

ATACAMA DESERT AND SANTIAGO TOUR

Santiago & Atacama Tour

8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS

This Santiago and Atacama Tour is a tour of contrasts. Santiago de Chile has a mild climate, with views of the Pacific Ocean to the west and the snow-capped Andes to the east. Santiago is surrounded by fertile vineyards that produce wines that are exported throughout the world, as well as great skiing resorts in the mountains and warm beaches along the coast in Valparaiso and Viña del Mar. The Atacama Desert is located in northern Chile and is known as the driest desert in South America and in the world. Explore Atacama Chile and its surrounding sand dunes, moon-like valleys, geysers, and lagoons filled with flamingos.

Note: The San Pedro de Atacama Tours listed are subject to change depending on the lodge's policies and availability. Please contact an Expert Travel Consultant for the most updated information regarding Atacama Desert Tours.

<p>FROM \$ 2255 per person</p>	<p>THIS TOUR INCLUDES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodations • All Breakfasts • Meals offered at the lodges in the Atacama Desert • All Transfers • All Tours in Santiago • A Full-Day or two Half-Day tours in Atacama per day* <p>*Tours in Atacama are to be selected from the lodge menu</p>	<p>HIGHLIGHTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santiago, Chile's capital • Casablanca Valley • Atacama Desert, the driest desert in the world
---	---	---

ITINERARY



Day 1

ARRIVE IN SANTIAGO DE CHILE & CITY TOUR

Arrive in the city of Santiago de Chile, situated between the Andes mountain peaks and the Pacific Ocean. Take a transfer from the airport to the hotel and get ready for a half-day, Santiago City Sightseeing Tour!

Follow a local guide around Santiago de Chile on what is called a “Panoramic City Tour.” With warm Santiago Chile weather, visit the Plaza de Armas (main square), the Metropolitan Cathedral, La Moneda Palace and Santa Lucía Hill. Enjoy a panoramic view of the city from Santa Lucía Hill, where it is possible to appreciate the backdrop of the Andes mountains, the impressive mix of colonial and contemporary buildings and more.



Day 2

CASABLANCA VALLEY

After breakfast at the hotel, get ready for one of the most popular day trips from Santiago Chile - a full-day excursion to Casablanca Chile! It is well known that one of the best things to do in Santiago Chile, is actually to leave the city and taste-test wine at one of the nearby wine valleys. The Casablanca Valley Wine Route is an ideal tour for white wine lovers, as the valley is especially famous for its excellent Chardonnay wines.

On this tour of Chile wine, visit the Santa Emiliana, Veramonte and Indomita wineries. Enjoy a wine tasting at each location and then finish the tour with a lunch of authentic Chilean cuisine. Then, return to Santiago in the afternoon.

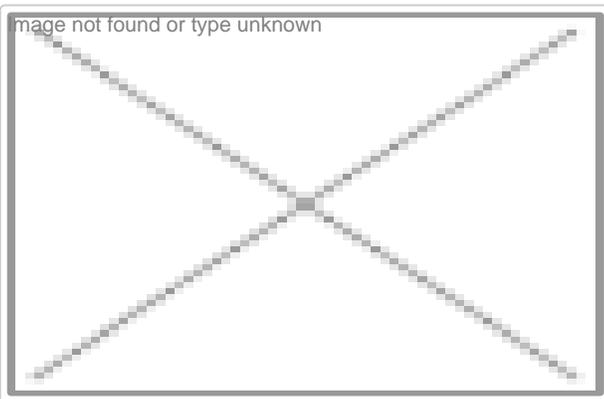


Day 3

ARRIVE IN ATACAMA

After breakfast, transfer to the airport. Fly along Chile's sprawling coastline north towards Calama, about 95 km (60 mi) from San Pedro de Atacama. Upon arrival, check into the lodge and choose from one of the day excursions offered by the lodge.

The Moon and Death Valley Tour is highly recommended while visiting the Atacama Desert Chile. On this tour, explore the various sand and stone formations that dot the Mars and Moon valleys. In the evening, grab a spot in the Salt Mountain Range and watch as the sun sinks below the horizon. The surreal sand shapes in the desert combined with the changing colors of the sky make for an amazing first night in the Atacama Desert.



Day 4

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOUR & CEJAR LAGOON

This morning, visit Tulor, Catarpe, and Quitar, three archaeological sites that will help you understand the life of ancient 'Atacameño' people. Start the day in Tulor, a small village located just 8 km (5 mi) southwest of San Pedro. Scientists have stated that its ancient constructions and circles, which used to serve as either houses or meeting areas, were built between 800 B.C. and 500 A.C.

Head north towards Catarpe, located on top of a terrace surrounded by deep gorges. Here you will see an impressive view of the Atacama Desert. This place used to serve as an Administrative Inca Center. Next, visit Pukara, renowned for its fortress or 'Pukara.' Despite the resistance of Atacameño people, it was taken over by the Spanish rule in 1540. In the afternoon, visit the Cejar Lagoon and gaze at the beautiful turquoise waters, lush vegetation, and exotic fauna, including flamingoes, ducks, and Andean coots. Take a refreshing swim in the lagoon in the middle of the Atacama Salt Flats before returning to your hotel in San Pedro.



Day 5

PURITAMA HOT SPRING & ATACAMA STARS

Transfer to the Puritama Hot Spring, located 32 km (20 mi) north of San Pedro. This idyllic natural area enables you to feel the harmony of the desert as you unwind in its warm waters, reaching about 91° C (33°F). The modern facilities include outdoor pools, saunas, baths, and changing rooms.

In the evening, leave your hotel and go on an astronomical tour to discover the mesmerizing Southern sky. The Atacama Desert is in one of the clearest places on Earth to see the sky. With the help of a green laser pointer, your guide will show you all the visible constellations, like the famous Southern Cross. It is even possible to take images of the moon using the telescopes and cameras. Finish your tour by enjoying a warm drink with your guide and the rest of your team.



Day 6

SALT FLATS & ALTIPLANIC LAGOONS

On your way from San Pedro to the lagoons, you will pass by Socaire, an oasis where maize, wheat, and potatoes grow - this is how the farmers make their income. As you continue driving, take in views of the Twin Miscanti & Meñique Lagoons, surrounded by the pure white salt and the high Meñique Hills in the background. Admire the fauna in this region, including the ducks and other birds species that gather in the lagoons, and the llamas along the hillsides.

Arrive at the Atacama Salt Flats, an alluring area where elegant flamingos thrive. After taking pictures and learning about this exotic ecosystem, head to a nearby village to feast on a delicious local lunch. Return to San Pedro in the late afternoon.



Day 7

TATIO GEYSERS

Early in the morning, before dawn, leave San Pedro to visit one of the most important places in the Atacama desert: the Tatio Geysers. Take in the breathtaking images of the steam columns that can reach up to 10 meters in height. Wake up early because the best time to see the geysers is during sunrise. Afterwards, enjoy a delicious breakfast while your guide tells you all the secrets of this unique destination. Immerse yourself in the local culture at the Machuca village, where agriculture and herding are the primary sources of income. The village also features swamps that serve as homes for flamingos, ducks and seagulls. Transfer back to your lodge to spend your last day in the driest desert in the world before heading to the airport for your flight back to the Chilean capital.



Day 8

DEPARTURE FROM THE ATACAMA DESERT

After breakfast transfer to Calama and fly back to Santiago where you can take a connecting flight to your next destination in South America.