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ATACAMA DESERT AND SANTIAGO TOUR



Santiago & Atacama Tour

8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS

This Atacama and Santiago 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, in the north of Chile, is the driest desert in South America and the world. The ocean does not bring enough precipitation to the Atacama Desert, so northern Chile and Peru have unique coastal deserts. Explore San Pedro de Atacama and its surrounding sand dunes, moon-like valleys, geysers, and lagoons filled with flamingos.

Please note: The tours listed for the Atacama Desert are subject to change depending on the lodge's policies and availability.

FROM
\$2670
per person

THIS TOUR INCLUDES:

- 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*

*Tours in Atacama are to be selected from the lodge menu

HIGHLIGHTS

- 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 to discover the Chilean capital on a half-day city tour!

Your guide will take you to the Plaza de Armas (main square), where you can see the contrasts between modern skyscrapers and the antique buildings in Santiago, which date back to colonial times. Then, head to Santa Lucía Hill to enjoy a panoramic view of the city nestled in the towering Andes.



Day 2

CASABLANCA VALLEY

After breakfast at your hotel, go on a full-day excursion to the Casablanca Valley Wine Route, an ideal tour for white wine lovers. The Casablanca Valley is especially famous for its exquisite Chardonnay wines.

Visit the Santa Emiliana, William Cole, and Indomita Wineries and enjoy a wine tasting at each location. For lunch try an authentic Chilean dish at one of the wineries.

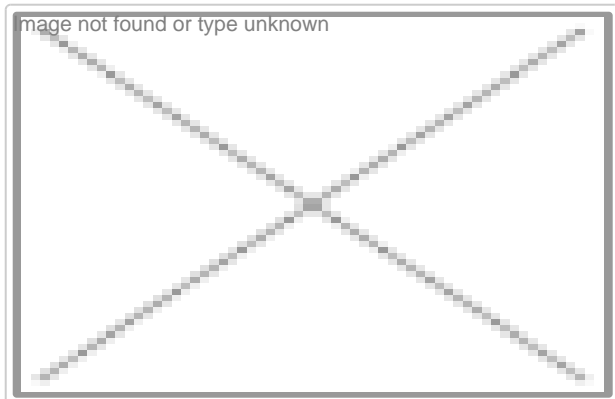
Return to Santiago in the afternoon.



Day 3

ARRIVE IN ATACAMA

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight along Chile's long coast travelling north towards Calama, about 95 km (60 mi) from San Pedro de Atacama, the Oasis in the desert. Check into your lodge and choose one of the excursions offered by the hotel. We recommend the Moon and Death Valley Tour. 'Muerte' is Spanish for death, which is what locals understood when a Belgic monk said 'Marte' (Mars), the name he intended to give to the valley. The surreal sand shapes in the desert create incredible landscapes sure to captivate you.



Day 4

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOUR & CEJAR LAGOON

This morning, visit Tulor, Catarpe, and Quito, 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 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.



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.

