

# ..... HIDDEN TREASURES OF SOUTH AMERICA .....

DETAILED ITINERARY

ARGENTINA, URUGUAY, CHILE AND BOLIVIA

Aug 15/19



Visit four South American countries - Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Bolivia: regions with fascinating Indigenous cultures, active volcanos and geysers, sublime landscapes and snow-capped peaks. Walk through numerous pre-Columbian villages and ruins, visit superb wine regions and search for guanaco and vicuna herds roaming the high altiplano.

Drive over spectacular Andean passes and remote gorges and valleys dotted by fincas (ranches). Enjoy the surreal landscape of the Atacama - including Tatio Geysers, Laguna Colorado, Valley of the Moon, as well as the parks of Talampaya and Ischigualasto.

What makes this journey even more impressive is the fact that most of these destinations remain virtually undiscovered by tourists.

### Combines with...

Easter Island, Iguazu Falls extentions.

### FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 22 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start in Buenos Aires, Argentina, finish in Santiago, Chile • All meals included
- Includes 2 internal flights • Explore Colonia, Buenos Aires, Cachi, Salta and San Pedro de Atacama • Talampaya National Park • Shincal Inca Ruins • Porvenir Winery • Traverse the Andes • Atacama Desert • Valley of the Moon • Tatio Geysers
- Laguna Colorado • Search for Andean condors, flamingos, caracara, guanacos, vicunas, foxes and wildlife of the altiplano.

### DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

**Mar 05 - Mar 25, 2027 - \$10995 USD**

**Activity Level: 2-3**

**Comfort Level:** 6 nights sleeping around 8,300 ft / 2,530 m

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable hotels/lodges with private bathrooms.

**ELDERTREKS**



SMALL GROUP  
**EXOTIC ADVENTURES**  
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

## DAY 1 ARRIVE IN BUENOS AIRES

Upon arrival in Buenos Aires, you are met and transferred to our centrally located hotel. The remainder of the day is free to explore the city of Buenos Aires. In the evening, we have our introductory meeting and dinner.

Overnight in Buenos Aires.

## DAY 2 BUENOS AIRES CITY SITES

Today, we discover the highlights of Buenos Aires. Traveling by bus and walking through the unique “barrios”, we will have a close look at daily life in Buenos Aires.

We visit Parliament Square, where we see the pink Presidential Palace, Mayo Avenue and the Palacio del Congreso. We also visit some of the neighborhoods of the city; La Boca (a section of Buenos Aires built by Italian immigrants) with many colorful buildings, and Recoleta (the most affluent of Buenos Aires’ neighborhoods), which is home to Cementerio de la Recoleta, where Eva Peron is buried.

Tonight enjoy dinner as we watch a live tango show called “La Ventana”.

Overnight in Buenos Aires.

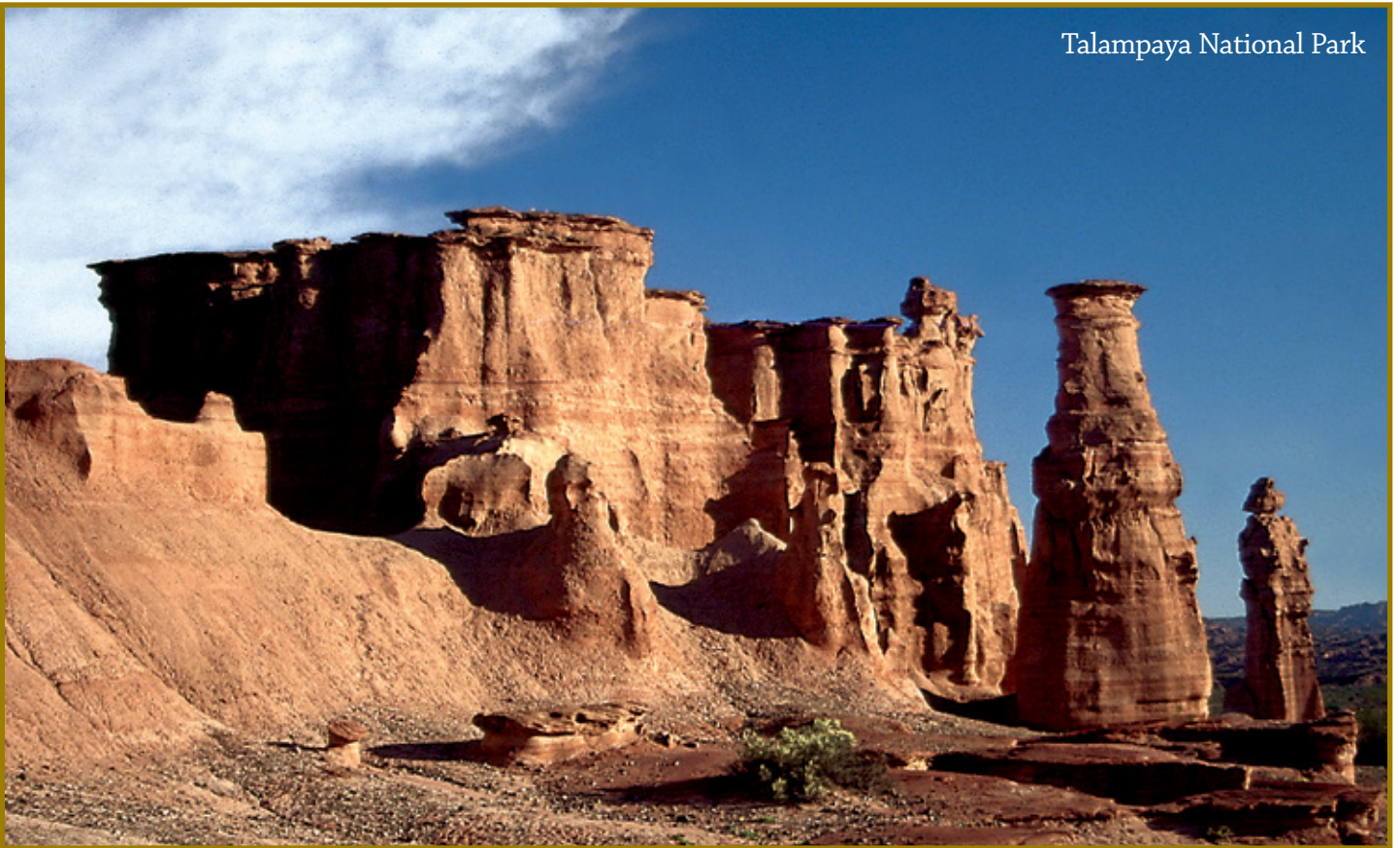
## DAY 3 FERRY CROSSING TO COLONIA, URUGUAY

This morning we enjoy a relaxing morning, sailing on a slow boat to the historical city of Colonia, the 17th century Portuguese contraband port and fortress. We cross the Rio de la Plata to arrive at this colonial gem. Our walking tour explores some of the buildings and laneways dating back to 1680, when it was founded. The area is known as the Barrio Historico.

We see the restored Puerto de Campo, the Calle de los Suspiros, the Casa de Lavalleja, the ruins of the 17th century Convento de San Francisco and the restored



Talampaya National Park



Ischigualasto Provincial Park



19th century lighthouse. In the afternoon, we return by high speed ferry to Buenos Aires.

Dinner and overnight in Buenos Aires.

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#### **DAY 4 FLY TO LA RIOJA, VILLA UNION**

Transfer to the domestic airport for our midday flight to La Rioja in the Velasco mountains. The region is famous for several reasons, including its wine. We enjoy the scenery as we make our way through the countryside, we watch for the wildlife that is commonly found in this area - including guanacos, Andean condors (the second largest bird in the world) and foxes.

Overnight Villa Union.

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#### **DAY 5 TALAMPAYA NATIONAL PARK**

After breakfast, we set off to explore Talampaya National Park with its dramatic geology. Enjoy your exploration of this deep red canyon with some of the most bizarre and exquisite rock formations on Earth. In the morning, we hike (approx. 3 hrs) in the canyon. After lunch, we explore the canyon while driving before making our way back to the hotel, where you will enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

Overnight in Villa Union.

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#### **DAY 6 THE TRIASSIC PARK OF ISCHIGUALASTO**

We have a half day excursion to explore the deep-white, sandstone landscape of Ischigualasto Provincial Park by vehicle. This circuit includes 5 designated stops where we can observe the stunning landscape created by wind erosion. These formations are part of the only Triassic park in the Americas. We visit the Dr. William Sill Museum and learn about his work with ancient dinosaur fossils and the fascinating world of paleontology.

We have the afternoon to relax in the beautiful surroundings of hotel.

Overnight in Villa Union.

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#### **DAY 7 MIRANDA GORGE, FOLKLORIC MUSEUM**

Today we pass by the marvellous Miranda Gorge, followed by arrival at Chilecito in the Famatina valley in La Rioja province. The drive takes us past wide vineyards and through Londres (or London), the second oldest city in Argentina, founded in 1558 by the Spanish. We travel along the 'Ruta del Telar' (Loom Route) making a stop at the Folkloric Museum, a space dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and celebration of the customs, beliefs, arts, and traditional knowledge of northwestern Argentina.

Overnight in Belen.



## DAY 8 THE INDIAN RUINS OF QUILMES

Continuing north, we visit the Quilmes Ruins. The Quilmes Indians were one of the cultures who fiercely resisted the Incas but eventually fell to the Spaniards. The ruins are possibly the most extensively preserved in Argentina and date back to around 1000 AD, when they housed approximately 5000 people.

Overnight in Cafayate.

## DAY 9 QUEBRADA DE LAS CONCHAS, WINE VINEYARDS OF CAFAYATE

We begin our day with a walk from Quebrada de Las Conchas, through a dry riverbed of the Yesera River. See beautiful rock formations with fanciful names like “The Obelisk”, “The Window” and “The Castle” with layers of green, grey and red that are highlighted beautifully by the sun. Strips of gypsum form white lines running through the red soil. We can enjoy this beautiful area during our picnic lunch.

For those who want to hike up to the top of the gorge (400 ft/130 m) you will be rewarded with magnificent views of the mountain range.

Overnight in Cafayate.

## DAY 10 CAFAYATE - WINE EXPERIENCE

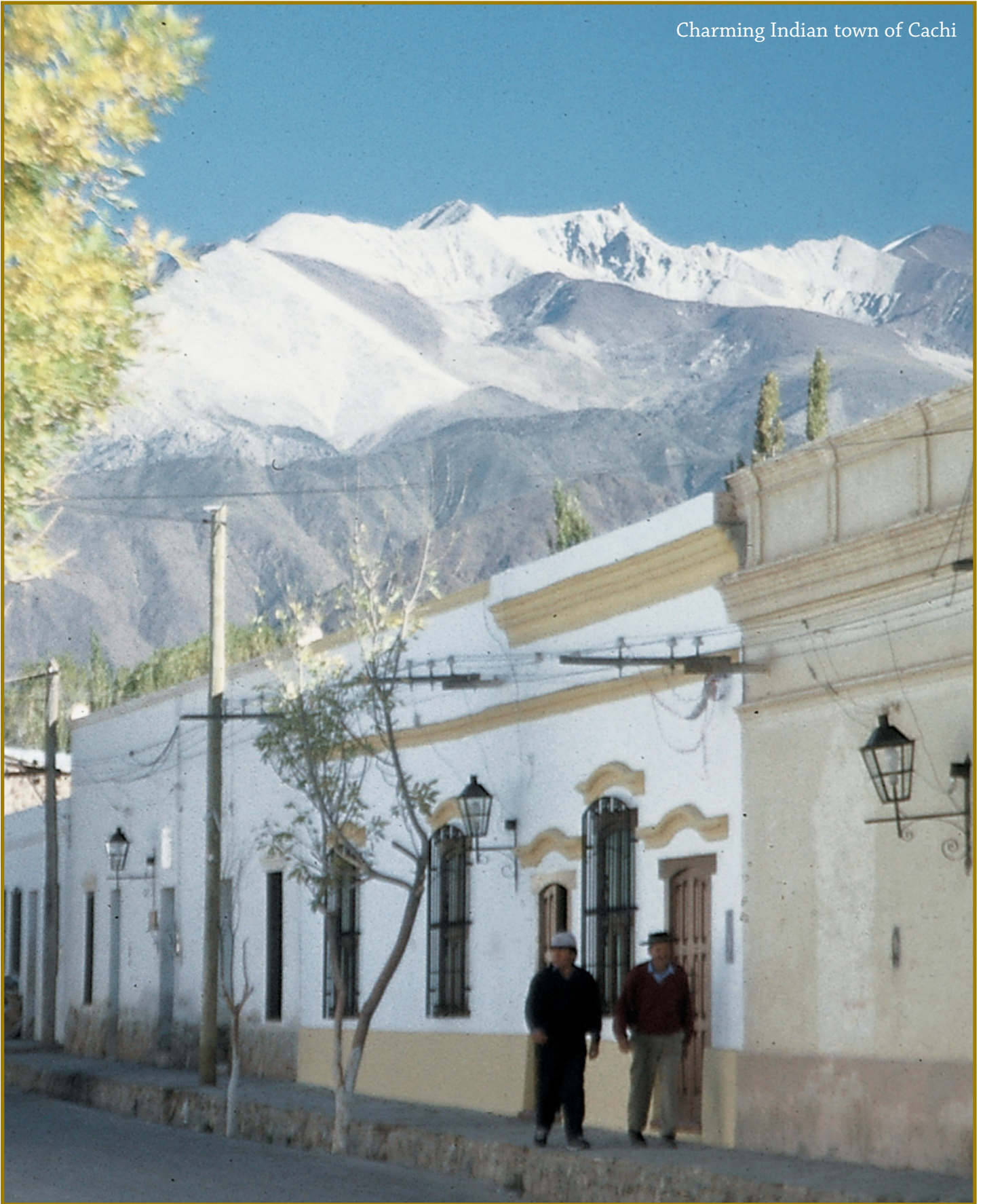
We visit Dal Borgo Winery, a boutique winery established in 2012 that offers a warm, interactive wine experience just outside the heart of Cafayate. During our visit, we are welcomed with an introduction and a glass of wine in the lounge before strolling through the vineyards to learn about the grape maturation process. We then enjoy a second tasting directly from the fermentation tanks, followed by a third tasting in the cellar before concluding at the bar.

Our experience is complemented by a delicious three-course regional lunch, showcasing the flavors and culinary traditions of northwest Argentina.

Overnight in Cafayate.



Charming Indian town of Cachi



## **DAY 11 LAS FLECHAS GORGE, TOWN OF CACHI**

Our drive today takes us further into the Calchaquies valley and through the stunning Las Flechas Gorge. The gorge was formed by the folding of deep white sandstone to an almost 90 degree angle. The white spears contrast sharply with the green of the valley.

We enjoy a short walk among the spears before continuing on. Arrive at the charming Indian town of Cachi in the foothills of imposing Mt. Cachi.

Overnight in Cachi.

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## **DAY 12 LOS CARDONES NATIONAL PARK**

We have a full day to Los Cardones National Park where we can enjoy breathtaking views of the Cuesta del Obispo (The Bishop's Slope).

Overnight in Cachi.

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## **DAY 13 CACHI TO SALTA**

Depart from Cachi for a 3 hour drive to Salta down the amazing Obispo Gorge, probably the most stunning view for people who love mountain roads, descending approximately 1000 meters to the Lerma valley. We have free time this afternoon to explore the charming town of Salta.

Overnight in Salta.

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## **DAY 14 TO PURMAMARCA**

Continuing north, we drive to Purmamarca today, a tiny colonial town in the foothills of the famous Seven Colours Mountain. After lunch we enjoy a relaxed hike (approx. 2 hrs) to view the surrounding landscape as we head to Los Colorados behind the Hills of Seven Colours.

Overnight in Purmamarca.

## **DAY 15 THE INDIGENOUS VILLAGES OF THE NORTH**

Drive through the Humahuaca Gorge before stopping at the Indian villages of Maimara, Tilcara (with its ancient ruins), Humahuaca and Uquia. It's an easy day without too much driving but plenty of handicraft shopping, colonial churches and great Indian culture and scenery.

Driving to Tilcara, enjoy the unique orange and yellow colored beautiful sites at the foot of the "Paleta del Pintor" in Maimara, near Tilcara. Visit the Pucara (Omahuacan-Incan fort and archaeological site) and its museum.



Andian Condor,  
world's second largest bird



Grey Fox



Vicunas



On the way to Humahuaca, pass through the Tropic of Capricorn and visit the church at Uquia after arriving in Humahuaca. Visit the town and the handicraft market. Return to Purmamarca for a relaxing evening.

Overnight in Purmamarca.

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## **DAY 16 TRAVERSING THE ANDES**

Today we head west, ascending with every switchback along the Lipan Gorge, until we reach the high Puna (or Andean Plain), with roaming wild herds of vicunas and guanacos crossing deep-white salt flats.

We arrive in Chile (the highest pass we use: 15,748 feet, 4,800 meters) and are surrounded by beautiful volcanoes such as Lascar and Licancabur.

Late arrival at the oasis of San Pedro de Atacama where we spend the next 5 nights.

Overnight in San Pedro.

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## **DAY 17 THE ATACAMA DESERT, MOON VALLEY**

We spend the morning at leisure in the legendary and original adobe town of San Pedro de Atacama, an oasis in the world's driest and perhaps most beautiful desert, with its impressive geological formations and stunning scenery. We visit San Pedro's great museum.

In the late afternoon, we visit the magnificent reddish clay and salt range, better known as the world famous Moon Valley. Watching the sunset here is a must.

Overnight in San Pedro.

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## **DAY 18 THE ATACAMA DESERT, TATIO GEYSERS**

Very early morning drive to visit the massive and impressive area of Tatio Geysers. There are hundreds of geysers in the area and most of them are active. The best

time of the day to see the geysers erupting is in the early morning when the low temperature allows us to see the steam. It is truly a remarkable sight. Return to San Pedro with some time at leisure this afternoon.

Overnight in San Pedro.

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## **DAY 19 BOLIVIA - FLAMINGOS OF LAGUNA COLORADA**

We spend this wonderful day journeying into Bolivia. Once we are finished with immigration, we continue to Laguna Colorada with its bizarre pinkish hue. This naturally occurring color results from the rich source of algae in the lake, which is the main source of food for the thousands of flamingos (three species of flamingos which may be found here) and other water birds found on the lake. Laguna Colorada is also the single largest nesting site in the world for the rare James's flamingo.

Time permitting, we may visit the small but interesting boiling pools of sulphur and mud at Sol de Manana and Laguna Verde.

Overnight in San Pedro.

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## **DAY 20 PURITAMA HOT SPRINGS**

This morning we drive to the delightful Puritama Hot Springs, a series of hot pools (temperature is approx 34 degrees C). A perfect place to feel completely cleansed and refreshed before heading back to San Pedro for lunch.

This afternoon is free to explore the town. You can even hire a bike or horse for the afternoon! San Pedro is a great place to get around on your own as there is almost no traffic - everything is accessible by foot, from the handicraft market to the town post office.

Overnight in San Pedro.

Colonial Church in the Andes



## DAY 21 DRIVE TO CALAMA, FLY TO SANTIAGO

Enjoy our last glimpse of the Atacama region during the drive to Calama and during the flight to Santiago, with stunning views of the Andes. Arrive in Santiago late afternoon.

Overnight in Santiago.

## DAY 22 DEPART SANTIAGO

Today we depart for our homeward flights or join our extension to Easter Island. **Note:** if you wish to sight-see in Santiago, we recommend you stay an additional night.



Flamingos of Laguna Colorada



Atacama Desert



Tatio geysers







## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### 1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

### 2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (porterage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

### 3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

### 4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, National Parks and Reserves and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are spent sipping a cold drink in a street market.

### 5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

We travel by minivan or minibus and jeeps; fly between Buenos Aires/San Juan and Calama/Santiago. We take a ferry between Buenos Aires/Colonia and back to Buenos Aires.

### 6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

We always stay in good accommodations — both hotels and lodges, with private facilities.

### 7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

Weather can always be unpredictable, but in general, based on the areas we visit and the departure dates, the weather should be warm and dry for most of your trip. Occasional rain is also possible. At higher elevations, evenings and nights can be cold.

### 8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

### 9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

*\*Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

### 10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

### 11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1, and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings. In many cases, we simply order a number of dishes and share, allowing you to sample new foods and decide what you enjoy best.

### 12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

### 13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.

The Triassic Park of Ischigualasto

