

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 Atacameño 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

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.



'Rapa Nui' - Easter Island Active

Easter Island, known as Rapa Nui to its native inhabitants, is a vast National Park filled with diverse archaeological treasures. The island is famed for its iconic "moai" statues—towering stone heads that serve as enduring remnants of its rich and ancient culture. This heritage continues to thrive through the island's vibrant traditions and rituals.

During this program, you'll explore Rano Raraku, the island's most renowned site where many of the moai were skilfully carved. You'll marvel at the stunning petroglyphs of Orongo, trek up Maunga Terevaka—the highest volcano on Rapa Nui—and venture into two captivating caves that showcase the island's unique history and natural beauty.



Tierra Del Fuego - "Land of Fire"

Tierra del Fuego or "Land of Fire" is a breath taking island divided between Argentina and Chile and a must see destination for anyone travelling to Patagonia.

KE's excellent extension explores this beautiful part of the world with inflatable canoes, boat and on foot. Containing one of the most famous stretches of water in the world - The Beagle Channel you will motor and paddle along 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.

**4 days from
US\$1,730 per person**

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, 5 lunches and 4 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. You should allow approximately \$25 to \$30 per meal for the lunches and evening meals that are not included.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Drinking 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. The Empanada shop in San Pedro is an absolute must... a perfect delicious lunch for just a few dollars.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 8 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. Accommodation at the hotel is on a twin sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost.

We will also spend 2 nights at the lakeside mountain refugio at Laguna Blanca. The rooms here may be mixed sex and typically accommodate 4-8 people.

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](#). 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 a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

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

Your 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

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.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates (see *Health & Vaccinations* below), and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check the [FCDO](#) for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

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. For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website to check current requirements.

Visa Brazil

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

Citizens of the USA, Canada or Australia

US and Canadian citizens must obtain a Brazil visa prior to arrival if they will be in Brazil for more than 6 hours. For details: : <https://brazil.vfsevisa.com>. (Required for Iguazu Extension).

New entry requirements to Argentina

Please note that, due to recent changes in Argentina's Immigration Regulations, new entry requirements apply to all foreign non-resident travellers as of May 28, 2025.

To enter the country, each traveller must present the following documents:

- Valid medical insurance that provides coverage for the entire duration of the stay.
- A return ticket or proof of onward travel out of Argentina
- Accommodation booking or the address of the place where they will be staying.

Failure to provide any of these documents may result in denied entry, at the discretion of the immigration authorities.

We strongly recommend to all travellers to ensure all the travel documents are complete and up to date before departure to avoid delays or inconveniences upon arrival.

Health & Vaccinations

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

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](#).

Severe Allergies

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.

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 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 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 form 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.

Private Groups Information

Make this KE Adventure holiday your own!

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Would you prefer to travel with just friends and/or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local walking, biking or mountaineering club?

It's really easy to make a trip your own. Simply select from our full range of adventure holidays and choose the dates that work for you and your group.

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities and clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

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
- 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:

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

Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Land Only Information

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

Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will [offset the carbon of your flight](#).

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

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 07/01/2026 and the trip is subject to change