

# Red Hot Chile Trekkers - The Atacama Desert

Trip Code: CAE

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



CHALLENGING



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Climb the impressive Lincancabur volcano rising above the expansive Altiplano landscape
- Relax in San Pedro before an excellent acclimatisation trek through the Atacama
- Discover the the El Tatio Geysers and the flamingos of Laguna Blanca and Laguna Verde

- Watch the sunset over the Valley of the Moon and enjoy the hot springs of Chaxa Lagoon

## AT A GLANCE

- 8 days trekking
- Max altitude - 5920m
- Join at Calma

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

As the oldest desert on earth, the Atacama is not only described as the best stargazing destination on the planet, but its stark beauty is home to incredible volcanoes including Licancabur (5920m). As the holy mountain of the Atacameno people, summiting Licancabur is an explosive highlight of this fantastic South American trekking holiday to Chile and Bolivia. Here, nestled between the Andes and the Pacific, you'll discover a jaw-dropping landscape of salt lakes, flamingo-filled lagoons, bubbling geysers and captivating peaks. We start in the quaint town of San Pedro, with Licancabur as our backdrop, acclimatising with gentle walks exploring the sites of San Pedro. From the flamingos on Chaxa Lagoon to the Valley of the Moon, we'll immerse ourselves in this incredible lunar landscape which includes remote communities and rich cultures. After an acclimatisation circuit of Copa Coya (4500m), we relax in hot springs and visit the famed El Tatio geysers before heading to Bolivia. Here, we're surrounded by flamingos and the beautiful lagoons of Blanca and Verde. However, it's the summit of Licancabur at 5920m that offers the magnificent Atacama Desert at our feet. This adventure holiday is an awesome combination of the most magnificent landscapes, ancient cultures and the opportunity to summit one of the world's most incredible volcanoes.

## Is this holiday for you?

This fantastic holiday offers a unique trekking experience in the extraordinary Atacama Desert and uses a variety of accommodation including comfortable hotels, camping and a simple mountain refuge. The holiday starts out with some relaxing walks and days in and around San Pedro to aid acclimatisation before heading out on a superb trek where days are longer and include a number of river crossings. Nights are spent between 3000-4000m and with the trek going up to 5000m this is excellent acclimatisation for summit day on Licancabur. Although non-technical, as you'd expect going up to almost 6000m, summit day takes around 11 hours and requires an early start. The holiday is graded higher due to the high elevation and long day for Licancabur on footpaths of scree. However the summit optional and if you decide not to head to the top, this won't take away your enjoyment from the rest of the holiday.

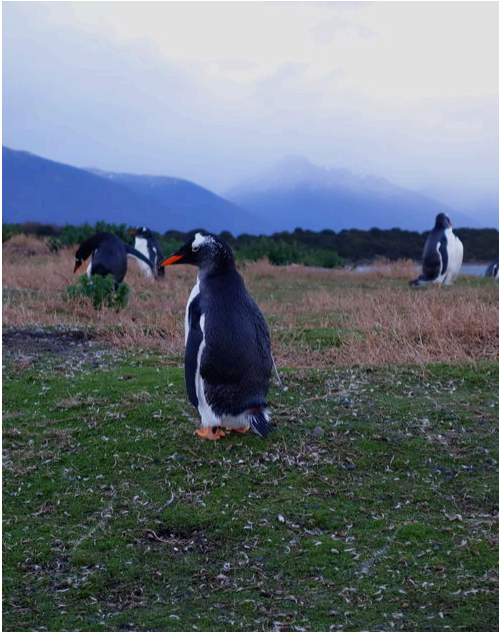
# Itinerary

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Version:

# Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



## "Land of Fire" - Tierra Del Fuego

The "Land of Fire" or Tierra del Fuego is a breath taking island divided between Argentina and Chile and a must see destination for anyone travelling to Patagonia. It contains one of the most famous stretches of water in the world - The Beagle Channel. KE's excellent extension explores this beautiful part of the world with inflatable canoes, boat and on foot. As the most relaxing way to travel you'll motor and paddle down wonderful waterways, hike secret trails, visit the famed Gable Island with its beaver dams, look for exciting birdlife including seals and meet the penguins on Martillo Island! Staying where the Andes meet the ocean, Ushuaia is the world's most southern town and the perfect place to enjoy, pre- or post-trek.

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- An experienced English-speaking local leader
- An extra climbing guide in Bolivia
- Single timed airport transfers
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as outlined in the Meal Plan
- Once on trek a full service including food and all equipment (excluding personal equipment)
- All land transport involved in the itinerary

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for trek staff
- Visa fees if necessary
- Calama Airport transfers (other than group transfers)
- Departure tax (if applicable)
- Some meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in San Pedro.

There will be a single group transfer from/to the airport in Calama to the group accommodation in San Pedro.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 7 lunches and 7 dinners are included in the holiday price. When staying in San Pedro, with access to a wide choice of dining options and budgets, it makes sense to leave the choice to you. We therefore have not included all meals while staying in San Pedro de Atacama. You should allow approximately \$15 - \$20 per meal for a total of 3 lunches and 2 dinners.

## Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

In San Pedro de Atacama there is a wide range of restaurants and bars serving a mix of local and international cuisine. On trek, varied packed lunches will be supplied. Evening meals will be plentiful and will be a delicious mixture of local and international-style, from ingredients purchased in Chile and cooked for us by professional cooks.

## Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 5 nights at a pleasant hotel in San Pedro de Atacama, a wonderful laid-back town with a stunning backdrop and relaxed feel. Here we will stay in charming wood and adobe cabin-like rooms with terraces, nestled in a fruit orchard. There are also 3 nights camping and 2 nights spent in a basic mountain refuge on the trip. All accommodation is based on twin sharing (except in the refuge where the rooms may be mixed sex and typically accommodate 4-8 people). If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. For the 5 hotel nights, single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. Whilst camping, single tents are available for a supplementary cost. Additional hotel nights in San Pedro de Atacama are also available. For Hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website. Hotels are subject to availability and prices may vary.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be accompanied throughout the holiday by an experienced, English speaking local leader. In addition, while trekking the group will be supported by a full crew of camp staff and drivers. There will also be one or more support vehicles and drivers and a trek crew including a cook, camp staff and either baggage animals or porters. A Bolivian guide will join us for the ascent of Licancabur.

## Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude on our website which can be viewed via the link below. Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry bottled oxygen for use in emergencies. [www.keadventure.com/page/altitude.html](http://www.keadventure.com/page/altitude.html)

## Spending Money

We estimate that \$400 will cover all of your expenditures whilst in Chile, including non included meals, soft drinks, tips for local staff and any airport taxes. If you intend to purchase expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly. Credit cards can be useful here. The Chilean unit of currency is the Peso. We recommend that you carry your money in the form of US dollars currency as it will not be possible to exchange traveller's cheques. There are a number of ATMs in San Pedro but we would recommend that you obtain cash using your credit/debit card at the cash machine in the airports at either Santiago or Calama. Visa credit cards are widely accepted in Chile.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides and crew. They do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. For your trek crews we recommend that you give a tip if you feel that their services have met your satisfaction. As a rough guide we suggest you allow a total of \$100-\$150 for tipping your crew.

## **Beat the Jet Lag**

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

## **Baggage Allowance**

You KE trek bag will be carried by the support vehicle. The packed weight of your trek bag during the trip should be no more than 15kg.

## **Group Size & Holiday Status**

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

## **Flight payment**

The dates shown are for the LAND ONLY itinerary, joining in San Pedro. For clients making their own flight arrangements, El Loa Airport, Calama, is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements & transfers', and 'Flights' sections in the trip dossier for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the trip is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

### Visa Chile

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. USA passport holders will be issued with a tourist card on arrival.

### Visa Bolivia

UK passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. USA passport holders do require a visa.

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).



## Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking or climbing trip getting some additional exercise. Our treks can be physically demanding, but more as a result of altitude and terrain than distances walked. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime. Running and swimming are good for developing aerobic fitness and better stamina. You should gradually increase your exercise leading up to departure, and in the month before setting off, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country.

## Climate

The Atacama has a climate characterised by blue skies and mild temperatures throughout the year. At average altitudes of around 2500 metres, temperatures range from 28°C / 82°F during the day to 0°C / 32°F at night. Higher, on the altiplano, at altitudes above 4000 metres, average daytime temperatures range from 10°C / 50°F down to minus 10°C / plus 14°F. We can expect little, if anything, in the way of precipitation.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's ['Travel Aware'](#) campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- Chile & Easter Island - Lonely Planet.
- The Rough Guide to Chile.
- Chile & Easter Island - DK Eyewitness Travel Guide.
- Travels in a Thin Country - Sarah Wheeler.
- The Motorcycle Diaries - Ernesto "Che" Guevara.
- The House of the Spirits - Isabel Allende.

## Maps

### San Pedro de Atacama Region 1:350,000/1:50,000

San Pedro de Atacama Region at 1:350,000/1:50,000 in a series of contoured, GPS compatible trekking and exploration maps at various scales from Trekkingchile. The maps are annotated with tourist information and most titles include a street plan of the region's main town. Many are illustrated with drawings of local fauna or flora.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. The packed weight of your trek bag whilst trekking should be no more than 15 kgs. Please note when packing you need to be prepared for extreme desert conditions and extreme cold conditions for the early ascent of Licancabur.

**You should bring the following items:**

- Hiking boots
- Walking sandals (TEVAs) or old trainers for use at river crossings
- Socks
- Trekking trousers and shorts
- Waterproof overtrousers / jacket
- Down / thermal jacket (for the ascent of Licancabur)
- Underwear
- Thermal baselayers (shirts / leggings as it can be cold at night)
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Scarf or buff
- Sunglasses
- Good quality thermal gloves or mittens
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$ )
- Daypack 30 to 40 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries

- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters (band-aids) and blister treatment, insect repellent and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep trek bag contents dry)
- Small padlock (to lock your main trek bag)

◆ **The following items are optional:**

**(please note a camping mattress is provided on this holiday).**

- Trekking poles (highly recommended)
- Trainers
- Sleeping bag liner
- Travel clothes
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## **Cotswold Outdoor**

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official**

**Recommended Outdoor Retailer'**. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The dates shown are for the LAND ONLY itinerary, joining in San Pedro. A single transfer from / to Calma Airport is provided.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London (Heathrow) to Calama, via Santiago with Iberia & LATAM. Outbound flights will depart the UK in the evening, arriving the following day (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart Calama airport in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the morning of the following day.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

This exclusive-to-KE Adventure trekking holiday takes you on an authentic adventure through the heart of the breath-taking Atacama Desert. You'll not only explore the sites of San Pedro and trek beneath volcanic giants, but you'll summit the incredible Bolivian peak of Licancabur.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 21/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change