



## Eclipse & Atacama 2019

Go Beyond Immerse Yourself Tour | 12 Days | Physical Level 3

Santiago – San Pedro de Atacama – El Tatio – La Serena

Embark on a special journey for a fantastic once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to watch the solar eclipse over the stunning Chilean skies. The tour will travel throughout the beautiful landscapes of the Atacama that make up this fascinating country.

- Watch the incredible solar eclipse
- Take a walk in moon valley
- Wonder at the salt flats
- Soak up the atmosphere in buzzing Santiago
- See colourful Valparaiso



### Eclipse & Atacama inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- Touring with guides and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking Local Guides

*The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. meals, drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.*

### Immerse Yourself Go Beyond Tours:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime.

Active tours combine the key sights with more energetic pursuits such as hiking and cycling. This allows us to explore more and discover the destination in greater depth. These tours are designed to provide a wide range of activities to ensure a varied and culturally immersive experience. These tours include:

- Cycling or walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

### Physical Level 3:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Eclipse & Atacama' is rated 3 on the physical level scale. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances.

- A number of destinations on this tour are at altitude. San Pedro de Atacama sits at 2,400 metres above sea level - activity at these altitudes will be at an easy pace.
- There will be several days of sightseeing on foot for a period of time and in some cases for an extended period of time.

Of course, our Local Guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

### Joining Your Tour

The tour is 12 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Santiago and end the tour on Day 10 in Santiago. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

## Itinerary – Eclipse & Atacama

### Days 1- Fly to Santiago

Fly to Chile's sophisticated capital Santiago, arriving the same day due to crossing the International Date Line. You will be met at the airport and transferred approximately 40 minutes to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure.

#### Destination Information

**Santiago** - Santiago is a vibrant and cultural city set on the plains of the Andes and home to 40% of Chile's population. Split into 32 boroughs (comunas), each area has its own distinct character, yet all the streets are alive with the energy of the city.

### Day 2: Santiago

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning, embark on a city tour will allow you to experience its eclectic contrasts. Stroll around the Plaza de Armas and the Cathedral to admire the colonial facades, before walking down Ahumada Boulevard, the city's main commercial street. Explore the bohemian Bellavista by road, and drive up San Cristobal Hill for views over the city and the towering Andes Mountains. Finish the tour in the modern area of Santiago to wander the chic neighbourhoods. Your afternoon is at leisure.

### Day 3: Santiago to San Pedro de Atacama

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early and transfer approximately 2 hours to the airport to board your flight to Calama, the flight is 2 hours and 10 minutes. On arrival, transfer 1 hour 50 minutes to your hotel in the desert oasis town of San Pedro de Atacama. This afternoon, you'll see some of San Pedro's most famous landscapes with a drive out to Death and Moon valleys, some of the direst spots on the planet.

#### Destination Information

**San Pedro de Atacama** - San Pedro de Atacama is a town sitting in the Andes mountains of North East Chile. The dramatic surrounding landscape incorporates desert, salt flats, volcanoes, geysers and hot springs.

**Moon Valley** – The Moon Valley is a vast lunar backdrop of scattered hills in the Atacama Desert. The Valley is at its most impressive at sunset and sunrise when the sunlight creates a magical series of colours from orange to purple and pink.

### Day 4: San Pedro de Atacama

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Travel approximately 2 hours to the otherworldly Salar de Atacama, the largest salt flat in Chile. Visit Chaxa lagoon, part of the Los Flamencos National Reserve en route to reach Miscanti and Miniques lagoons, which sit on the high plains at the base of two colossal volcanoes of the same names. Travel to the village of Socaire. Here you will see ancient agricultural terraces with irrigation channels. After lunch, travel another peaceful village with typical colonial architecture built in Liparita (volcanic stone),



Toconao. Explore the village before returning to your hotel.

#### **Destination Information**

**Salar de Atacama** – The largest salt flat in Chile is an intriguing natural phenomenon. The basin was formed by evaporated water which flowed down from the Andes. There are numerous lakes within the basin, some of which are home to frolicking flocks of flamingos.

#### **Day 5: El tatio Geysers**

Meals included: Breakfast

Rise early and travel for around 2 hours deeper into the Atacama to visit El Tatio Geysers. Set within a ring of volcanoes, there are about 80 lively geysers and fumaroles, which are at best at sunrise. Have a guided walk amongst the mud craters and small bubbling geysers. Wander freely before travelling through the Andes Mountain Range with impressive views of Putama Volcano and Tocopuri Mountains. Visit the small desert village Machuca to see the typical terrace farming system, mud houses with straw rooves, and its local fauna such as llamas, alpacas and flamingoes. This afternoon, travel to an archaeological site where you can see Petroglyphs, stone sculpted figures with drawings of llama and shamans, among others. Then, visit the Rainbow Valley. Keep an eye out for the wild vicunas as you journey to and from San Pedro. Today is a full day touring. This day you will be reaching an altitude of 4320 metres above sea level for a short period of time.

#### **Destination Information**

**El Tatio** - Set within a ring of volcanoes, El Tatio is the world's third largest geyser field with about 80 lively geysers and fumaroles. The spectacle is best observed at sunrise, when the geysers are at their most active.

#### **Day 6: San Pedro de Atacama - Santiago**

Meals included: Breakfast

Transfer back to Calama and fly back to Santiago. On arrival, the rest of the day is at leisure.



#### **Day 7: Eclipse at La Serena**

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Take a 1 hour flight north by private charter to the seaside city of La Serena, one of the best place to witness the solar eclipse. From the airport you'll be transferred up to a prime vantage point, where you can settle yourself comfortably to enjoy the show. Return to the airport and fly back to Santiago. Your evening will be at leisure.

### Day 8: Santiago

Meals included: Breakfast

Today is a free day to spend as you wish in Santiago. You may wish to take part in an optional half day vineyard tour to sample some of Chile's finest wines (payable locally).

### Day 9: Santiago to Valparaiso

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Travel 3 hours to the coast, to visit the manicured seaside resort of Vina del Mar and the bohemian port town of Valparaiso. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Valparaiso is a unique and delightful tangle, draped over a series of hills. Funiculars connect the industrial seafront with the cerros (hill) neighbourhoods, each a maze of colourful, artfully-dilapidated mansions and enchanting street art. Ride the funicular up into the hills to explore, stopping for a visit to Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's house.



#### Destination Information

**Valparaíso** – Overlooked by an imperious hillside and set on a wide bay, Valparaiso is considered to be the most captivating and unique city in Chile. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003, the colourful houses are dotted across the hillside in a haphazard, disorganised fashion and the main method of getting up and down through the city is on the city's old funicular lifts.

### Days 10-12: Depart Santiago

Meals included: Breakfast

Transfer to the airport according to your international flight time and fly to Australia, arriving home two days later due to crossing the international date line.



## Eclipse & Atacama Travel Information

### Visas

Australian passport holders currently do not require a visa to enter Chile. Your passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date to Australia. Wendy Wu Tours does not provide a visa service for Worldwide tours. To stay up to date with the latest visa requirements, visit [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au).

### Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24-hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your local guides should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Altitude

On this tour you will be spending several nights at altitude – in San Pedro de Atacama at 2,400 metres, on day 7 whilst visiting the El Tatio Geysers you will reach altitude of 4300 metres. At these sort of altitudes, Altitude Sickness is a risk. Symptoms may include dizziness, fatigue, nausea and shortness of breath. It is recommended that travellers utilize their first day in high-altitude destinations to acclimate. To help you acclimatise we have designed our tours to be at a slower pace with more convenience stops and more free time, during the first few days. Staying hydrated, eating light meals and following a very light schedule will all help. We recommend that any symptoms that are unusual should be brought to the attention of your guide. Your guide will be extremely well-trained in dealing with its effects – taking it easy and taking some time to acclimatise are the best ways to prevent and combat it. Serious cases, meaning that you must descend immediately, are rare. We have adapted the itinerary to make sure that your time at these heights is as relaxed and easy as possible.

There are no specific factors, such as age or fitness, that can cause you to suffer from. Altitude Sickness can affect anyone at any time and symptoms may vary. In some instances, a short spell on Oxygen can help enormously. Our guides are trained in this and in many hotels and coaches and restaurants oxygen is available. There is medication - that can help treat and prevent symptoms. Consult a doctor before taking any of these medications, before engaging in strenuous activity at high altitude and regarding any necessary vaccinations in plenty of time before travelling.

### Eating in Chile

The diversity of the landscape, provides Chile a tremendous amount of produce, meat and seafood, essentially unparalleled in the rest of the world. The unique environments are well represented in Chilean cuisine, being equally as varied. Typical dishes are hearty and filling, containing a combination of meat or seafood and vegetables, often put into a crust. A great example of Chilean cuisine are empanadas, which are fried beef, onion and olive dumplings, served all throughout the country. Others include a thick stew called cazuela de ave and an indigenous recipe of corn, onions cooked in cornhusks called humitas. Because of its long coast, seafood is a staple in many dishes, especially across the centre and south. Chile's supply is funnelled into Spanish-influenced dishes such as marinated shrimp and paella. Meals in Chile are culturally considered as a time for families to gather at home, especially around lunchtime, which is the primary meal of the day.

Whilst we strongly recommend trying as many local dishes as possible, Chile also has a wide range of international foods available.

## Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to rainforest lodges. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality may exist between the Australia and South America. All group tour hotels have private bathroom facilities and air conditioning where needed. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

## Clothing

On this tour, you will be travelling through various regions of Chile with quite diverse climates especially in the Atacama Desert and in the Torres del Paine National Park where all four seasons can be experienced in one trip. It is recommended to bring lots of layers including the following: T Shirts made of breathable materials, hiking pants, with the option to turn into a short pant (rain pants optional), a fleece jacket for colder parts and the evenings and a waterproof Jacket as shell layer or a light rain jacket, a scarf and hat, warm socks. Sensible walking shoes and small back pack that fits into your main hand luggage to carry your daily essentials.

## Transport

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers between destinations. Roads in Chile have generally been improved over recent years, but please be aware traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. There may be sections of road where the surface may be comparatively bumpy, but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

## Souvenirs

There are plenty of interesting bits and pieces to buy as souvenirs in Chile, such as indigenous textiles, handicrafts and artworks. The most popular items to pick up are lapislazuli (blue stone) and copper handicrafts. There will be some opportunities during your tour to pick up souvenirs.

## Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by Local Guides. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

### Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in South & Central America. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much. For your convenience, with years of experience in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on your Group Tour so your Local Guide will look after this aspect of the trip for you. This ensures the amounts paid are reasonable for you and still fair to the local people. The suggested total amount is specified for each Group Tour and will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is paid in USD or other local currencies if specified. Any additional tipping you feel is appropriate is welcomed at your discretion

### After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

### Itinerary changes

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

### Before You Leave

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au).

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

**Last updated 29/03/19**