



PUNA – Rooftop of the Andean skies

The Puna high plateau is located in the northwestern corner of Argentina between 3,500 and 4,000 meters above sea level and forms the rooftop of the central Andes as a southern extension of the Bolivian Altiplano.

Some of the world's highest volcanoes compete in grandeur above 6000 m and watch over large salt flats and shallow lagoons where groups of vicuñas contrast with the endless horizon and create a surreal scenery. The vast emptiness of the Puna highland desert is a true jewel of nature, distant, captivating and defiant.

4x4 High Mountain Expedition – USD 550 per Person (TWIN Based) – Min 3 / Max. 8 pax / Starts: 22SEP

Flights AR 1546 AEPSLA 14:25 16:40 [price on request](#)
AR 1457 SLAAEP 17:30 19:30 [price on request](#)

Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival transfer – time for individual exploring – welcome dinner - 1 night hotel in Salta
Day 2: Salta – San Antonio de los Cobres – Tolar Grande– 2 nights in Tolar Grande at family house
Day 3: Tolar Grande – Salar de Arizaro – Mina La Casualidad – Mina Julia – Volcan Lullailaco
Day 4: Tolar Grande – Antofalla – Antofagasta de la Sierra - 1 night Hosteria Municipal Antofagasta
Day 5: Antofagasta – Piedra Pomez field – Cafayate - 1 night hotel in Cafayate

Includes:

Lodging and full board during the circuit (breakfast, lunch or box lunch, snacks, dinner)
4x4 expedition with experienced bilingual drivers – 3 persons with one driver in each vehicle
Full expedition and safety equipment for travelling in the Puna region





Day 1 – Arrival to Salta

Reception at airport and transfer to the hotel. Time for an individual stroll around the city center. Introduction meeting and welcome dinner.

Day 2 – Salta – San Antonio de los Cobres – Tolar Grande

Railway tracks and impressive bridges follow your ascent along Quebrada del Toro, crossing the large chain of mountain ranges of the Eastern Cordillera of the Andes, that rises abruptly to the impressive heights of over 5000 m, where you reach the highlands of Puna region. Little mining towns struggling for survival and railway stations abandoned decades ago slip in between salt lakes and volcanoes as you come closer to Los Colorados formation and experience your first sunset in the Puna region. A last mountain range is to be crossed before arriving in Tolar Grande with the last lights of the day.



Day 3 – Tolar Grande - Salar de Arizaro, Mina La Casualidad & Mina Julia

The soft colors of Arizaro Salt Lake merge with the endless mountains and finally become one with the deep blue sky. Only quiet volcano peaks and small groups of vicuñas cut through the horizon. The Puna takes over and the feeling of the immense emptiness can only be described with silence.

Mina La Casualidad is testimony of an earlier prosperous mining town, nourished by the sulfurous rocks of Mina Julia and protected by the mighty Lulllaillaco volcano, the lord of the northern Andes. Mina Julia, at more than 5000 m altitude, offers spectacular panoramas and unbelievable spectrums of colors. It forms part of the still active volcanic arc of the Puna. With the smell of sulfur in your nose and the steamy clouds coming out of a nearby volcanic slope you can't quite tell whether you are closer to heaven or hell.





Day 4 – Tolar Grande – Antofalla – Antofagasta de la Sierra

The highland desert of Puna region evokes grandeur and irrelevance at the same time. Huge volcanic buildings become insignificant at a distance and small peaks arise to greatness when you come closer.

Small oasis at their feet sustain a handful of people deeply rooted in the traditions and beliefs of the Andean cultures, where the word of a Cacique is the regulation and Pachamama the rule.

In the afternoon you reach the peaceful village of Antofagasta de la Sierra, at the foothill of the gigantic Volcán Galán's caldera and watched over by the twin volcanoes Antofagasta-Alumbrera.



Day 5 – Antofagasta – Piedra Pomez field - Cafayate

The wide open valley of Antofagasta is spotted with countless small volcanic cones and extended lava flows, which occasionally seem to have flown only yesterday. It feels like travelling through an open book of geology.

The magnitude of tectonic activity during the uprising and folding of the Puna plateau came covalent with magmatic events and the formation of colossal volcanoes, which eventually would collapse and give birth to the most devastating volcanic events that characterize the whole Puna region.

Eroded for thousands of years, the Piedra Pomez formation stands out with its shiny white figures and cracks and forms a tricky and charming labyrinth that begs to be explored on foot.

Filled with these energetic moments you leave Puna region and return into somewhat more "civilized" regions. In the middle of the vineyards of Cafayate you enjoy the mild climate, the "luxury" of a comfortable room and go through all the feelings and sensations of the past few days in the depth of the Andean skies over a glass of local wine.





Day 6 – Cafayate – Salta

Colorful twisted rock formations join in for the last part of [your](#) journey down to the fertile valleys of the lowlands.

After a light snack it is time to say farewell at the airport of Salta.

Continue with your individual program

CONSIDERATIONS

Altitude is the master of the region. You transit a region of high mountain desert between 3500 m and 4500 m and will reach panoramic points at over 5000 m above sea level. If you have any doubt about your physical condition to face such a challenge please consult with your doctor.

In our spring season, from September to November, you may expect mostly sunny and even warm days. Nevertheless, the temperature gap between day and night is considerable at these altitudes and temperatures may drop below the freezing point at night.

Fierce winds, heavy rain, hail and snowstorms may occur at any time of the year and complicate the advance over the desert tracks or even obstruct the road. It is exclusive decision of the driver and guide to choose an alternative tour option in case of such adverse weather conditions, which are not frequent but may occur.

Services and accommodation in the Puna Region

Services and accommodation in Puna region are scarce and basic. Asphalted roads vanish at the entrance gate to the Puna and the nearest cities are a day's drive away - You are literally in the middle of nowhere.

In Tolar Grande accommodation is in private houses of the local community. Bathroom is shared. Toilette and shower share the same space, but there are usually hot water and central heating. Beds are comfortable and the sheets and linen are clean. We usually split the group into a ladies and a gentlemen's house for accommodation. The basic comfort is highly compensated by looking at the universe of the deep Andean sky above you.

Wi-Fi is only available around the community center. Electricity is provided by a generator that sometimes stops at night and sometimes doesn't.

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