

Atacama, Salt Flats & Gauchos Northbound

21 Days | Santiago to La Paz



Kicking off in Santiago take a 3 week epic journey through Chile, Argentina and Bolivia. Discover Argentina's beautiful winelands, stay on an Argentine gaucho ranch, marvel at the vast expanse of the Atacama desert and the spectacular Uyuni salt flats before finishing in lofty La Paz.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Santiago - Chile's cosmopolitan capital. Free time to explore the city on your own
- Mendoza - Argentina's wine capital at the foot of the Andes mountains. Opt to visit some of the many vineyards in the region or go white water rafting in the Mendoza River
- Estancia stay - spend three nights at a unique cattle ranch in Argentina, learn all about being a gaucho and go horseriding
- Cafayate - visit the impressive rock formations of 'El Amphiteatro' and 'La Garganta del Diablo'
- Salta - independently explore this charming town in the foothills of the Andes. Opt to take a cable car to San Bernardo Hill or mountain bike the mountains and forests

- Atacama Desert – cross the Andes to explore the world's driest desert, marvel at the famous El Tatio Geysers and the lunar-like landscape of the Valley of the Moon
- Salar de Uyuni – cross Bolivia's spectacular dazzling white salt flats on a jeep adventure
- Altiplano - take an unforgettable journey across the wilds of the Altiplano, a spectacular desolate desert landscape dotted vividly coloured lakes
- La Paz – explore the sights of Bolivia's highest city at your own pace and opt to see the fascinating Witches' Market or take a mountain bike trip down the World's Most Dangerous road

What's Included

- 20 breakfasts, 8 lunches and 7 dinners
- 7 nights multishare hostels, 7 nights camping (including 2 nights wild camping) and 6 nights simple hotels
- Services of two crew and local guides along the way
- Day trip on the surreal Salar de Uyuni Salt Flats including the Uyuni train graveyard
- Visit the incredible Moon Valley and the El tatio geysers in the mountains above the Atacama desert
- Visit the impressive rock formations of 'El Amphiteatro' and 'La Garganta del Diablo'
- Visit the ancient ruins of the indigenous city of Quilmes en route

- Spend 3 nights at a traditional estancia (ranch) with gauchos
- Transportation in an overland expedition vehicle and 4x4

What's Not Included

- Items of a personal nature, additional meals and drinks
- International flights and visas
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture
- Sleeping bag and roll mat - please bring your own for camping

Local Payment

\$830pp, paid in USD

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-2 : Santiago

Welcome to Santiago, the cosmopolitan Chilean capital! There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

Optional Activities:

These activities are not included in the itinerary, however they are available to book and/or payable locally:

- Learn more about Santiago and its history on a free walking tour of the centre from a knowledgeable local guide - Free

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- Take in the breathtaking vista of the city skyline backdropped by the mighty Andes, from the viewpoints at Cerro San Cristobal or Cerro San Lucia - Free

- Discover all of Santiago's sights on a hop-on/hop-off bus around the city - CLP 21000

Accommodation: Multishare hostel
Overnight - Santiago (2) (B:1)

Days 3-4 : Mendoza

Santiago - Mendoza (Argentina). Today we will drive over the stunning Cristo Redentor pass in the high Andes, passing Aconcagua (the highest mountain in the Southern Hemisphere) and heading to the Argentine wine capital of Mendoza, nestled in the dry flats underneath the shadows of the largest mountains of the Andes. Mendoza is the centre of Argentine wine production, and one of the nine 'Wine Capitals of the World' - it is especially famous for its Malbec, grown at some of the highest-altitude vineyards to be found in the world.

Estimated Drive Time: 11-12 hours

Border information: Exit Chile at Paso Cristo Redentor, enter Argentina at Los Libertadores.

On the following day we will have a free day to explore the incredible region, head out on various adventure activities, or of course take a tour of some of the many wineries in the region.

Optional Activities:

- Go for a horse ride through the arid foothills west of Mendoza - ARS 1400

- Explore the vineyards of the Mendoza and Maipu region, either on an organised tour or by cycling between the bodegas - ARS 950

- White water rafting on the Mendoza River - ARS 1000

- Relax in the beautiful thermal baths in Cacheuta, in the hills above Mendoza - ARS 450

Accommodation: Multishare hostel

Overnight - Mendoza (2) (B:2)

Day 5 : Cordoba



Mendoza - Cordoba. This morning we have an early start and after breakfast continue our drive to the lively university city of Cordoba, located at the heart of the Argentinian sierras. This evening is free to explore and soak up Cordoba's vibrant atmosphere or enjoy its excellent nightlife.

Estimated Drive Time: 10 hours

Accommodation: Multishare hostel

Overnight - Cordoba (B)

Days 6-8 : Gaucho Ranch



Cordoba - Estancia. Today we will have a leisurely start to the day, with time to explore Cordoba. After lunch we will complete our drive to the Estancia.

Estimated Drive Time: - 2 hours.

On the following two days we will head out horseback riding. This is a magical experience in a beautiful location, and many people's highlight of the trip! Please note that some of these activities are subject to weather conditions. Please also note that there is a strict weight limit of 15 stone (210lbs) or 95kg to partake in the horse riding - if you should weigh more than this, then unfortunately you will not be able to participate in the horseback riding. In the Estancia we will camp with facilities in the grounds near the main house.

Accommodation: Camping

Overnight - Estancia (3) (B:3, L:2, D:3)

Day 9 : Tafi del Valle

Estancia - Tafi del Valle. Today we will drive north across the lush flat pampas and start climbing into the drier mountains and onto Tafi del Valle, nestled in the valleys of the Sierra del Aconquija. We'll set up camp in a basic campsite for the night.

Estimated Drive Time: 9-10 hours

Accommodation: Camping

Overnight - Tafi del Valle (B, L, D)

Days 10-11 : Cafayate



Tafi del Valle - Cafayate. Today we will have an included visit to the ancient ruins of the indigenous city of Quilmes en route, then arrive in the serene town of Cafayate. This small unassuming town is the centre of one of Argentina's principal wine producing regions, famous for the quality of its Torrentes and Tannat wines! We will have the opportunity to go to a few of the vineyards nearby to see how the wine is made, and of course to try them! In Cafayate we stay at a campsite with good facilities.

Estimated Drive Time: 2-3 hours.

Optional Activities:

- Discover the bodegas and stock up on wine in Cafayate - ARS 150

- Visit the impressive rock formations of 'El Amfiteatro' and 'La Garganta del Diablo' en route through the primeval landscape of the Quebrada de las Conchas - Free

Accommodation: Camping

Overnight - Cafayate (2) (B:2, L:2, D:2)

Days 12-13 : Salta

Cafayate - Salta. Today we will drive through the spectacular rock formations of the

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Quebrada de las Conchas, and reach the beautiful colonial town of Salta.

Estimated Drive Time: 4-5 hours.

On the following day, we will have a free day to explore the town of Salta, visit its many museums, or explore the beautiful surrounding hills on foot or by mountain bike. We will also have the chance to take the cable car to the viewpoint on San Bernardo Hill overlooking the town, or take the famous 'Train to the Clouds' through some of the incredible mountain scenery nearby. In Salta we will stay in a local hotel or guesthouse.

Optional Activities:

- Take the cable car up to the top of San Bernardo Hill, and take in the breathtaking views out over the city of Salta below - ARS 200
- Explore the beautiful mountains and forests near Salta on a mountain biking trip - ARS 1300

Accommodation: Basic Hotel

Overnight - Salta (2) (B:2)

Days 14-15 : El Tato Geysers

Salta - San Pedro de Atacama (Chile). Today we will have a drive day to cross the mighty Andes, cross the border into Chile, and then descend all the way into the Atacama desert.

Estimated Drive Time: 12 hours.

Border information: Exit Argentina at Paso Jama, enter Chile at Paso Jama.

On the following day we will have a free day to explore the incredible highlights of the Atacama desert surrounding San Pedro. In the evening we will take an included trip out to the extraordinary Moon Valley, where we will hopefully see an incredible sunset. At night we will also have the chance to go stargazing, in one of the world's premier regions for astronomy (please note that this is only possible when there is not a full moon). In San Pedro de Atacama we will stay in a centrally located hostel.

Optional Activities:

- Hire a bike to explore the incredible deserts surrounding San Pedro de Atacama at your own pace - CLP 5000

- Head out for an exciting sand-boarding excursion in the sand dunes of the Atacama Desert - USD 30

- Discover some of the interesting ancient ruins near San Pedro, and the artifacts found in the area, on an archaeological tour - CLP 25000

Accommodation: Multishare hostel

Overnight - San Pedro de Atacama (2) (B:2)

Day 16 : The Altiplano

San Pedro de Atacama - Altiplano. We will depart San Pedro de Atacama early today to drive to the world's highest Geyser field, at 4300m above sea level, the El Tatio Geysers are an impressive sight first thing in the morning. After time to explore, we will continue our journey into the Reserva Nacional Alto Loa, we will have plenty of opportunities for photographs along the way on this scenic drive. Tonight we will bush camp in a beautiful, remote spot close to the Bolivian Border.

Estimated Drive Time: 7-8 hours.

Please note: The weather in this region can be unpredictable and has been known to close the road to the border. On these occasions we will take an alternate route across the Altiplano, crossing into either Chile or Argentina at a different border point. Your Tour Leaders will keep you informed of any changes that may be necessary.

Accommodation: Wild camping

Overnight - Bush camp close to the Bolivian border (B, L, D)

Day 17 : Uyuni

After breakfast we will break camp and cross the border into Bolivia. We will take our time to enjoy the views on the way to the town of Uyuni, the gateway to the incredible salt flats of the Salar de Uyuni. Tonight we will stay in a friendly hotel, famous for serving the highest pizzas in the world!

Estimated Drive Time: 7-8 hours.

Border information: Exit Chile and enter Bolivia at Ollague

Accommodation: Comfortable hotel

Overnight - Uyuni / Salar De Uyuni Region (B, L)

Day 18 : Uyuni Salt Flats



Today we will venture out onto the salt flats of the Salar de Uyuni, spending a full day exploring this phenomenal location by jeep and on foot. En route we will explore the nearby train graveyard and the cactus-filled 'Fish Island', and take all the time we need to get plenty of perspective-bending photographs!

Accommodation: Comfortable hotel

Overnight - Uyuni / Salar De Uyuni Region (B, L)

Days 19-20 : La Paz

Uyuni - La Paz. Today we will leave Cochabamba and drive north to La Paz, Bolivia's seat of government and the highest administrative capital in the world!

Estimated Drive Time: 8-9 hours.

On day 20 we have a free day to explore the city or take part in optional activities.

Optional Activities:

- Take a guided tour of the main sights and viewpoints around La Paz - BOB 150
- Downhill "gravity assisted" mountain biking from La Paz to Coroico - USD 125
- Guided tour to explore Tiahuanacu Inca Ruins - BOB 220
- Take a trip out to the mountain resort of Chacaltaya and the other-worldly landscape of the Moon Valley near La Paz - BOB 130
- Discover Bolivia's history, art, and culture in some of La Paz's many museums such as the San Francisco Museum and the Museum of Ethnography - BOB 20

Accommodation: Comfortable hotel

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Overnight - La Paz (2) (B:2)

Day 21 : La Paz

Our incredible journey comes to an end in La Paz this morning. If you would like to extend your stay in Santiago we can arrange post tour accommodation upon request. (B)

Is This Trip Right For Me?

Overlanding is not a style of travel that will suit everyone so please carefully read these Trip Notes before selecting this tour and be realistic about your ability and desire to join such a trip. Overland travelling can be demanding and challenging. On your trip you'll travel in a purpose-built expedition vehicle on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, sometimes across vast distances. If you're the adventurous type who'd rather spend a night roughing it in a rainforest than luxuriating in a boutique hotel, then overlanding is for you. You just need the right attitude, an open mind, and a desire to participate fully in the trip.

How Challenging Is This Trip?

This is a fairly challenging trip; you will be travelling at high altitudes, across deserts or through cold and windy or hot and steamy areas. The terrain and roads can be rough and the facilities can be very basic or non-existent. There may be some long drive days followed by wild camps, and physically and mentally it can be tough, but there will be some rest days and time to relax as well.

Joining Hotel

On day 1 please make your own way to our centrally located joining hostel. There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hostel reception for a note from your tour leader with more details about this meeting.

Joining Hostel:

Happy House Hostel
Moneda 1829, Región Metropolitana
Santiago, Chile
Tel: +56 2 2688 4849

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Our partners

This tour is operated in by our trusted partner and you will join travellers from different operators, not solely On The Go.

Itinerary Disclaimer

The routes, activities and places visited described in these notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed and it sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons; climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Changes to the itinerary may occur with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to your trip.

Emergency Contact Information

In the event of a real emergency once you have left your home country, please contact the out of office hours number below. If you cannot get through on the phone, please leave a message with your name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you. Please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours, depending on the issue.

If your flight is delayed, please inform us as soon as you can and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in the Joining Point section of these notes.

Overlanding Lifestyle

Overlanding is all about taking the road less travelled, seeing the real country as well as the highlights, and getting away from the tourist trail. It's all about the journey, not just the destination!

Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of our purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and

smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable – but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity.

On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp – we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc. Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out!

Meals & Group Participation

On an overland journey in South America you are more than just an individual passenger - you're part of the team. You are expected to pitch in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. As part of your trip you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting water and firewood, sweeping out the truck, loading the back locker, etc. While camping on overland journeys, the meals are included in the kitty. This means that you will have to work together to cook for everyone in your group. You will be divided into smaller units of 3-4 people and take it in turns to cook for the whole group according to a rota system. When it is your group's turn to cook you will have to plan the meal, shop for the ingredients in local markets or supermarkets and then prepare the meal for the whole group. The secret to cooking for 20+ people using a basic camping kitchen is to keep it simple!

An example of a typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, fruit and cereal as well as tea and coffee. When time allows it will also be possible to serve something hot such as eggs or pancakes. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto or pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

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The Local Payment/Kitty

In addition to the trip price on our South America overlanding trips, you will also be required to pay a Local Payment specified for your trip. This Local Payment is referred to locally as the kitty. The kitty is payable in instalments at the start of each section of the trip for combination trips, and in full at the start of the trip for individual trips. Each customer joining a trip pays their kitty into a central fund. The fund is managed by the crew and the kitty accounts can be viewed by all throughout the trip.

The kitty covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not whilst staying in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park or historical site entrances, excursions, etc.)

The kitty system is unique to overlanding and allows us to have flexibility and transparency on our trips. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally. It also helps to keep the costs competitive and save on administration costs so that we can pass the saving on to you. We make NO PROFIT on kitties, as they are the group's fund. If there is money left in the kitty at the end of your trip, then this is divided between the group and you receive a refund.

Prices can change with no notice and exchange rate fluctuations will affect costs. Therefore the Local Payment/kitty amount can change and the price on our website includes a buffer to cover this. The actual amount you will be asked to pay locally may potentially be less than the amount quoted on your tour voucher/trip notes.

The kitty is payable in cash on Day 1 of your trip so remember to arrange to bring sufficient cash USD with you. Alternatively you can pay in advance via a bank transfer 3-4 weeks before the start of your trip. If you wish to pay in advance please contact us and we can provide the bank details and instructions. Please note that we cannot accept traveller's cheques on our trips. Should you wish to do

this and the kitty quoted on day 1 of the trip is less than what you have paid prior to arrival, you will receive a refund on day 1 of the trip.

Please ensure your USD notes are clean and undamaged and no more than 8 years old. If needed, your tour leader will be able to accept some of the kitty in local currency, and they will let you know the exchange rate locally. In most destinations you can withdraw local currencies from ATM machines, using either a cash passport or a credit/debit card. However, please bear in mind that most cards have a maximum withdrawal amount per day, local ATMs may run out of cash, and your bank could block the card despite you warning them of your travel plans, so it could be impractical to try to get the entire kitty out from an ATM.

Tipping

Tipping may not be customary to you and is entirely voluntary - however it can be of great significance to the people who take care of you during your trip. The crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you are happy with the service and feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it.

It is also customary to tip the local guides. We recommend USD1 to USD4 per person per day, but check with your crew for an appropriate amount.

For general tipping in restaurants and on excursions, it can be useful to hold on to your smaller notes and coins to make tipping easier.

The Crew

Our crew are passionate about travel and are always up for adventure. The crew undergo the most intensive training program of all the overland companies, spending 8 weeks learning the ropes at our partner's base in the UK, and then up to 6 months on the road as a trainee. The crew are trained to manage and operate the trip safely and efficiently and their duties include: planning the trip according to the itinerary, driving

and maintaining the truck, securing services of local guides, general logistics, health and safety, liaising with bureaucracy, dealing with issues where needed and offering advice and support to our customers.

In addition they have a basic knowledge of the places visited and will be able to offer suggestions of things to do and see. We endeavour to provide the services of experienced crew, however, due to the seasonality of travel, situations may arise where your tour leader is new to a particular region or training other crew who are new to the area.

On all of our South America overlanding trips, we have two western crew but please be aware that there may be times when one crew member has to leave the trip due to unforeseen circumstances.

In addition to our crew we will employ local guides in specific locations of interest (for just a few hours up to a few days). Your crew have a duty of care to all members of the group and therefore they have the authority to ask you to leave the trip if you require serious medical assistance, you are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

Our Overland Trucks

We use rugged and sturdy Mercedes-Benz trucks (known for their durability) that will take you off road and off the beaten track. These have been specially modified to create custom designed overland vehicles which have unique integrated cabs. The trucks are fully equipped for self-sufficient wild camping, and have comfortable coach-style seating. All of the trucks are owned and maintained by our partners, and our crew follow a strict maintenance schedule - this means we can manage the quality and safety of our fleet.

Please note that the overland trucks are not air conditioned. This helps to avoid illness from the sudden changes in temperature and humidity that you can experience with air conditioned vehicles on long overland

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journeys and it also helps to speed up the process of acclimatisation to the climate.

Each of our vehicles is unique and features will differ between each truck, but most of our trucks feature the following:

- An integrated cab - so you are always with your crew rather than being separated
- Coach style seating - forward-facing apart from four seats facing backwards around two tables
- A side awning for sun/rain cover
- Luggage locker
- A drinking water tank of approximately 350 litre capacity, plus 60-80 litre jerry cans
- Long range fuel tanks
- Audio equipment with MP3 player connection
- 12v charging points (some models only)
- A hidden safe to keep money and passports secure
- An integrated fridge
- Large equipment storage areas for food, cooking utensils, expedition equipment, etc.
- Bookshelf/library
- Map board

Standard equipment on each truck:

- Dome-shaped or A-frame tents with integrated mosquito nets
- Emergency medical kit
- Camping stools and tables
- Cooking equipment, gas, and eating utensils
- Camping lights
- Full range of mechanical tools and spares
- Sand mats in case of bogging

Drive Times

Please note; all drive times given are the approximate number of hours that the truck will be in motion only, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors - flexibility is essential on any overland trip!

Optional Activities

Please note that all optional activity costs provided in the Trip Notes are an approximation and subject to change. Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated.

You will have the opportunity to take part in many exciting activities and excursions, some of which are included whilst others are optional. The included activities are listed under Inclusions. All other activities are optional and at your own expense. If you choose not to participate in the included activities, the cost will not necessarily be refunded; this is something you will need to check with your leader.

Some of the activities require a certain level of fitness, so it's important that you read through the itinerary thoroughly and make your own conclusions as to whether you feel that you are fit and healthy enough to enjoy the trip and its activities to their fullest. Some activities may have higher risks than you are used to and you must judge whether or not you wish, and have the physical ability, to take part. Also always make sure that your personal travel insurance covers you for any activity you are planning to take part in.

Please note: The optional activity prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator, and therefore any prices listed are a guide only and cannot be guaranteed.

Accommodation

Our South America overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying in hotels or hostels, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Whilst our crew will do their best to accommodate couples travelling together in twin rooms, all our travellers should expect to stay in multi-share accommodation when staying in hostels.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary greatly depending on what options are available at the time;

hotels can vary from very basic rooms without electricity or running water to high standard hotels with good facilities! Generally in hotels most rooms will be single sex, twin-share, but in South America many rooms are triple/quad-share. Hostels are nearly always multi-share and may be mixed sex.

The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses. One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will camp away from the tourist crowds. Occasionally on some of our trips we are able to stay in villages or local homestays allowing us to get close to the indigenous population and ensuring that our money stays within the local community.

Our Overland Groups

Our overland groups in South America are made up of people from around the world, and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split between males to females, and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible, and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18 (or 7 on our Family Trips), as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the wonderful aspects of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and the variety of people that you will meet.

Group Size

The maximum group size we take on our South America overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location; however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16. On some departures there may be more than one truck doing the same route. This means that you will be in the same hotel or campsite as another group on some days. To ensure that you are not always at the same place at the same time as another group, your itinerary will most likely be slightly altered from the

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itinerary advertised on the website and in the Trip Itinerary. Even on the majority of our trips where there is only the one truck, you may from time to time meet up with other groups at points on the road, and may partake in activities jointly with other groups on these occasions.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Cuzco and during the Inca Treks. This means a group starting a trip in Cuzco will embark on the Inca Trail at the same time as a group finishing in or travelling through Cuzco. In practical terms this means there could be more than 22 group members in Cuzco and on the Inca Trail at the same time.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and tell your crew at your welcome meeting. Our crew will try to cater for any particular dietary requirement or food intolerance whenever possible. However, it must be remembered that it may not always be possible and the variety of dishes may be severely limited in comparison to those available to others. If there is anything in particular you require in your diet, that you would miss from home, or because of an allergy would miss out on, it would be best to bring this with you. Depending on your particular requirements, you may need to allow yourself some extra spending money to allow you to purchase extra food items.

Itineraries

Our itineraries are developed and published with the best of intentions, however travel in more remote areas of the world is unpredictable – borders can close, there can be extreme adverse weather, strikes or maybe mechanical issues that affect the running of your trip, but equally due to the nature of our trips we can often spontaneously include a local festival or event into the itinerary. This being said, the safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a priority for us. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. We make operational decisions

based on informed advice from a number of sources, including the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice, reports from other travel companies and local suppliers, leaders' reports from off the road and local contacts we have built up over many years of experience.

Passport

Your passport details are required to complete your booking. If you change your passport, please remember to inform us as soon as possible - however, please be aware that changing your passport can cause big problems if you need to apply for visas or permits (such as the Inca Trail) in advance.

As a general rule most countries expect that your passport is valid for 6 months after the end of your trip and will refuse entry to anyone with shorter validity. A temporary or 'visitor's' passport is not valid on our trips. Please ensure the name on your passport matched the name on your booking and flight tickets. Bring a copy of the main passport page with you on your trip and leave another copy at home with family or friends.

General Visa Information

Many countries require visas to enter; some must be obtained before you leave home and others can be obtained en route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible. If you require any supporting documentation for your visa applications, we can obtain this on your behalf.

For visas that are needed in advance, you may wish to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy or consulate. However, for trips that involve multiple visas, you may find it beneficial to use a specialist visa agency to assist you with your applications. While this does sometimes increase the cost, it usually makes the process much easier for you.

Visas can take several weeks to process so make sure you familiarise yourself with any requirements as soon as you have booked your trip to allow for processing time. As you will often need to submit your passport together with your applications,

we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure.

For trips that are not yet guaranteed, you may find yourself in the position whereby you will need to start the visa application process prior to your trip being guaranteed - in this situation we still advise you not to purchase flights until your trip is guaranteed. However, you can start your visa application process, ensuring that when applying for your visas or letters of invitation that you allow several days before and after your entry into the country to allow for delays, availability of flights, etc.

The information provided here is given in good faith and was correct at time of writing; however please visit the relevant consular website of the country or countries you are visiting for detailed and up-to-date visa information specific to your nationality. Please be aware that rules surrounding visas do change, often suddenly, and without prior warning.

If your flight goes via the USA, then you must obtain an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before travel (except for citizens of Canada, who will not require this). Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and most EU countries are part of the USA's Visa Waiver Scheme and are eligible to obtain an ESTA.

Flights Via the USA or Canada

An ESTA must be obtained online and in advance via the following link and paying the appropriate fee - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/> - please note that you will be denied boarding your flight if you do not have this arranged. If you are not eligible for an ESTA, then you will have to obtain a B-1/B-2 visa for temporary visitors, and you will need to obtain it in advance. In this case it would be advisable to book flights that do not go via the USA.

Please note that if you have travelled to Iran, Sudan, Iraq or Syria since March 2011, or hold dual-nationality with one of these countries, then you will not be eligible for an ESTA and must instead apply for a visa. There are some

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exceptions to this, please see the following link for more details - <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251577.htm>.

Similarly, if your flight goes via Canada, then you must obtain a Canadian Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA) before travel (except for citizens of the USA, who will not require this). Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, most EU countries, South Korea and Japan are part of Canada's Visa Waiver Scheme and are eligible to obtain an eTA. An eTA must be arranged online and in advance – please go to <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/>, apply and pay the appropriate fee.

If you are not eligible for an eTA, then you will have to obtain a Temporary Resident Visa, and you will need to obtain it in advance. In this case it would be advisable to book flights that do not go via Canada. Please note that several Eastern European nationalities will need a visa.

Physical Preparation

Overland travelling can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions can be challenging to some. You will need to be fit enough to help every day with the camp chores (cooking, washing up, general camp set up) as well as putting up and taking down your own tent. There are some long driving days and some early morning starts. The step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high, can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down the step at least 8-10 times a day.

South America is a diverse continent, from high altitudes in the dry Andes, the steamy and humid Amazon, the cold moorlands of Patagonia, to the lush green pampas of northern Argentina. You should therefore be prepared for the full gambit of climates. There will be time for hiking and many other activities such as horse riding and white water rafting, and you will need to be reasonably fit to be able to participate in everything on offer. By and large the South America trips have a good range of hotel accommodation mixed up with camping so that life is not too rough.

Health

You need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in our trips. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assessed your ability to cope with our style of travel. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns. Please note that if, in the opinion of our leader, you are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to yourself and/or the rest of the group, we reserve the right to exclude you from all or part of the trip without a refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information prior to travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. We also advise you to declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase.

Altitude

Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatising to high altitude; please discuss these options with your doctor. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude, the tour leader will issue you with a self-assessment altitude questionnaire which allows you to monitor how you are coping with the altitude and informs you of danger signals so that you can report these as soon as possible, either to the tour leader or a medical professional.

Yellow Fever

A valid international certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever is required in many countries. You may need to present this on arrival at the airport or border crossing. Some countries will refuse entry if you are unable to present your certificate. It's also quite common for your home country to request a Yellow Fever certificate on your arrival back home. It is your responsibility to check with your doctor well in advance of leaving home about the Yellow Fever requirements for the countries you'll be visiting.

Malaria & other Mosquito-Borne Diseases

There is a risk of contracting malaria in some areas which we travel through. If your trip goes to areas with malaria it is always best to get expert advice before travelling about the types of malaria pills available, whether they are recommended, and take any that are prescribed as instructed. Consult your GP or travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as yellow fever, dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika are continuing to spread and are becoming a bigger problem around the world. Mosquito bite prevention is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases, as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available. Health professionals have issued warnings for pregnant women travelling to areas affected by the Zika virus. For more information about Zika please visit:

- WHO: www.who.int/en/news-room/factsheets/detail/zika-virus
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/zika

The Anopheles mosquitoes that transmit malaria usually bite between the hours of dusk and dawn, whereas the Aedes mosquitoes that transmit yellow fever, dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika bite both during the day and the night. To prevent being bitten, it is recommended to cover up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light-coloured and buttoned at the wrists. Do not sleep without closing your windows, tent door, etc. and use a mosquito net in hotels or if sleeping outside where there are mosquitoes present. Use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing. Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permethrin solution also provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights and in hotel rooms, but cannot be used inside the tents. For more advice on how to avoid bites please see: www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/38/insect-and-tick-bite-avoidance

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protections vary according to different

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regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest specific health advice on the regions and countries you are planning to travel in, so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel. The following websites are also a helpful resource: www.nathnac.net and www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Medical Assistance in Remote Areas

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available. If you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

Insurance

Comprehensive travel insurance with cover for medical expenses and emergency repatriation is compulsory for all our trips. You will not be allowed to start the trip without showing the trip leader evidence of valid travel insurance including the insurance company's 24-hour emergency contact number.

In the case of credit card travel insurance we will require details of the participating insurer, the insurance policy number and emergency contact number rather than just the bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank before travel to obtain these details. Also ensure that your credit card travel insurance policy has the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas and many are not valid for travelling outside your country of residence or outside the EU.

Make sure that your insurance policy:

- is designed for adventure travel and that it covers any activity that you may wish to participate in (whether included or optional), such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding, etc.
- has a 24-hour emergency assistance company that is experienced in handling situations in developing countries – for example, they should have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such

as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes

- covers your age group (some policies have age limits)
 - covers travel to high altitude if your trip goes to altitude (e.g. if you're climbing Kilimanjaro)
- We recommend that any policy has a minimum medical (including repatriation) cover of £5,000,000. We recommend that any policy also has a minimum level of cover for Personal Liability of £2,000,000 and for Cancellation and Curtailment of £5,000 (or the full cost of your trip). Please note that you should be insured for trip postponement or cancellation purposes immediately upon paying a deposit.

Cover for loss of baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice although please bear in mind that personal effects are more likely to go missing whilst travelling and you should ensure that your policy is adequate to cover the value of your personal effects e.g. cameras, tablets, phones, iPods, etc. Please note that Dragoman is not responsible for your personal effects and is not insured for their loss.

Travel insurance can be arranged through the Dragoman website or by our team of travel consultants – please contact us for a quote.

Our Liability Insurance

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger vehicle liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £5,000,000 and £10,000,000 per incident respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

Personal Spending

You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget a sensible amount for things like drinks, shopping, optional activities, tipping and laundry. Remember to also budget for any visas to be obtained en route.

We appreciate that it's hard to know exactly how much money you will need when you're travelling through new countries and areas. To make budgeting a little easier we have included some guidelines below. The Trip

Itinerary also gives approximate costs for some optional activities and by reading the itinerary thoroughly you will know what's included and what isn't. As a general rule, it's always better to bring a little more than you think you'll need!

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on our South America trips, we recommend budgeting USD15-30 per day (this amount is normally lower in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru but slightly higher elsewhere).

Cash or Card

We recommend bringing a sensible mix of cash and cards on your trip. A small amount of local currency can be handy when you first arrive to your destination but bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated. Traveller's cheques have become increasingly difficult to change around the world. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips and do not recommend that you bring them for your personal spending money.

More and more people are choosing to travel with prepaid travel cards or currency cards in addition to, or as an alternative to, debit or credit cards. This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM within each country. Please note that while ATMs are widely available in most areas, in more remote areas they are few and far between and in some countries you cannot use foreign cards at all. ATMs are also not always reliable and we therefore do not recommend that you rely on them as your only source of funds. Cards are accepted as payment in some major cities, but be prepared for high commission charges depending on your bank/card provider.

Cash can be changed in many places where ATMs are not available and you will sometimes get a better exchange rate as well. Make sure any USD and EUR notes are no more than 8 years old, clean and in good condition. Worn or damaged notes or any

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that have been written on are often refused by money changers. Please also bring a mix of denominations; the majority of the money you intend to change should be in large denominations (USD/EUR100 and 50 notes) as the exchange rate is often much better than for smaller notes. However, it is a good idea to have some smaller notes as well, as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over USD/EUR50.

In South America we recommend you bring USD. Brazil can be difficult for changing money, so it's handy to have a cash card as backup if you're travelling through Brazil. Please note that due to a recent counterfeit scam central banks in several South American countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile) have temporarily banned the circulation of USD100 notes bearing a series 2001 production date and a serial number starting with the letters CB or CF and ending in B2. The serial number is printed in green on the emblem.

Contingency Emergency Fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond our control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although we will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside of our control you will be required to contribute the additional costs involved and therefore we ask you to bring the equivalent of USD400 as a contingency fund. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you bring an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies in some instances only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

Luggage

Although you will not have to carry your main bag for long distances, you will need to help load and unload bags onto the truck. For

this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip your main luggage will be kept in the truck's luggage locker which will be inaccessible during a drive day, so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use. Please be aware that due to the constant dust and vibrations your luggage bag will be subject to extreme wear and tear.

The size of baggage that can be brought is limited by the locker space on the truck. We recommend that your bag be no larger than a large rucksack with a capacity of about 80 litres (approximately 70cm high, 40cm wide and 40cm deep). The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is a maximum of 20kg.

What to Pack?

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On our overland trips, all camping equipment is included apart from sleeping bags and ground mats, so you'll need to bring those with you if your trip includes camping nights.

Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to - there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag. And remember that even when it's warm during the day it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

Kit Lists

For a general idea of what you need, the lists below provide a guide. The lists are NOT exhaustive.

General

- Sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, sleeping mat and small pillow – if your trip includes camping nights
- Sandals or flip flops
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm sweater or fleece
- Swimwear

- Comfortable travelling clothes and a set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out
- If visiting places of worship on the trip, men should bring a pair of full length trousers and women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf
- Towel – quick dry, lightweight travel towels are best
- Toiletries including bio degradable wet wipes, sanitary products, hand gel, sun cream and insect repellent
- Day pack – essential for keeping things handy when on the truck, on short hikes, walking around cities, etc
- Assorted dry bags – to protect your kit from dust and damp
- Pouch or money belt
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre) – we carry drinking water on all of our trucks and actively encourage our customers to use the water supplied. Whilst away from the truck we encourage the use of a filter water bottle
- Head torch with spare batteries and bulbs
- Camera with spare battery and extra memory cards
- Electrical accessories such as charger, power bank, adapter, etc
- Carbon monoxide detector
- A good book, a diary or notebook and pen, a fun game for travel days
- Personal medical kit – see notes below

Cold weather

For trips going through mountainous areas, deserts, high altitude regions and Patagonia, you should be prepared for cold weather, especially at night. Ensure you bring:

- 3/4 or 4/5 season sleeping bag with liner – see note on sleeping bag ratings below
- Thermal base layers
- Winter jacket
- Hat, gloves and scarf
- Warm socks

Hot weather

For trips going through tropical areas you should be prepared for hot and humid weather. Ensure you bring:

- Loose fitting clothes with long sleeves and legs
- Mosquito repellent

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- Mosquito net – not essential as our tents have mosquito netting but can be handy for hotels and hostels or sleeping under the stars

Trips with trekking

For trips including treks, ensure you bring:

- Lightweight walking clothes suitable for the general climate
- Waterproof trousers
- Sturdy walking boots
- Walking stick(s) – not essential but can help in steep terrain; sticks can generally be hired or purchased en route

Sleeping Bags

A sleeping bag's rating typically indicates the lowest temperature at which it will keep the average sleeper warm enough to sustain them but not necessarily make them warm enough to feel comfortable. For example, with a 0°C bag, you should be able to stay in 0°C temperature but you will not necessarily be able to sleep comfortably.

For European sleeping bags there are the following standards:

- The upper limit is the highest temperature at which a 'standard' adult man is able to have a comfortable night's sleep without excess sweating.
- The comfort rating is based on a 'standard' adult woman having a comfortable night's sleep.
- The lower limit is based on the lowest temperature at which a 'standard' adult man is deemed to be able to have a comfortable night's sleep.
- The extreme rating is a survival-only rating for a 'standard' adult man. This is an extreme survival rating only and it is not advisable to rely on this rating for general use.

The transition zone, in between the comfort and lower temperature, is usually considered as the best purchase guideline.

Electrical Equipment

Your vehicle will usually be equipped with a 12 Volt socket, so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12V adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it

will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points, so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adapter for your specific charger.

For mobile phones, please note that most countries in the Americas operate at 850 MHz and 1900 MHz which is not the same frequencies used in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. Most modern tri-band and quad-band mobile phones will be able to operate on these frequencies but please check your mobile phone specifications before travelling to ensure that you'll be able to use your phone in the Americas.

Personal Medical Kit

All of our trucks have a standard motorist's first aid kit on board for use in emergency situations only. The first aid kit is in compliance with UK standards for first aid provision within motor vehicles, and contains supplies to treat road side injuries. We do not carry prescription medications, therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit.

In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce travel medical kits. They have been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contain everything you would need for any minor incidents and health issues. To see their overland range go to <http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/overland-ready>

Government Travel Advice

We follow the British Foreign Office Travel advice when deciding where and where we are unable to travel. We will base our decisions on itineraries and alterations to published routes based on their advice rather than the advice of other governments. We will advise you of any significant changes in advice before travel or whilst you are overseas. However, we recommend you check the latest travel advisories from your own government for the country you are travelling to before you book and prior to

departure. If there are any travel warnings present for the region you will travel to, as well as considering whether you are happy to travel despite the warning you must also check to ensure that it is not invalidating your travel insurance.

Here are a few useful addresses:

UK - www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Australia - www.smartraveller.gov.au

New Zealand - www.safetravel.govt.nz

United States – www.travel.state.gov

Canada – www.travel.gc.ca

We also recommend that you check the UK Travel Aware website before you travel at <https://travellaware.campaign.gov.uk/>. This website offers straightforward travel advice, top tips, and up-to-date country information to help you plan a safe trip.

Safety Information and Tips

Your safety is of paramount importance to us and we will do our best to ensure that your travel is safe and trouble-free, but we do ask that you take that little bit of extra care whilst you are away and take some time to understand about the nature of this style of travel. Part of the enjoyment of travel is experiencing a different way of life and cultures but this may also mean experiencing different safety and hygiene standards than those you are normally used to. Therefore, please take note of the following safety tips and follow any local safety advice or briefings delivered by your crew and any third-party suppliers we use during your trip.

Transport safety

- Our own vehicles have fully-fitted seat belts; make sure you always belt up. If you find a safety belt inoperable or missing on one of our vehicles, please inform the crew immediately.
- Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that other vehicles we may use or recommend in some countries will be fitted with seat belts on every seat as it is not a legal requirement in much of the world.
- Please remain seated on board vehicles at all times when the vehicle is in motion.
- Never place luggage in the aisles or foot wells.
- Ensure you know where your nearest emergency exit is; this may be a designated

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emergency exit, a window, a door, or a roof hatch.

- Check the location of the fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- Follow any safety instructions provided by the crew/driver.
- Some of our vehicles are fitted with roof seats which can be used in certain conditions, such as when driving at low speeds, off main tarmac roads, etc. The roof hatches can only be opened and the roof seats used with the express permission of the crew and you must never sit in the roof seats without seat belts.

Road safety

- Traffic in some countries travels on the opposite side of the road to what you may be used to, so ensure you look both ways before crossing the road.
- In many countries vehicles do not automatically stop at crossings and driving styles may be very unpredictable, so please remain very vigilant when near roads and vehicles.
- Crash helmets are often not provided with mopeds and motorbikes overseas – we do not recommend you hire these vehicles.

Hostels/Hotels/Homestays safety

- Ensure you know where your nearest fire exit is and check to ensure that it is operative.
- Check the location of the nearest fire extinguisher.
- Study the fire instructions in your room if available.
- Identify how to raise the alarm if a fire occurs.
- If a fire occurs, leave immediately; do not stop to collect your effects.
- Proceed to an assembly point well away from the building.
- Electrics in hotels in many of the places that we visit will not be up to the same standards as at home. Please ensure that you check rooms, especially bathrooms and are aware of any issues that look unsafe. If in doubt inform the crew who will endeavour to sort the situation out if possible.
- Staircases and stairwells are often built to a very different design than under western building standards. There may be no guard rails, be excessively steep, have dangerous gaps between the stairs and the wall, etc. At

all times be aware and take appropriate and prudent care.

- We often stay in homestays and farmstays. As these are traditional homes, they may well not adhere to our western standards of safety and so it is important that you make yourself aware of potential risks.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with the hotels/hostels or homestays.

Campsite fire safety

- Ensure you know where the nearest source of water or fire extinguisher is.
- Know how to raise the alarm.
- Extinguish all camping fires fully before retiring to bed.
- Observe any regulations regarding fires and bushfires in dry conditions.
- Identify how to raise the alarm if a fire occurs.
- If a fire occurs, leave immediately; do not stop to collect your effects.
- Proceed to an assembly point away from the tented accommodation/affected campsite.

Campsite safety & security

- Familiarise yourself with the campsite and any known hazards.
- Group the tents around our vehicle wherever possible.
- No open flames, smoking or flammable liquids in or near the tents.
- Ensure the cooking area is well away from the tents.
- Ensure all water for cooking and drinking is purified first.
- Ensure any soil toilets are a minimum of 50m away from the tents and the cooking area.
- All food waste should be burned or buried a minimum of 100m away from the site.
- Ensure local advice is followed concerning any wildlife in the area.
- Keep valuables locked in the vehicle.
- Be aware of any local security issues that might be important.
- Do not set out tents close to perimeter fences which may be a security risk.
- Be aware of the security arrangements and local guards for campsite and if in doubt ask them where and where not to pitch tents.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with campsite.

- When wild camping, ensure that you do not wander away from the camp alone. If you do leave camp, ensure that you have notified the leader or other members of the group.

Food safety

- Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked.
- Hot food should be hot, cold food should be cold.
- Avoid any uncooked food, except fruit and vegetables (notably those you can peel or shell yourself).
- In many countries you should only drink bottled water or purified water and ensure any seal is intact when purchasing bottles.
- On the overland trucks we have a tank of drinking water that is kept purified by the crew.
- Avoid ice in drinks as this can cause upset stomachs in hot climates.
- Make sure you wash your hands in antibacterial product when preparing and/or eating food.
- Many of the restaurants that you will eat in, either as a group or as individuals, will NOT have the same standards of food hygiene as we have in the western world. Unfortunately this is a reality of life in these regions. Therefore please think carefully about where you eat, what food you order and be aware of the risks.

Personal safety

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly-equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on-hand to offer advice. We have come up with a few pointers that we recommend you follow:

- Follow the crew's specific safety advice in each destination.
- Always remain aware and vigilant, and stay away from situations where you do not feel comfortable.
- Avoid carrying too much money.

Atacama, Salt Flats & Gauchos Northbound - 21 Days

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Atacama, Salt Flats & Gauchos Northbound

- Always avoid carrying your passport, driving licence, air tickets, and other valuable items around with you unless this is essential. Instead, keep valuables such as this locked away in the truck's safe, or the safety deposit box in the room or reception of the hotel/ hostel.

- If you are carrying cash, cards or valuables, use a money belt or neck wallet which are more easily concealed and more difficult to pickpocket.
- Do not take any valuable jewellery, watches, etc. away with you in the first place.
- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas.
- If possible avoid walking around on your own; it is always safer to explore with others.
- Always try to walk with confidence and purpose, which will help you avoid looking like a lost tourist!
- Take special care when walking to avoid spraining or twisting your ankle on potholes, cobbles and uneven ground.

Activity Safety & Optional Activities

Optional activities are not included in the trip price or kitty, and do not form part of your contract with us. As such you accept that any assistance given by the crew members or local representatives in arranging optional activities does not render us liable for them in any way. The crew are assisting you in arranging these activities for your added enjoyment whilst on your trip. The operators of these services and optional extras are local suppliers who contract directly with the client 'on the road', subject to and in accordance with their own terms and conditions. We accept no liability for any action or activity undertaken by the client which is arranged independently of us while on tour. Crew may take part in an optional activity but do so as private individuals and not as company representatives.

Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time, taking into account your physical ability to take part and making sure you are happy with the safety aspects of the activity. Ensure that you use the appropriate equipment on optional activities, including life jackets, helmets, etc. This is especially important on activities such as horse riding, white-water rafting, etc.

Always ensure that your travel medical insurance covers you for all included and optional activities that you wish to participate in.

Extra Accommodation & Transfers

We believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of the joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay? We can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This service is available for some hotels in joining and finishing cities, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While we are happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand that you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet. Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk-in rates or internet specials. We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival; however we do have pre-paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer.

A Few Rules

It is one of our core values to treat all people we encounter with respect, including the local people who make our destinations so special. We have therefore set down a number of rules to which our travellers must adhere. Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, carrying weapons, or engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities may be legal, it is not acceptable for our travellers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

Argentina Country Guide

Argentina - Buenos Aires Hotel Tax

The Buenos Aires Legislature in 2020 created the "Visit Buenos Aires" entity, an organization that will be in charge of promoting the city as a tourist destination around the world. This organisation will be financed through a tax on foreign visitors. This tax cannot be included in our tour price and you will need to pay this upon check out at each hotel so please budget accordingly.

This tax will be applied to foreign tourists older than 12 years old who visit the city of Buenos Aires from the 1st of March 2020.

The amount charged differs depending on the star rating of the hotel:

- 3-star hotels - USD 0.50 per person per night
- 4-star hotels - USD 1 per person per night
- 5-star hotels - USD 1.5 per person per night

Argentina - Fact File

- Official Name: Argentine Republic
- Capital: Buenos Aires
- Population: 38 million
- Total Area: 2.8 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholic 92% (less than 20% practicing), Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, other 4%

Atacama, Salt Flats & Gauchos Northbound - 21 Days

updated on 21-08-2020 04:47:04

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Atacama, Salt Flats & Gauchos Northbound

- Voltage: 220 volts. Argentina has European type two-pinned round sockets in most old buildings and the Australian style three-pin flat sockets in most new buildings.

- Dialling Code: +54
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -3
- Airport Departure Tax: US\$18

Argentina - Visas

UK, Australian, Canadian, US, South African and New Zealand passport holders do not require a visa for entry into Argentina for up to 90 days.

For entry into Argentina you must:

- Hold a passport valid at least six months on entry with one blank visa page
- Hold proof of sufficient funds
- Hold proof of onward/return airline tickets
- Hold documents showing proof of purpose of trip
- Hold all documents required for the next destination
- Confirm with their airline that boarding will be permitted without a visa as these conditions are subject to change

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours.

Argentina - Climate

The Argentine climate ranges from hot and humid in the north to cold and windy in the south. In northern Argentina, summer is hot and winter fairly mild while in contrast, Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of Argentina, is quite often cold with continual winds, rain at times and freezing winter temperatures.

Buenos Aires, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with well-defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees in the lush parks. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot and winter can be cold. It usually begins to rain in April and reaches its highest level during June and July, then decreases gradually to almost nothing in November.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Argentina - Money

Important

In Latin America you will have problems changing the US\$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not bring them. In some countries banks won't even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President's face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Argentina is the Argentine peso. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies.

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Argentina, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins.

Argentina - Local Transport

Much of Buenos Aires can be visited on foot. Most sightseeing in Buenos Aires can be reached on foot from our hotel, with La Boca being the furthest at about an hour's walk. There is also a good, if rather dated, underground metro system (called the "subte") which has 5 lines and is very cheap at approx \$0.30 per journey.

There are local buses called "colectivos", which are also inexpensive, but you MUST

have the right change (ask hotel reception for prices) as you have to drop the money into a machine. We recommend you use taxis (black & yellow) at night as they are fairly cheap and usually have meters fitted. Just make sure that the driver turns it on when you get in. Remember that you will pay more for taxis at night.

Argentina - Food & Drink

As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$1, a light meal will cost around \$5-\$6, and even a meal in one of the better restaurants in Buenos Aires costs very little in comparison to what you would expect to pay at home. Obviously this depends on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks, which will certainly increase the bill. If you eat in Puerto Madero or Recoleta in Buenos Aires you are likely to pay quite a bit more, however there is a huge choice of good reasonably-priced restaurants in the city centre where you can get a good meal (and great steaks).

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below;

- 1 litre of water US\$0.70
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US\$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer US\$0.70
- 50cl bottle of beer US\$1.00
- Food

Food

In Argentina the basic diet focuses around meat mostly with french fries (papas fritas), mashed potatoes (pure) or 'papas suflé' (local typical deep fried potatoes that blow up like little balloons and are delicious). As there is a large Italian population you'll have no problem getting pasta dishes or pizzas. In fact, in the larger cities, you'll have no problem getting all types of food.

For breakfast it's normal to eat croissants (media lunas) with a good strong coffee.

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Atacama, Salt Flats & Gauchos Northbound

Most Argentines would have a large lunch at around 1pm then at around 5pm, they all head to the 'conferías' for tea, sandwiches and cakes. Dinner is usually eaten around 10pm and is often grilled beef (asado) in different forms. Other dishes include 'lomo ala pimiento' (pepper steak), giant ribs (asado de tira) and mixed grills (parrillada) which include beef, intestines, offal, blood sausage (morcilla) and spicy sausage (chorizos) or thick grilled steak (churrasco). 'Bife de chorizo' is a rump steak (nothing to do with the sausage of the same name) and 'bife a caballo' is steak topped with a fried egg. Although seafood is not so common you can get fish (pescado) which can be served grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs (apanado) or with a sauce. There are also plenty of chicken (pollo) dishes available. 'Milanesa de pollo' (boneless chicken cooked with breadcrumbs) is a favourite.

For a cheap and hearty meal 'tenedor libre' restaurants offer a fixed price buffet. These are usually very good value and you can eat as much as you like.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular particularly in south Argentina. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. Argentina also has some of the best coffee in the world.

In Argentina some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. Imported beers and spirits are available but local spirits tend to be cheaper. There is an array of rums, gins and brandy and the fabulous Argentine wines can be extremely cheap (from US\$1 a bottle) There are also various brands of beers including

Quilmes, Rubia, Negra Ahumada, and Negra Extra XXX.

Bolivia Country Guide

Bolivia - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Bolivia
- Capital: La Paz (administrative), Sucre (judicial)
- Population: 8.4 million
- Total Area: 1.1 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish, Quechua and Aymara
- Religions: Roman Catholic 95%
- Voltage: 110 volts in La Paz and 220 volts in the rest of the country
- Dialling Code: +591
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4
- Airport Departure Tax: US\$25

Bolivia - Visas

Citizens of the EU, Canada and Australasia do not need a visa to enter Bolivia. Entry is granted on production of a passport valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. Many other nationals, including US and South African citizens do require visas. For the latest information on your specific visa requirements you should contact the local Bolivian Embassy or Consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

Bolivia entry/exit requirements: Your passport must contain a Bolivia entry stamp, without this you'll have to pay a fine when you leave the country. If you enter Bolivia overland ensure that your passport is stamped on both sides of the border, with an exit stamp from the country you are leaving and an entry stamp on the Bolivian side.

Bolivia - Climate

Nicknamed the 'Tibet of the Americas', landlocked Bolivia is the highest and most isolated country in the Americas. With elevations ranging from sea level to over 6,880 metres, the Bolivian landscape offers a mind blowing array of complex ecosystems and stunning scenery. It is basically divided into three regions: Altiplano (a plateau at an average of 4,000 metres above sea level,

800 kilometres long and about 130 kilometres wide); the yungas (a series of forested and well-watered valleys); and the llanos (the Amazon-Chaco lowlands). Because of the wide range of elevations and topography, there are many different climatic patterns. The overall temperatures are probably cooler than most people expect. Even in the humid forest regions of the north, frosts are not unheard of. Bolivia's unprotected expanses contribute to variable weather conditions and the two climatic 'poles' are Puerto Suarez for its stifling, humid heat, and Uyuni for its near-Arctic cold and icy winds.

There's no time that is perfect for the entire country, but December to March is when most of the rain falls. La Paz is always cool to cold at night, so be prepared with sweaters and windbreakers. La Paz can get quite warm during the day but sometimes mists swirl through the streets and the city can be literally wrapped in the clouds. Throughout the country, night temperatures drop dramatically, and on the high Altiplano, when a cloud passes over the sun, the temperature plunges noticeably. In Cochabamba, Sucre and Tarija, winter is the time of clear, beautiful skies and optimum temperatures. The lowlands experience hot sunny days and an occasional shower to cool off and settle the dust.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Bolivia - Money

Important

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Local currency

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Atacama, Salt Flats & Gauchos Northbound

The monetary unit in Bolivia is the boliviano (often referred to as the Peso), which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash in US dollars only. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Bolivia, however very large sums should be declared on arrival.

There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins – you may sometimes be offered sweets, cigarettes or even razor blades as change!

When arriving at the La Paz El Alto International Airport we suggest that you change some money at the bank (“Cambio”) in the main terminal building. Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your tour – particularly if it is a weekend. Please note you can only change cash (not traveller’s cheques) at the Cambio.

There are ATMs in the city where you can get money out 24hrs a day.

Bolivia - Local Transport

Most of La Paz is easy to visit on foot, although the high altitude can take its toll, especially when walking up hill. There are various types of buses and minibuses which are very cheap but you will need to know which routes to use (ask at the hotel reception for assistance). There are also fixed route taxis “trufis” which are “colectivos” (meaning other people will be on-board). You can tell these taxis apart by their red number plates. We recommend the use of taxis at night as they are fairly cheap and much safer than walking. It is not common, however, for taxis to have meters so you will need to barter for a good price. In other Bolivian towns and cities walking is basically the best and cheapest way to see the sights.

Bolivia - Food & Drink

Food

In Bolivia the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french

fries or rice (or both) and possibly a little salad. The Bolivian national dish is the parillada, a mixed grill with everything meaty including offal and intestines. Sajta de pollo is hot spicy chicken with onion, fresh potatoes plus dehydrated potatoes called chuno, lomo ala pimiento is a pepper steak popular with travellers, fricase is juicy pork with chuno, silpancho is bread-crumbed meat with fried eggs, rice and banana, saice is a dish of mince meat with spicy sauce and potatoes, rice, onions and tomatoes and milanese is beef or chicken breaded and fried like a schnitzel. For a simple fish, you should ask for pescado which can be grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs apanado or served with a sauce. Trout trucha is especially good from Lake Titicaca. Typical snacks include empanadas, pasties filled with cheese, humitas (maize pies), pucacapas (spicy cheese pies) and saltenas (meat or chicken pasties which you can get super spicy or mild). Much of Bolivia’s food is not too hot and spicy but you will find a bowl of aji (which is a chilli or hot pepper sauce) on most tables which can be added to spice things up.

In most of the larger cities and towns you will find an array of international cuisine. There are pizzerias on every corner and Chinese (chifas) food is very common. A cheap, filling 3 course lunch (normally called a comida del dia) can often be had for about US\$1.50.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. You might find that you are eating a lot of omelettes and other egg dishes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water and carbonated soft drinks are widely available and are generally safe to drink. Plastic sachets of flavoured chocolate and strawberry milk are also available.

Imported beers and spirits are available but usually at a high price. If you are happy to drink the local spirits then there is an array of rums and singani (distilled grapes). Imported Chilean and Argentine wine can sometimes also be found cheaply. A bottle of rum could be as little as US\$5 in a local shop and quite often the mixer to go with it (Coke) is more expensive. There are various brands of beers including Pacena, Ducal and El Inca (dark sweet stout).

Chile Country Guide

Chile - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Chile
- Capital: Santiago
- Population: 18 million
- Total Area: 756,102 square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholics 77%, Protestants 16%
- Voltage: In Chile the standard voltage is 220 V and the frequency is 50 Hz. You can use your electric appliances in Chile, if the standard voltage in your country is in between 220 - 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa).
- Dialling Code: +56
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4 . For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- Airport Departure Tax:\$30 USD

Chile - Visas

Most nationals, including citizens of the EU, North American and Australasia do not need to acquire a visa in advance to enter Chile. However some nationalities must pay an entry fee on arrival by air (e.g. United States \$100, Canada \$55 and Australia \$34, these costs may change). Entry is granted on production of a passport valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. Most nationalities can enter for up to 90 days, although it's up to the immigration official to decide whether you're allocated 30, 60 or 90 days on arrival. Visa requirements do change periodically so you should check for the latest information on your specific visa requirements with your local Chilean Embassy or Consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

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Atacama, Salt Flats & Gauchos Northbound

APIS and ESTA - important flight information: ESTA - if flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your application to ESTA online. This costs \$14 per person. This must be done by you personally.

Passports must also be machine-readable (MRP). Avoid locking suitcases if transiting the USA, as their customs authorities retain the right to break into them.

APIS - Many countries now oblige airlines to provide additional information about passengers prior to the flight departure. This Advance Passenger Information (APIS) must be supplied to us promptly in order to issue tickets and avoid fare increases. We will provide the airlines with the relevant details if we are booking your international flights. If the information is not provided you may be denied boarding.

Chile - Climate

Chile is very long and narrow (it is no more than 180 km wide at any point) and the Andes Mountains are a dominant feature running down the entire length of the country. Because of its length, Chile encompasses a variety of climates (the country contains both arid deserts and icebergs). There's no one time that's perfect to visit every part of the country, but it seldom rains during October to March, humidity is low, midday temperatures reach about 32°C and the nights are cool. It is colder and rains a lot in Santiago and in the south in May to August. A sweater (and, in the south, a heavy jacket) should be taken no matter when you go, as nights can be cool-to-cold nearly everywhere.

Santiago, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with well-defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot although at night it cools down slightly, and on the coast this temperature drop can be much more extreme. Autumn is between March and May, and temperatures decrease gradually. Daytime winter temperatures are reasonable but mornings can be very cold.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Chile - Money

Important In Latin America you will have problems changing the US\$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not to bring them. In some countries banks won't even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President's face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Chile is the Chilean peso, which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies. Travellers cheques must be changed before 12pm except at 'casas de cambio' (which do tend to offer better rates than banks anyway).

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Chile, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins. When arriving at the Santiago International Airport we suggest that you get some Pesos at one of the little banks just inside the luggage hall or use one of the ATMs outside the terminal. Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your trip – particularly if it is a weekend.

Chile - Local Transport

Much of Santiago can be visited on foot. There is a very good underground metro system

which has three lines and is very cheap at US \$0.40-\$0.60 per journey. You can also buy a 10 journey card for about US\$4. The last trains are at around 10pm. There are local buses called micros, which are also cheap, but you should try to have the right change (ask at the hotel reception for prices). They also have 'colectivos' (shared taxis on fixed routes). We recommend the use of taxis at night as they are fairly cheap and usually have meters - just make sure that the driver turns it on when you get in. Remember that you will pay more for taxis at night.

Chile - Food & Drink

All meals are included when camping and lunch is included on travelling days in the truck. When staying in hotels all meals are at your own expense. As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$1.50, a light meal will cost around US\$5-8, and a meal in one of the better restaurants in Santiago will compare with developed countries in the west. Obviously this does depend on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. In cheaper restaurants where Chileans and backpackers eat, you can get meals for as little as US\$3 if you shop around.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

Food

In Chile the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and sometimes salad. Compared to countries further north, Chile's cuisine is quite creative and tasty. 'Cazuela de ave' is a stew of large chunks of chicken, potatoes, rice, onions with green peppers and 'pastel de choclo' is a casserole of beef, onions and olives topped with a maize mash baked in an earthenware bowl. 'Parillada', a mixed grill of meats, offal and intestines served at your table in a charcoal brazier (miniature barbecue) is popular here as in all the southern countries. Other favourite dishes include 'lomo ala pimienta' (pepper steak) and 'humitas' (mashed corn mixed with spices and butter baked in a maize leaf).

Seafood is the basis for many of Chile's favourite dishes and the 'congriso' is their

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 UK 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
 AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
 NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
 USA 1 866 606 2960 SA 0800 990 311

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national fish. One of the most popular ways to serve it is 'caldillo de congrio' (a soup with large pieces of the fish with onions and potato balls). Other delicious fish include 'corvine' (bass), 'albacore' (swordfish) and 'cojinoa' (no translation). Try a 'paila choncha' (a bouillabaisse type dish with heaps of flavour) or a 'parillada de mariscos' a mixed seafood grill. There is a whole host of other seafood available including clams (almejas), mussels (choritos/cholgas), sea-urchin (erizo), barnacles (picorocos) and seaweed.

Typical snacks are 'emanadas de pino' (pasties with onions, raisins, olives meat and peppers) and 'prieta', a blood sausage (black pudding) stuffed with cabbage

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular you will just have to search a little harder for the restaurants that cater to your tastes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water US\$1.50
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US\$1
- 30cl bottle of beer US\$1.50
- 50cl bottle of beer US\$3

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water (especially outside of Santiago). Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. However fruit juices are sometimes made from unboiled tap water, so could upset your stomach. An easy way around this is to order the juice 'con leche' with milk instead. For decent coffee try one of the cafe chains: Cafe Haiti, Tio Pepe or Cafe Brasil.

In Chile some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available, but tend to be expensive. Alternatively there is an array of local rums, gins, brandy available and the fabulous Chilean wines which can be extremely cheap (from US\$1.50 a bottle). There are various brands of beers including Cristal, Escudo, Austral, Heineken and Royal Guard (light), there is also a brown ale type beer from the south called Malta. Please note that many places will charge a refundable deposit for the bottles.

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