



## SUMMARY

Northern Chile | Wild Atacama



### South America's Wild West "The Atacama Horseback Expedition"

#### Northern Chile

**9 days – 8 nights (7 days in the saddle)**

On this equestrian expedition we take you to the Wild West of South America which is the Atacama desert in Chile! The Atacama desert is a plateau in Northern Chile, covering a thousand kilometers of land on the Pacific coast, west of the Andes mountains. It is the driest non-polar desert in the world. Still today it is home to the Inca descendants, the Atacameños. Their picturesque desert villages, lying on the Inca Trail, will surprise you by their Wild West appearance, by a "time has stood still" atmosphere and by its breathtaking surroundings. As here you will find yourself galloping in one of the most spectacular and dramatic landscapes on earth!

The adventure starts in the tiny desert village of Chiu Chiu at an altitude of 2.525mts. After a first night in a cozy guesthouse near the Church of San Francisco (the oldest church of Chile - anno 1600) it is time to mount your Chilean Criollo horse and prepare yourself for a week of riding and sleeping on the wild side!

It will take you 9 days to reach this final point, San Pedro de Atacama. On average, you will be 6 to 8 hours in the saddle per day and make your way across the high altitude part of the Atacama called the Altiplano.

Leading your strong horse through huge sand dunes, rocky mountains, canyons, rivers, salt lakes and along geysers, no one but the snow covered Volcanos San Pedro (6145m) and San Pablo (6092m) will be witnessing this equestrian caravan. During the expedition you will encounter Flamingos, Lamas, Vicuñas and Condors. You will take well deserved baths in natural warm water springs and ride through Atacama villages where donkeys and mules are parked in front of the local barber and supply shop. You will have a refreshing beer with the locals of the village and continue the ride in the oldest desert of the world, spending cool nights under clear skies. You will be camping and setting up your tents each evening exactly the same way as the Spanish conquistadores did when they first came across this region. Idyllic camp places where your guides will prepare a good meal and take care of the horses while you unroll your sleeping bag and take a bath. The thrilling stories of what happened during the day will be washed away with Chilean wine or Pisco around the campfire.

The next morning it will be the first sunbeams that wake you up. After breakfast you will climb the famous sand dunes of the Valley of the moon and to take your last canter, crossing Death Valley before unsaddling your horse at the beautiful adobe village of San Pedro de Atacama. It is here that you spend your last night on this South American riding adventure. An evening and a week that you will never forget! Prepare yourself that from now on, Chile and the Atacama will always be on your mind.



# ITINERARY

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## 9 DAYS 8 NIGHTS

### **DAY 1: Calama Airport – Chiu Chiu**

Transfer from airport to Chiu Chiu.  
Overnight in Chiu Chiu.

### **Day 2: Chiu Chiu – Puente del diablo (6 hrs riding.)**

After breakfast we visit the oldest church of Chile, the church of San Lucas of Chiu Chiu, build in 1600. We leave the village behind us and head towards the lake Laguna Inka Coya. From there we follow the riverbed of Rio Salado, climbing all the way till Puente del Diablo (devils bridge), a natural bridge over the narrowest point of the canyon of the river Salado. It is here in the plains next to the river bed that we will set up our camp.

**Day 3: Puente del Diablo – Turi (7 hrs riding.)** We ride along the river Rio Salado and follow part of the pilgrim route of the Virgin Aiquina. The mighty volcanoes San Pedro, San Pablo and Paniri are watching us from nearby. We continue along the canyon where we probably come across herds of llamas and goats until we reach the vast plains of Turi (3,100mts). We arrive at the foot of pucará Turi where we set up camp.

### **Day 4: Turi – Caspana (6 hrs riding.)**

An early bath in the natural mineral baths of Turi who offer a comfortable swim. We ride and visit the Pucara of Turi, the largest fortress built by the Atacameño people. We continue our expedition to Caspana and visit this typical village. This village is surrounded by a fertile valley where we see its many terraced crops and fruit trees. The village has only 400 inhabitants and the houses are built in liparita clay (400 inhabitants), we can visit the Church built in 1641 which is declared a national monument. Overnight in camp.

### **Day 5: Caspana – Turcapo: (9 hrs riding.)**

We leave the village of Caspana and climb the dizzying rocky landscape following an Inca trail until we reach a high plateau. We continue our ride in a southeasterly direction passing at the foot of the mountains of Cablor. After four hours of riding we arrive at the Chita mountain.

We follow our path to the top of the plateau where we ride for about four more hours with a breathtaking view of all the peaks and volcanoes surrounding us. At the end of our day we descend a long slope that leads us to the bottom of a huge and very rugged canyon with small salt flats. We visit one of the few locals who live in a natural cave and continue to ride in the canyon till we reach Turcapo. We set up camp in a corral of local villagers.

### **Day 6: Turcapo – Rio Grande (8 hrs riding.)**

We begin riding between the orchards of the local inhabitants, then ride up a beautiful slope reaching a plateau full of wild donkeys. We continue through dramatic landscapes and come to a ravine where we find large pools which is the ideal stop place for a refreshing bath. We cross this plateau through the Inca Trail and descend towards the Rio Grande where we will appreciate an oasis in the valley. It is here that camp is set

### **Day 7: Río Grande-Catarpe (7 hrs riding.)**

We leave Rio Grande climbing up the hill with our horses till we reach the pampa. From here we follow the Inca Trail again and descend for a long time through small hills but with big views of the snow covered volcanoes and mountains. In the distance spotting the spars vegetation of San Pedro de Atacama. We continue the ride through San Bartolo to reach the place where the rivers Rio Salado and Rio Grande meet. Descending the ride we reach our camp place on the grounds of Catarpe.

### **Day 8: Catarpe – San Pedro de Atacama (7 hrs riding.)**

We follow the Rio Grande river till we reach the Valley of Death (Valle de la Muerte). Here we follow the path till Valle de la Luna. Sand dunes and fantastic surroundings is the ideal décor for our last gallop in the Atacama desert. Overnight in San Pedro Atacama.

### **Day 9: Transfer out Hotel – Airport**

After breakfast your transfer will be waiting to take you back to the airport. End of our services.

Includes: Foods, tents, Local transfers.



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## INCLUDES

- **Accommodation:** First and last night in comfortable rooms in cozy Guesthouses . Based on double-rooms. All other nights we camp in the desert. You will be sleeping in Iglo tents with space for 2 persons in each tent. Beside this there is 1 big kitchen/social tent.
- **Meals:** full board. (From dinner first day to breakfast last day)
- **Guides:** Marcos or José Tomás Liberona and Chilean Huasos (Cowboys). The guides are equipped with cell phones so they can call for assistance if needed.
- **Backup Vehicle:** brings your personal luggage to the daily overnight camp place.
- **Horses & tack,** including saddle bags
- **Transfer:** From and to the Airport of Calama. (City: Calama / Name of the Airport: El Loa / Airportcode: C J C)

## NOT INCLUDED

- Insurance: We request you take a travel Insurance. Ask your local insurance company or travel agent about it. You will not be allowed to participate at the trail ride without having a personal travel insurance.
- Flight: international and local flights are not included. Gateway is Calama (CJC).
- Alcoholic beverages & soft drinks: cheap
- Single Supplement: US\$ 350
- Personal expenses
- Tips: (optional)

## PRACTICAL INFO

- **Riding level:** Suitable for intermediate to experienced riders. You should be confident on a horse at all paces. The pace is varied to include walk, trot and canter.
- **The riding:** Trailride, 7 days on horseback, riding from one place to the other, average of 7 hours per day in the saddle.
- **Weight:** riders weight limit: 120 Kg
- **Age:** minimum age is 12 years, only allowed if accompanied by an adult.
- **Group size:** groups comprise a minimum of 6 riders and maximum of 12 riders.
- **Horses:** Chilean Criollo
- **Saddles:** comfortable Huaso saddles
- **Guides:** professional and multilingual guides
- **Comfort:** basic during the camping + comfortable at the guesthouses.
- **International Passport:** Required for most foreigners

## TRAVEL GEAR

- Valid international passport.
- Travel Insurance.
- Pocket money (you can change EUR/£/USD in the airport) .
- A warm sweater.
- A warm jacket.
- 4 or 5 T-shirts and minimum 2 a shirts with long sleeves.
- Jodhpurs or jeans to ride with.
- Riding shoes or boots / riding shoes with mini-chaps or long chaps .
- A second pair of shoes for the evening .
- Comfortable clothing + a Hat
- One towel
- Swimsuit
- Toiletries
- Sun Cream
- Water canteen
- Sleepingbag comfortable to sleep at C° (-10°C)
- Sleepingmattress (thermarest is the best option)
- Camera... \* we have saddle bags available for you \* It is recommended to put your luggage in travel bag instead of a hard suitcase. 10 bags are easier to get in the backup vehicle than 10 suitcases. (thanks!)



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