

South America MOTORBIKE TOURS

LIFE IS NOT - WITHOUT A PASSION

ANDEAN **tour** Northern Argentina and Chile RIDE TO THE CLOUDS

A ride back in time to discover the legacy of the ancient Incas and the Spanish conquistadores, set against the backdrop of the magnificent peaks of the Andes. A journey that starts from the famed vineyards following the strangely shaped desert landscapes to finally climb to the dramatic mountain passes as you make your way to the driest desert on earth.

Total Kilometers 2.876
10 days
9 nights

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ANDEAN tour

Northern Argentina and Chile

RIDE TO THE CLOUDS

DAY 1
376 kms.

This adventure begins at the heart of **Santiago** from where the riders can already distinguish the Andes mountain range.

A few hours after leaving the city behind, the mountains ahead of us become more visible, the roads narrow and the architecture looks more rural; it means we are now beginning to ascend the steep slopes of the **Andes**. The 32 bends snaking upwards that take us to the Argentine border are a unique sight.

A few minutes after customs, we make our first stop at one of the most sacred places in these high mountains. This is the **Inca Bridge**, where a lot of history surrounds the mystique of a place with numerous legends. Here is where we will enjoy our first coffee break with home-made brownies served by SAMt. Our second stop - before reaching Uspallata - is the "**mountaineers' cemetery**" where several intrepid climbers of the Aconcagua are buried. This peak, rising to an altitude of 6,952mts, attracts mountaineers from all over the world, and it is known as the roof of the Americas as it is the highest one in the continent. We finally reach our destination and a well-deserved rest, after which we tuck in to a typical Argentine barbecue and sample the local wines.

Overnight at the bodega, Mendoza, Argentina.

DAY 2
320 kms.

We leave the Hotel that is located along one of the four wine routes leading into the city of Mendoza and then ride through the vineyards to shortly take the turn off to a road that will lead us to a place called **Barreal** in the province of San Juan. Clean skies above greet us at Barreal which is the headquarters of the **Leoncito Astronomic Center**.

Whilst on our way there we shall wind our way around the **bends of Villavicencio**, a sinuous road also going by the name of the **365 bends**. Along the way we may spot some typical fauna from the region such as guanacos and condors. Half way along this road we stop for a moment at a viewpoint which has a spectacular view of the Andes Mountains.

Overnight at Barreal, Argentina.



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DAY 3

450 kms.

An early start for our next destination: **Villa Unión** in the province of La Rioja.

After leaving Barreal behind, we stop 20 kms along the road at the **Cañones de Alcázar**, which is a real miracle of nature modeled by the continue blowing of the wind. These hills, with their magical views and colors, captivate everyone's view.

After lunch, we keep riding through a series of curves which are surrounded the majestic foothills of the Andes. We also ride past one of the world's most famous wind surfing lake.

Overnight at Villa Unión, La Rioja, Argentina.

DAY 4

200 kms.

Our final destination for the day will be the town of **Campanas**.

Leaving La Rioja behind, we ride around the foothills of the Andes, imbued with an intense red color and start climbing the **Miranda Hill**. After a few bends, the road becomes gravel and the climb itself begins. With its red earth on either side, the road continues up and down, crossing precipices that are sometime as much as 300 meters deep.

By nightfall, we reach the inviting Argentine lodge where we can admire excellent views over the vineyards and where we will be treated to a simple but warm service.

A bbq dinner will be held in the outdoor area of the lodge beside the vineyards.

Overnight in Campanas, La Rioja, Argentina.

DAY 5

430 kms.

Today's ride will be mostly along paved roads with some stretches of gravel. Our final destination today will be **Cafayate** in the province of Salta.

Upon our arrival and after a refreshing shower, we will all meet take around the gardens of the vineyard and enjoy exquisite Argentine empanadas (Argentinean meat pies) you will be able to see how the local people bake them in a typical outdoor clay oven. At the same time we will also sample the best local wines.

Overnight in Tolombón, Salta, Argentina.



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DAY 6

200 kms.

After a short ride over roads of both paved and gravel, we reach **Salta**.

After leaving Cafayate, we are faced with another interesting stretch of road going in the direction of **Cabra Corral Lake**. Here, beside the lake, we will stop for lunch.

When night falls, we shall go out and enjoy the nightlife of Salta. Only a few blocks from the hotel in Salta is the Pasaje Balcarce, a charming alley where we can find the best taverns and restaurants located along this narrow street that is the center of the nightlife in this town.

Highly recommended: Go to Central Square, only 8 blocks from the Hotel and visit the Archeology Museum where you can see the "**Children of Llullaillaco**", undoubtedly one of the most important archeological discoveries of recent years. These three Inca children were found in March 1999, frozen on the top of Llullaillaco Volcano at 6.000 meters. Next to them were the one hundred and forty six items that made up their dowry, a miniature world that accompanied them on their trip to the world beyond.

From studies performed we know that they lived over 500 years ago during the time of the Inca state, shortly before the arrival of the Spanish conquerors.

Overnight at Salta, Argentina.

DAY 7

160 kms.

We'll have an early start today to ride our bikes through the famous **Quebrada de Huamahuaca Canyon**. Huamahuaca Canyon, in Jujuy Province, was declared World Patrimony of Humanity by the United Nations Organization (UNESCO). During the meeting held on July 2, 2003, in Paris, France, the Andean valley that runs for 320 kilometers in the Northwest of Argentina was unanimously voted by the 21 members of **UNESCO's World Patrimony Committee**, which called it a "**patrimonial system of exceptional characteristics**".

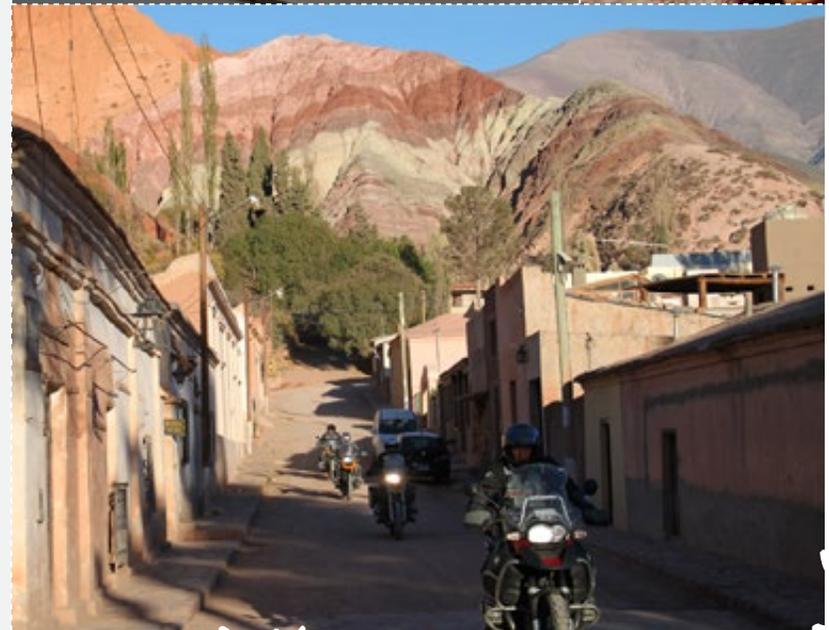
This marvelous journey ends in the beautiful town of **Purmamarca**, our final destination for the day.

Purmamarca is famous for its **Seven Color Mountain**; layers upon layers of sedimentary origin make an absolutely gorgeous backdrop for the village.

At dawn, the market stalls that arise around the square start to unfold fabrics and shawls woven of alpaca and sheep wool. The richness of the fabrics may be seen from the weaving, the dyeing and the designs.

A great opportunity to buy your souvenirs if you have not done so yet, as this is our last destination in Argentina.

Overnight in Purmamarca, Argentina.



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DAY 8

420 kms.

Today we'll be on our way to **San Pedro de Atacama**, Chile.

Leaving Purmamarca, we take National Route 52 that takes us to the International **Jama Pass** through the well-known "Cuesta de Lipán". Combined with the infinity of the curves of the "**Cuesta de Lipán**", this landscape is one of the most beautiful natural sceneries in the Argentine Northwest.

Our first stop will be at **Las Salinas Grandes** (salt flats). Las Salinas Grandes are considered to be the third largest salt lakes in the world, after Uyuni Salt Lake in Bolivia and Arizaro Salt Lake in Salta. The origin of the Salinas Grandes dates back to an extended period tentatively located at 5 to 10 million years ago.

The lovely town of San Pedro de Atacama is located immediately after leaving the customs post.

Overnight at San Pedro de Atacama, Chile.

DAY 9

Non riding day

San Pedro de Atacama is considered the archaeological capital of Chile.

Today, you can have the morning off to walk around the town. Early in the afternoon, a private transfer will pick up to take you for a cocktail on **the salt flats** beside the amazing oasis where you can also swim.

Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama, Chile.

DAY 10

320 kms.

Today we will make our final ride to **Antofagasta**.

On the way to Antofagasta, we will drive through the heart of the **Atacama Desert** which is well known for being **the driest desert in the world**. Flight out early in the afternoon.

END OF TOUR



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