



# ATACAMA DESERT BOLIVIAN ALTIPLANO PHOTOGRAPHIC TOUR

Otherworldly is the first thing that comes to mind when you see the awe-inspiring landscape of **Atacama Desert in Northern Chile** and the **Altiplano's of Bolivia**. The landscape is surreal with unique light that is seemingly easy to photograph throughout the day. Atacama with its dramatic desert wilderness, lagoons and colourful flamingos is surrounded by the volcanic mountains of the Andes. Higher up in the Andean plateaus of Atacama and Bolivia, beautiful lagoons, snow-capped volcanoes and some of the most colourful geological landforms are scattered throughout the stark desert landscape., including one of the world's most spectacular sights, Salar de Uyuni, the largest salt flat in the world. This is an adventurous photographic tour not to be missed.



## Highlights

- Valle de la Luna (Moon Valley) and Mars Valley
- Laguna Tebinquinche or Valle del Arcoiris (Rainbow Valley)
- Miscanti and Miñiques Altiplano lagoons, Tuyacto, and the famous Piedras Rojas also known as Salar de Talar.
- The village of Toconao and Laguna Chaxa
- El Tatio Geysers
- Astrophotography
- Laguna Colorada
- Train Graveyard
- Uyuni, the largest salt flat in the world
- Necropolis and Coral Army
- Numerous altiplano lagoons
- Seven Colours Mountain
- Sol de Mañana Geyser
- Beautiful flamingos and much more

## Included

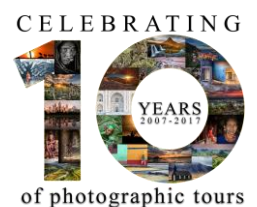
- The complete tour as per itinerary
- Return Santiago – Calama economy flights
- Transfers on arrival
- Meals as specified (B/L/D)
- Private ground transport
- All accommodation during the tour
- Experienced photographic leader and local guide where required.

## Not included

- Return International Flights to Santiago
- Travel Insurance
- Any expenses of a personal nature (such as laundry, phone calls, personal tipping etc.)
- Any meals other than those specified (B/L/D)
- Any drinks (alcoholic or non-alcoholic)
- Optional tours and activities
- Excess baggage fee
- Tips and gratuities
- Visa/Reciprocity Fees

## Details

- Departure date: **2 March 2024 (12 days/11 nights)**
- Price: **US \$7295** per person twin share.
- There will be a **minimum of 5 people** and **maximum of 8 people** on this tour.
- International return airfare is not included in the tour price. Flights departing Sydney/Melbourne are estimated to be around **AU \$1800** per person depending on airline and when purchased.
- For anyone requiring a single room, there will be an additional surcharge of **US \$550**.



## Tour Itinerary

### Day 1: ARRIVE SANTIAGO (D)

Upon arrival in Santiago, you will be transferred to your hotel for the night. After dinner there will be a presentation/discussion on the tour and an opportunity to ask questions.

Overnight in Santiago.



### Day 2: SANTIAGO – CALAMA – SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA (B/L/D)

We rise early for our flight to Calama. On arrival we meet our local guide/driver for our transfer to San Pedro de Atacama, our base for the next four nights, stopping at Mars Valley to photograph sunset over the Andes.

Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama.

### Day 3: ATACAMA DESERT (B/D)

This morning we rise early and go to Valle de la Luna (Moon Valley) for sunrise. After a picnic breakfast it's time to drive into the valley to explore and photograph the otherworldly landscape. On return to San Pedro de Atacama you're free to explore the town and find a restaurant for lunch (own expense).

Depending on the conditions when we're at Atacama, we have an option of either going to Laguna Tebinquinche or Valle del Arcoíris (Rainbow Valley) for sunset. Atacama is also one of the best places in the world for astronomy so tonight we will enjoy an astrophotography tour. Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama.



### Day 4: ATACAMA DESERT (B/L/D)

This morning we rise early in preparation for a long day of travel up into the altiplano lagoons surrounding the Atacama basin, visiting the famous Piedras Rojas (Red Stones) also known as Salar de Talar followed by Laguna Tuyacto a short distance further. The landscape in this region is amazing and there will be numerous stops as we travel.

On our return journey we take a short detour to visit two more lagoons, Laguna Miscanti and Laguna Miñiques, both at the foot of Cerro Miscanti volcano. On our return journey to San Pedro de Atacama, we will have brief stops at the small towns of Socaire and Toconao. Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama.

### Day 5: ATACAMA DESERT (B/D)

We rise very early this morning for our long drive to El Tatio Geysers. This is a very popular destination and an early start is crucial to beating the crowd and seeing the geysers at their very best. For the brave, there's also an opportunity to take a bath in the thermal pool. On our way back we will stop at a lesser-known area with some interesting colours and a unique geyser different from the others. There is some amazing scenery and wildlife on the return journey, so expect to have a number of photo stops.

On return to San Pedro de Atacama you will have some free time to get lunch at your own expense, explore the town or just take a rest. Later in the afternoon we return to Moon Valley for sunset. Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama.



### Day 6: ATACAMA DESERT – VILLAMAR MALLCU (B/L/D)



This morning we will be collected and transferred the border crossing of Hito Cajones. This will very likely be a slow process so patience will be required. Once we get through the Chilean checkpoint, we proceed to our 4WD vehicles at which time we will once again need to go through border formalities.

Our first stop will be Laguna Verde and Laguna Blanca. If there's no wind, we will have great panoramic reflection shots with Volcano Licancabur in the background. We then continue to Laguna Colorada where we enjoy photographing the lagoon and Flamingos. After lunch we continue to Salar de Capina and Villa Mar where we will stay for the night.

*Please note that the initial part of this drive to Laguna Colorada will be repeated on Day 13 in reverse so some stops may or may not be done today.*

### Day 7: VILLAMAR MALLCU – UYUNI (B/L/D)

This morning we depart early and head northward to Valle de Rocas, one of the most beautiful and visually striking landscapes in Bolivia. With locations such as Laguna Negra, Lost City of Italy, Camel Rock, World Cup Trophy, Balancing Rock and much more, you're guaranteed to return with truly incredible, otherworldly photos.

We then continue to San Cristobál to visit a lovely 350-year-old Jesuit church. San Cristobál is a mining town with one of Bolivia's largest mining facilities producing zinc-silver and lead-silver concentrate. It's the world's sixth largest producer of zinc and third largest producer of silver.

After lunch we continue to Uyuni where we visit the local office to collect gumboots for use during our stay. We then visit Cementerio de Trenes (Train Cemetery), a rusty collection of historical steam trains that were left to rust in the desert early 19<sup>th</sup> century. We then continue to Hotel Luna Salada, a unique hotel built from blocks of salt.

Overnight in Colchani.



### Day 8: UYUNI (B/L/D)



Today we have a full day to explore and photograph the largest salt flat in the world, Salar de Uyuni. Our program will be dependent on how much rain they had earlier in the year and how much water there is. This trip has been specifically scheduled for after the rain season at which time Uyuni becomes the world's largest mirror.

During our drive around the salt flat we visit areas where they are mining the salt, Ojos de agua (Eye of the salt flat) where water from a distant volcano bubbles up through the salt crust. If the water level is low enough, we will also visit Isla Incahuasi, a rocky island in the middle of Uyuni Salt Flat with giant cactus. Our day no doubt will end with sunset over the salt flat. Overnight in Colchani.

### Day 9: UYUNI (B/L/D)

This morning we rise early and head out to photograph sunrise over the salt flat, returning for breakfast. After breakfast we visit the township of Colchani.

During the remainder of the day, you will have free time to relax in anticipation of our afternoon and evening photography. We will either have an early dinner, then head back out to the salt flat for sunset followed by an astrophotography session, or we will return for dinner inbetween shoots. Either way, it will be a long night. Overnight in Colchani/Uyuni.



#### Day 10: UYUNI – SILOLI DESERT (B/L/D)



This morning we depart early and commence our journey south through Uyuni then westward to San Juan, where we will have an intriguing visit to the Necropolis and museum. Here we will see hollow coral bubbles that were transformed into tombs by the ancient Aymara people between 1250-1450 AD.

After lunch we head southward, and by mid-afternoon commence a slow off-road drive following a series of lagoons including Laguna Turquiri, Laguna Chulluncani, Laguna Canapa, Laguna Hedionda, Laguna Chiar Kkota, Laguna Honda, Laguna Ramaditas and more. This is a spectacular drive with amazing landscapes and a great opportunity to photograph more Flamingoes. Our day ends with the beautiful Seven Colour Mountain. Tonight we stay at Tayka Desert Hotel, a remote hotel in the Siloli Desert. Overnight in Siloli Desert.

#### Day 11: SILOLI DESERT – SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA (B/L/D)

We rise early to photograph the Seven Colour Mountain in the early morning light, returning to the hotel for breakfast. After breakfast we continue through the Siloli Desert stopping to see and photograph Árbol de Piedra (Stone Tree) before returning to Laguna Colorada for an amazing panoramic view and more photography.

We're now back on familiar roads however they will look very different travelling in the opposite direction, and you will be wanting to stop many times to capture the different compositions. We also take a slight detour to visit Geiser Sol de Mañana, an extensive geothermal area at 4800 to 5000m (16,400ft) altitude. We will also stop briefly to photograph Volcano Licancabur overlooking Laguna Verde and Laguna Blanca. After lunch we continue to the border crossing of Hito Cajones where we transfer back to a Chilean vehicle for journey back to San Pedro de Atacama. Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama.



#### Day 12: SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA – DEPARTURE (B/L)

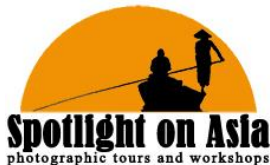


This morning we have one final photographic session, visiting Laguna Chaxa in the Salt Flat. This is a great location to get some final images of Flamingos in still conditions, hopefully with a good reflection. Afterwards we return to our hotel where we prepare for our journey back home.

It's now time to say farewell to our travelling companions and commence our long journey back home. We will then be transferred back to Calama in preparation for your flights.

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If you're interested in joining me on this fantastic photographic tour or require additional information, please contact:



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