pure water spring, comprising of Poplar, Molle and Willow trees. Antofalla, together with Antofagasta and Santa Rosa, were important stations for Llama caravans connecting this part of the Andes with the Oasis of Atacama. The oasis is located at the border of the longest salt flat in the world, set amongst vivid red mountains and lava strips. Antofalla is still inhabited by a tiny community of shepherds numbering around 60 people. We will stop for lunch, and then travel across the salt lake. Above 4.200 meters with wide views over the Antofalla Volcano (6.400 metres) lays a kind of green field (Vega Colorada) home for llamas, suris (Andean ostrich), wild donkeys and vicuñas. The valley of Calalaste, just a few kilometers away from Vega Colorada is the best spot to find wild camelids. Antofagasta de la Sierra was the biggest Oasis on the path connecting this side of the Andes with the Oasis of San Pedro de Atacama (Chile), it is a big village with only around 800 inhabitants who maintain their ancient traditions and culture. The name Antofagasta means "place where the sun shines" and it is surrounded by many volcanic peaks. We continue to the next town, El Peñón where we will be staying the next two nights. Overnight Hosteria El Penon or similar. (BLD)

Distance: 340 km earth track and salt road

Altitude: Highest point 4.500 metres / 14.764 feet - El Peñón: 3.400 metres / 11.155 feet

Estimated driving time: 7 hours



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Day 9: Full Day Tour to Volcán & Laguna Carachi Pampa - Campo de Piedra Pómez - Dunas Blancas

Our adventure starts today at the edge of Campo de Piedra Pómez, as we reach the Carachi Pampa basin, where therein lies a volcano of the same name, surrounded by black lava fields and a lagoon, where the Andean flamingo, and the James' (or Puna) flamingo can be found. During the dry season, a small salt lake is formed around the lagoon. Later, our journey will continue into the Natural Reserve *Campo de Piedra Pómez*, a strange and stunning landscape carved into the rock that gives rise to its name: The Pumice. Of purely igneous origin, it was produced from a massive volcanic explosion so powerful that if one could have seen it, it would be similar to the mushroom cloud produced by a nuclear bomb. This cloud has spread the ash and debris in large areas and in different directions, which crystallized by the effects of the temperature giving shape to these wonderful rocks with unique features and with plenty of holes produced by the escape of gases during the cooling stage. This degassing phenomenon made the rock very easy to carve by the arid harsh winds of the Puna. Return to the Hotel, just on time to enjoy stunning sunset views from the village. Overnight Hosteria El Penon or similar. (BLD)

Distance: 130 km of earth, gravel, and salt tracks

Altitude: Highest point 3.800 metres / 13.780 feet - El Peñón: 3.400 metres. / 11.155 feet

Estimated driving time: 4.5 hours.

Day 10: El Peñón - Hualfin - Santa María - Quilmes - Cafayate

After days of intense travel on the High Desert Plateau, the Northwest still has plenty of surprises. The paved road from El Peñón to meet Route 40 is a 150 km long yellow field of Paja Brava, white lagoons and a deserted narrow canyon filled with rich vegetation. Visit the Quilmes Ruins, probably the most interesting Pre Inca archeological site with a dramatic story that paved the way for the end to this ancient population. Continue to Cafayate. Overnight Wine Resort or similar. (BL)

Distance: 250 km paved road - 50 km gravel road

Altitude: Highest point 4.000 metres / 13.123 feet. Cafayate: 1.683 metres / 5.522 feet

Estimated driving time: 5 hours.

Day 11: Cafayate - Quebrada de las Conchas - Quebrada de las Flechas - Molinos

Cafayate will be a perfect place to visit a winery since it is the capital of the Northern wine region, most famous for its "Torrontés" variety of white wine. Visit the Quebrada de las Conchas gorge, 55 km of scenic sedimentary rock formations dating back a hundred million years. Continue along *Ruta 40*, one of the most famous and longest roads in the world. The route between Cafayate and La Paya passes through the desert dotted with small ranches of local *campesinos*, vineyards and giant coloured mountains. The Quebrada de las Flechas is a desert of quartz ash and rocks covered by the mud of an ancient lake, the result of 500 million years of geological history. Overnight Hacienda de Molinos or similar. (BL)

Distance: 100 km paved road - 90 km gravel road

Altitude: Highest point 2.300 metres / 7.546 feet – Molinos: 2.020 metres / 6.627 feet

Estimated driving time: 5 hours.



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Day 12: Molinos - Cachi - Los Cardones National Park - Cuesta del Obispo - Salta

The road from Molinos to Salta is one of the most scenic drives in Northwest Argentina. We will travel through four different eco systems, from the Green Yungas to a semi-deserted dry valley. A further 50 km's will take us from the Piedra del Molino Pass at 3.457 meters down to Salta's Valle de Lerma at 1.200 meters. View condors flying in the dark blue sky, guanacos, and wild donkeys, as the stunning landscape of thousands of cardones – the local protected species of giant cactus – passes by. We have time to enjoy the view, take some amazing pictures and to go on a short walk in the unique red desert inside Los Cardones National Park. Overnight Finca Valentina or similar. (BL)

Day 13: Salta - Buenos Aires (2 hours domestic flight)

Today we travel to Salta airport for a flight back to Buenos Aires. On arrival in Buenos Aires, you will be transferred to the hotel for an overnight stay before flying into Bolivia the next morning. Overnight Dazzler Recoleta Hotel or similar (B)

Day 14: Buenos Aires to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia

After breakfast transfer to the airport for a scheduled flight to the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra where you will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel. Subject to flight schedules and an on time arrival, in the afternoon join your guide for a city walking tour taking in the main sights such as the church of San Lorenzo, the History Museum, and the handicrafts market of Recova Vieja. Overnight at Hotel Americana or similar. (B)

Santa Cruz de la Sierra

Santa Cruz de la Sierra was founded in 1561 by a Spaniard, Nuflo de Chavez, 220km east of its present location to grow a range of products to supply the rest of the colony. The city continues to prosper today and there is a strong desire for the region to be independent of the rest of Bolivia. The best way to appreciate the city is to stroll through its busy cosmopolitan streets joining the locals at any of the many cafes that abound

Day 15: Samaipata (approx. driving time 2.5 hours)

Today we visit the Fort and village of Samaipata. En route we have spectacular views of the Los Volcanes mountain range, and on arrival we take a 45-minute guided tour of the archaeological site. We discover the pre-Columbian architecture in the ruins of the defensive, religious and esoteric buildings. In addition, we hear the history of Fort Samaipata, which has belonged to the Chané, Inca and Spanish civilizations. After our stroll we visit the Samaipata Archaeological Museum, located just 12 miles from the archaeological complex. This colonial building exhibits the objects discovered during the excavations of the fort in its six rooms. After lunch at a local restaurant, we'll start our return journey back to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, making stops along the way at Las Cuevas waterfalls where we take a hike of approx. 1 hour and a half round trip to visit the rain forest and bathe in pools. We return to Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Overnight at Hotel Las Americas or similar. (BL)

Day 16: Sucre

This morning we transfer to the airport to catch the short flight south to "The White City" of Sucre (2.700m). After lunch we visit the impressive paleontological site of Cal Orck'o to see the rock face with its thousands of dinosaur tracks. On our way back to Sucre we visit the Indian market to understand the local folklore. After a short coffee break, we walk up to the roof of the tower of the San Felipe Neri Church. Overnight Hotel De Su Merced or similar. (B)





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Sucre

Sucre is the official capital of Bolivia but has long been eclipsed by La Paz as the economic and political hub of the country. However, it has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and is widely considered to contain some of the finest examples of colonial architecture within Latin America. Founded in the 16th century by the conquistadors, Sucre gained prominence and power due to the silver mines, located nearby at Potosi. Growing rivalry with La Paz over the years, led to a civil war in the late 19th century, in which La Paz became the de facto capital of the country. Sucre contains numerous elegant churches dating back to the time of the initial conquest, and strict building regulations have meant that the city has changed little over the last century, giving visitors a great insight into how many other Latin American towns once looked.

Day 17: Sucre – Potosi (approx. 3 hours driving)

This morning begins with a visit to the Museum Casa de la Libertad, the site of the declaration of independence, for an insight into the history of Bolivia. We then drive to the Recoleta viewpoint for panoramic views across the city and visit Museo Asur to learn something of the development of textiles in the region. We will continue on foot to enjoy close up, the wonderful colonial buildings and churches. After lunch we depart Sucre for Potosi City driving through beautiful landscapes. Overnight at Hotel Santa Teresa or similar. (B)

Potosi

Potosi became one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the world during the 16th and 17th centuries, a consequence of the insatiable demand of the Spanish, for silver from the mines nearby. Full of exquisite colonial architecture like its neighbour Sucre, Potosi's buildings serve as a testament to a lucrative era, and it has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. There are now fewer and fewer miners seeking out diminishing reserves of silver in the tunnels dug into Cerro Rico, or 'Rich Mountain', overlooking the city. The mines were worked by indigenous and African workers, subjected to appalling conditions which saw them stay underground for up to a week at a time, and in the three centuries that the mine was open an estimated three million people met their deaths there. The mines are now open for tours, guided by former silver miners, who know these labyrinthine tunnels intimately.

Day 18: Potosi

This morning we will travel by bus to visit the mines of Potosi. After donning appropriate clothing (helmet, torch etc.) we take a short ride to the Cerro Rico (Rich Mountain). Every day the miners celebrate the ritual of the Challa with offerings to Tio, the demon who is said to own the underground mineral riches. This afternoon we visit the Money Museum with its artefacts of a bygone age including machinery, utensils, and coinage. Overnight at Hotel Santa Teresa or similar. (B)

Day 19: Potosi– Uyuni (205 kms, approx. 5 hours)

This morning we depart for Uyuni, stopping en route in the canyons of Porco, Andean wetlands and the Cacti Forest, and after lunch we travel by road to the town of Uyuni. Overnight at Hotel Casa de Sal, Magia de Uyuni or similar. (B)

Uyuni

Founded in 1889 and standing isolated in a desert-like landscape, Uyuni is in the southwestern corner of Bolivia. Despite the harsh conditions, it is a cheerful town and the gateway to the Salar de Uyuni. Uyuni remains an important military base, and mining plays a significant role with the world's largest lithium reserve – about 100 million tons – lying beneath the nearby salt flat.



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Day 20: Salt Flat of Uyuni – Quemes (approx. 7 hours driving time)

This morning we take a short journey to visit the “graveyard of trains” a collection of historic steam locomotives and railcars, dating back several hundred years. We continue to the village of Colchani and witness how the locals transform the natural salt to edible salt using rustic ovens and tools. Colchani is the entrance to the fabulous salt flat of Uyuni, and we will take an impressive 3 hour cross country drive across the salt flat, with only track ways as points of reference. We stop en route at Incaawasi Island to explore an area of giant volcanic ash rocks accompanied by hundreds of giant cactus rising up all around. Our journey across this remote area is undoubtedly one of the highlights of the trip. We finally move out of the salt flat towards the hamlet of Quemes. Overnight at Tayka Hotel de Piedra or similar. (BLD)

Salar de Uyuni

Covering an area of 10,580 sq. km and situated at over 3000m, Salar de Uyuni is the largest and highest salt flat in the world, its white surface resembling an immense glacier. The scenery here, high in the Andes, is out of this world – vast expanses of white desert that stretch as far as the eye can see, bordered by jagged peaks, and littered with conical pyramids of salt. With few settlements and only occasional llama herders to be seen, travelling in this landscape feels like travelling in the very farthest reaches of the earth. The surrounding area contains lakes, hot springs and geysers and is home to good populations of birdlife.

Day 21: Desierto Siloli (approx. 7 hours driving time)

Today we pass by the lava flows of Ollague, and a series of colourful lakes (Chiguana, Hedionda, Honda), which are home to great concentrations of Andean birds. On the approach to the Siloli Desert (Ojo de Perdíz) stand huge Aeolian formations of surreal figures, before the shrubby vegetation disappears completely, giving way to dunes. After a journey time of around 6 hours, we arrive at a country hotel in the middle of the desert where we will sleep at 4600m. Overnight at Tayka Hotel del Desierto or similar. (BLD)

Day 22: Mallku

This morning we drive for around an hour and a half until we arrive at Laguna Colorada which is a burnt orange colour as a result of algae in the water. Generous mineral deposits line the shores and sustain a large concentration of flamingos. We continue to the extreme southwest of Bolivia passing by the geysers of Sol de Mañana at 4950m, before arriving at the hot springs of Chaviri for a late breakfast, with some time for bathing. Return to Chaviri for lunch and 4 hours to travel to the Canyons of Mallku passing en route by the Valley of rocks and the Neolithic rupestrian paintings of Mallku. Overnight at Hotel Mallku Cueva or similar. (BLD)

Day 23: Uyuni (approx. 6 hours driving time)

Today we return to Uyuni following a more direct route but passing by the Canyons of Mallu, the Valley of Rocks and the Negra Lagoon and arriving by mid-afternoon where you will have some time at leisure. Overnight at Hotel Casa de Sal or similar. (B)

Day 24: La Paz and Tiwanaku

This morning we catch a flight to La Paz at 8.30am and transfer to the city and on arrival. we will take the 2 hour drive to the archaeological ruins of Tiwanaku to explore the temples and palaces originating from Pre-Inca times. We will return to La Paz in the late afternoon. Overnight at Hotel Bivouac or similar. (BL)

Tiwanaku

In its heyday, Tiwanaku was the centre of an empire that stretched across the region and was home to 50,000 people. Founded around 1000BC, it expanded to include the whole of the area surrounding Lake Titicaca within its domain, but mysteriously fell into decline and disappeared before the first Europeans came to the area, leaving behind a mystery that has not been definitively solved.



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The main town is thought to have covered some 11 sq. km, but most of the houses were built of mud so collapsed with time, leaving only the temples and palaces that were built with stones. These include the Kalasasaya temple with its ornamental stonework believed to have been the sacred heart of the city, as well as the semi-subterranean temple, sunk into the ground with its representations of gods and idols. Tiwanaku still holds immense significance for the local Aymara people who come here to perform religious rituals.

Day 25: La Paz

Today will be spent discovering the sights of La Paz starting with main square Plaza Murillo and the streets around it where we can still find colonial architecture from the 16th century. We will visit the Museum of Magic Instruments and the Indian market. We will also take in the Witches Market known for the potions and magic amulets. We will drive to the cable car for a journey across the city from north to south, and drive to Moon Valley which is actually a maze of canyons and pinnacles formed by erosion. Overnight at Hotel Bivouac or similar (B)

La Paz

At 3636m in altitude, La Paz, formally known as La Ciudad de Nuestra Senora de La Paz, claims to be the highest capital city in the world, despite the fact that Bolivia's 'official' capital is actually the city of Sucre. Founded in 1548 by Spanish colonialists, it became a centre of colonial power for the Spanish Empire in Latin America and quickly established itself as a major centre of commerce within the region, growing rich from trade in minerals and coca. With a population of over a million people it is Bolivia's largest city attracting immigrants from around the country, and visitors here will notice the melange of age old indigenous traditions and ever encroaching European influence. Overlooked by the snow-capped Mount Illimani, La Paz is a set against a backdrop of spectacular scenery and is within easy striking distance of some of Bolivia's most enigmatic sites including Lake Titicaca and Tiwanaku. The city's streets are often thronged with market stalls, with the indigenous Aymara population selling food and clothing as well as some intriguing and unrecognisable items used in traditional religions.

Day 26: La Paz – Copacabana & Lake Titicaca (Overall driving time is approx. 4 hours)

Today we head towards the Titicaca, stopping on the way to visit the museum of Paulino Esteban, the Bolivian Indian that built the boat RA II which successfully crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Enjoy the fascinating history and learn about how to do this kind of reed boats using the totora reed, endemic to the Andes. Later, at about midday we arrive in Copacabana (3825m / 12546 ft) on the shores of Lake Titicaca. This is a beautiful town and a popular resort and pilgrimage area, with lots to see and several nearby hills, which offer commanding views over the lake and towards the Cordillera Real. At the beach of Copacabana embark on a motorboat and continue the journey for another hour as far as the extreme southern side of the Sun Island (Isla del Sol) where we land near an Inca temple called Pilkokaina to have lunch in a typical restaurant with superb view over the lake to enjoy a traditional late lunch. Then, visit the Pilkokaina temple and walk about one hour to the Lodge Pallakasa. In the late afternoon, depart to walk up to the highest point of the island (4070 m/13350 ft) in time for a colourful sunset over the lake. Return to the lodge for the diner and overnight. Overnight Lodge Pallakasa or similar. (BLD)

Day 27: Copacabana – La Paz

In the morning walk approx. 1 hour to descend to an idyllic Garden with an Inca spring considered by the locals a fountain of youth. We then take a boat to the Moon Island (about 45 minutes driving). Visit the Temple of the Sun virgins Aclla Huasi where the girls were educated to be sacrificed. Walk for another hour to the hamlet Coati to catch our boat and travel to the replicas of floating islands of the Urus people to stop and catch some trout for our lunch. Finally return to Copacabana for a short visit to the Indian markets and the famous Church of Copacabana that shelters to the famous Virgin of La Candelaria before returning to La Paz. Overnight at Hotel Bivouac or similar. (BL)



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Day 28: La Paz Departure

At your convenience we transfer to the airport for your onward flight. (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers
Transport throughout
Domestic and international flights as shown in the itinerary
All accommodation
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner) plus 1 ½ L of water per day
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes (except when included as part of the flights shown in the itinerary)
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks
Items of a personal nature
Tips (discretionary)

Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

Before booking your tour, please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to Argentina, Chile or Bolivia. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.



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Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis, please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom. In general, you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Soft drinks are included in the mentioned meals. Alcoholic beverages will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements, you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs, and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more. Argentine cuisine may be described as a cultural blending of Indigenous, Mediterranean influences (such as those created by Italian and Spanish populations) within the wide scope of livestock and agricultural products that are abundant in the country. Meat is very important in both Argentinean and Chilean cuisine and for many it is an essential ingredient in every dinner or lunch.



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Argentina

Lunch £15 / Dinner £20

Chile

Lunch £20 / Dinner £30

Bolivia

Lunch £5 / Dinner £8

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide payable in the lodges and hotels on the tour which is where you will purchase most of your drinks. In general, you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive. Wine has traditionally been the most popular alcoholic beverage in Argentina, with beer (cerveza and the Italian birra is frequently used) in recent decades competing with wine in popularity.

Argentina

Bottle of Water (1 Litre) - £3 / Bottle of Beer - £5 - £7

Chile

Bottle of Water - £3 / Bottle of Beer - £5 - £7

Bolivia

Bottle of Water - £1 / Bottle of Beer - £2 - £7

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

If you're happy with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many destinations.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: ATMs accepting Visa and/or Mastercard can be found in most towns and cities but will not be available in the desert

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in larger towns throughout Argentina, Chile, and Argentina. Many of the hotels and lodges will accept credit/debit cards but we recommend that you travel with some cash as a back-up.

Local Currency: The official currency in Argentina is the Argentine Peso, in Chile it is the Chilean Peso and in Bolivia it is the Peso Boliviano.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars

Where to Exchange: There are banks and bureaux de change in the larger towns throughout the region, and it is relatively easy to change money.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.



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Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure include in the tour price. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time, and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday. On this tour you will be travelling at altitude so please make sure your insurance covers you for activities at altitude.

Visa Information

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals do not require a visa for a short-term tourist visit to Argentina and Chile. For a short-term visit to Bolivia, British and Australian nationals do not require a visa. US nationals will require a visa for Bolivia.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance. Contact details can be found by visiting the following websites.

British Nationals - www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - www.smartraveller.gov.au/

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destinations nearest embassy or consulate.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country. We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice



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Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Latin America, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice, and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. A yellow fever vaccination may also be advised. The use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended, and we recommend that you take professional advice about malaria prophylactics.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

The Northwest Region of Argentina, and in particular Salta Province has two different Seasons: the dry one, mid- April to the end of November, and Wet Season from the end of November to the first part of April. During dry season when we operate this tour, it is exceedingly rare to have rain in Salta region. The temperature will certainly be cold at high altitude. Temperature varies depending on the altitude and can get as low as 0 degrees centigrade at night.

With Bolivia's altitude, the weather can vary greatly in terms of temperature from day to night. The best season to visit is generally considered to be the winter – from May to October – when there is little rain and temperatures are pleasant. However, at lower altitudes rain can occur at any time. In the summer months (November to April) it is much more humid, especially in the lowlands, and the Amazon experiences significant rainfall, often flooding. At higher altitudes there is less rain.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes that can be layered are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat, windproof jacket, warm socks, and gloves are required. Sunglasses will also be required.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared and adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. A torch/flashlight is advisable for any unexpected electricity outages or for dimly lit areas.

Driving times

Kindly note that driving times given on the dossier are approximate and are given in good faith. There are many scenarios, including weather and road conditions where journey times could take longer so we ask for your patience.



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Footwear

Comfortable walking or trekking shoes are recommended. Lighter shoes are suitable when travelling on the road.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V/50 Hz and plugs have two round pins.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour, but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These notes were updated 5 January 2024.