

ANDEAN TOUR RIDE TO THE CLOUDS – DAKAR 2009 NORTHERN ARGENTINA AND CHILE

Thirteen nights – fourteen days
Total Kilometers 3.760

A ride back in time to discover the legacy of the ancient Incas and the Spanish conquistadores, set against the backdrop of the magnificent peaks of the Andes. A journey that starts from the famed vineyards following the strangely shaped desert landscapes to finally climb to the dramatic mountain passes as you make your way to the driest desert on earth.

DAY 1 130 km.

Our first destination is the city of **Valparaiso**. Now listed as a **World Heritage** Site by UNESCO, this charming city is a hidden relic in Latin America. It was also a resting place for the participants of the Dakar 2009. Valparaiso is a natural bay which is surrounded by a mountain range on the Pacific Ocean. One of the biggest attractions is the manner in which the locals have built their homes, in an almost spontaneous fashion, up the side of the very steep hills. The great diversity of architectural styles that blend ancient marble mansions surrounded by smaller houses, restaurants and bars gives this place a little charm not often seen in other parts of the world. Because of the high steep hills which surround Valparaiso, there are numerous elevators (15 in total) which transport people from the city to their homes. These very **old elevators** are one of the cities major attractions and provide many wonderful views which almost always look out to sea.
Guide tour of the City.

Lodging and dinner at Valparaíso.

DAY 2 520 km.

Today we will get away very early towards our destination for the day, Tupungato, Mendoza, which is in the heart of the wine region. Three hours after leaving the Pacific Ocean we will arrive at a very different landscape, the foothills of the **Andes Mountain Range**. Crossing the majestic Andes Mountain Range is a truly unique experience as one feels dwarfed by the huge individual mountains and peaks which make up this extensive mountain range. The 32 bends climb to the border crossing offers a unique landscape and a certain dose of adrenalin. Immediately after crossing the border crossing, we will stop and view the Bridge of the Inca, a territory with a rich history which is wrapped in numerous legends. A little further down the road we will stop and visit the "**Graveyard of the Mountaineers**". In this graveyard rest those mountaineers who challenged The Aconcagua. This Argentine Mountain is known as the Roof of the Americas as it is the highest summit of the American continent and with its 6952 meters of altitude it attracts climbers from all over the world.

Lodging and dinner at the Argentine Vineyard.

DAY 3

320 km.

After touring the local vineyards we will head towards our next destination, Barreal, which is located in the Province of San Juan. To reach this village, we will climb up a series of 365 bends (los Caracoles) which will provide us with some very interesting flora and fauna and a spectacular view of the Andes mountains range. On our way we will visit a Ghost town, which is located at 3000m above sea level. Here we will have a short tour of the Jesuit ruins and the old mine.

Barreal is impressive because of the clearness of its skies which is the reason why the well known **Leoncito Astronomical Observatory** was installed a few kilometers outside of the town.

Optional night guided tour to the Observatory where you will observe through a telescope the heavenly bodies that are in the sky that night, i.e. planets, moon, double stars, galaxies, etc.

Lodging and dinner in Barreal.

DAY 4

450 km.

We leave early to reach our next destination, Villa Unión in La Rioja Province. Some 20 Km out of Barreal, we will arrive to our first stop, Los **Cañones del Alcázar**, a miracle of nature, modeled by the continuous blowing of the wind.

Visit to Las Minas de Huailán [The Mines of Huailán]. Currently abandoned the place still preserves the ruins of the establishment and the mining pieces of Inca origin. After lunch we will ride through a series of curves which are surrounded by fascinating mountains and rivers. We will also ride past one of the world's most famous wind surfing lakes.

Playa Lamaral at the small village called Rodeo.

Lodging and dinner at Villa Unión in the province of La Rioja.

DAY 5

200km.

We leave early towards our next destination, the locality of Campana.

Leaving Villa Union we enter a road which has many cliffs and shows the impressive red rocks of the Miranda escarpment. As we approach the mountain range we start to make out the Los Colorados mountain range. With its distinctive red color the road climbs and drops alternately, crossing abysses over one thousand feet deep. We will arrive at an Argentine Lodge. Here, you may take the afternoon off and rest beside the pool of the Lodge that offers you a spectacular vineyard views. Alternatively, you may take your bike and explore one of the many small villages which surround us.

Lodging and dinner at the vineyard lodge, Campana - La Rioja.

DAY 6

430 km.

Today we have a long ride to the city of **Cafayate** located in Salta Province. On our arrival and after a refreshing shower, we will meet in the gardens of the lodge where we will enjoy exquisite Argentine **empanadas** (Argentinean meat pies) you will be able to see how the local people bake them in a typical outdoor clay oven. Here you may also like to make a reservation for a relaxing masaje which can be taken in your own room. Need to make a booking the previous day. In the evening we will go by a private vehicle to the town of Cafayate to have dinner.

Lodging at a Argentine Wine cellar, Tolombon- Salta.

DAY 7

200 km.

We leave early towards **Salta City**, where we will stay two nights at the Altos de Balcarce. Leaving Cafayate, another fascinating road and scenery await us (we ride through the Quebrada de Cafayate. We will stop for lunch beside the " **Cabra Corral lake**". Here you will be encouraged to taste the delicious local trout. .

After our arrival in Salta the rest of the afternoon will be yours, you may walk downtown to have a look around or you may just decide to relax at the pool of the Hotel.

When night sets in, we will go out to enjoy the Salta Latin night. Only two blocks away from the Hotel is Pasaje Balcarce, a charming alley where folklore bars and the best restaurants are located. Highly recommended: Go to Central Square, only 8 blocks from the Hotel and visit the Archeology Museum where you can see the "**Children of Lullailaco**", undoubtedly one of the most important archeological discoveries of recent years. These three Inca children were found in March 1999, frozen on the top of Lullailaco Volcano at 6.000 meters. Next to them were the one hundred and forty six items that made up their dowry, a miniatura world that accompanied them on their trip to the world beyond.

From studies performed we know that they lived over 500 years ago during the time of the Inca state, shortly before the arrival of the Spanish conquerors.

**Lodging at the Altos de Balcarce Hotel, Salta City.
Dinner in the City.**

DAY 8

350 km.

During our second day in Salta we will offer you different options. Those of you who wish to climb back on the bike may leave the town and head off to **San Antonio de Los Cobres**, crossing Quebrada del **Toro canyon**. This is a dirt road that runs alongside the railway of the famous **Tren de las Nubes** (Train to the Clouds). Those who decide to ride Hill of course be accompanied by the guide. Train to the Clouds is another of the options for the day. This train actually reaches the clouds. It climbs up to over 4,200 meters in a 400 km journey (round trip). It is one of the world's three highest railroads (4200m above sea level) it crosses steep mountain ranges and winds through spectacular landscapes. The train does not leave every day or every month of the year, so this option is subject to availability.

Those who wish to rest or to go shopping may opt to visit the local craft market located near the Hotel. It is open all day long and you may get there by taxi.

**Lodging at Altos de Balcarse Hotel, Salta.
Dinner in the City.**

DAY 9

170 km.

Today we head in the direction of Jujuy Province. Our final destination for the day will be Tilcara which is at the beginning of the **Huamahuaca valley**. This small town with low roof building and steep streets offers the visitor all the splended view of the landscape of the famous Quebrada de Huamahuaca together with the lively cultural activity of its inhabitants.

Lodging and dinner in Tilcara.

DAY 10

250 km.

We'll have an early start today to ride our bikes through the famous **Quebrada de Huamahuaca Canyon**.

Huamahuaca Canyon in Jujuy Province was declared World Patrimony of Humanity by the United Nations Organization (UNESCO). During the meeting held on July 2, 2003, in Paris, France, the Andean valley that runs for 320 kilometers in the Northwest of Argentina was unanimously voted by the 21 members of **UNESCO's World Patrimony** Committee, which called it a "patrimonial system of exceptional characteristics"..

This marvelous journey ends in the beautiful town of **Purmamarca**, our final destination for the day. Purmamarca is famous for its Seven Color Mountain; layers upon layers of sedimentary origin make an absolutely gorgeous backdrop for the village.

At dawn, the market stalls that arise around the square start to unfold fabrics and shawls woven of alpaca and sheep wool. The richness of the fabrics may be seen from the weaving, the dyeing and the designs.

A great opportunity to buy your souvenirs if you have not done so yet, as this is our last destination in Argentina.

**Lodging at an Argentine Colonial Estancia.
Dinner in Town.**

DAY 11

420 km.

Today we'll be on our way to **San Pedro de Atacama**, Chile.

Leaving Purmamarca, we take National Route 52 that takes us to the International Jama Pass through the well-known "**Cuesta de Lipán**". We may say that, combined with the infinity of the curves of the "Cuesta de Lipán, this landscape is one of the most beautiful natural sceneries in the Argentine Northwest.

Our first stop will be at Las Salinas Grandes (salt flats). **Las Salinas Grandes** are considered to be the third largest salt lakes in the world, after Uyuni Salt Lake in Bolivia and Arizaro Salt Lake in Salta. The origin of the Salinas Grandes dates back to an extended period tentatively located at 5 to 10 million years ago.

Night at San Pedro de Atacama, Chile.

DAY 12

Non riding day

Today we will start our day early, as a private vehicle organized by the Hotel will pick us up to take us on an excursion to the Geysers.

Framed in a landscape of imposing, arid beauty, **Tatio Geysers** are a geothermal field of volcanic origin, where water and vapor surge violently from the depths of the Earth.

The geysers are located at an altitude of over 4000 m.s.n.m., so the temperature during the morning, when the jets of boiling water surge, is very low. The hour when the geysers are at their best is between 05:30 and 07:00 in the morning, when the height of the jets of water may easily reach 10 meters.

Lodging and dinner at San Pedro de Atacama.

DAY 13

320 km.

Today we will make our final run to Antofagasta.

On the way to Antofagasta, we will drive through the heart of the **Atacama Desert** which is well known for being the **driest desert** in the world. We will drive through the desert city of Calama which is the home of one of the largest open pit copper mine in the world, **Chuquicamata Mine**. Along the way we will see many ruins of the old Salitre mines (Sodium nitrate) which closed down many years ago. We will arrive to Antofagasta city (a coastal town) early in the afternoon.

Lodging and farewell dinner in Antofagasta.

DAY 14

Fly to Santiago to connect with departing flight

END OF TOUR

Prices (Based on double occupancy)

Rider with BMW R 1200 GS 2008 / 2009 Model	- USD\$	7,820
Pillion passenger / support vehicle passenger	- USD\$	3,208
Single room supplement (optional)	- USD\$	995

Includes

- Bilingual Motorcycle guide (English and Spanish) for the entire tour
- Flight Antofagasta - Santiago

South America
MOTORBIKE TOURS

- A combination of 3, 4 and 5 star hotels and lodges (depending on location), with breakfast included.
- Fuel and oils for entire trip
- 4 x 4 Support vehicle with driver
- One spare motorbike towed on a trailer
- Motorbike Spare Parts
- One mobile phone per rider
- Coffee, tea, soft drinks, biscuits and snacks all the way
- 3 Dinners including farewell dinner (alcohol not included)
- 8 Lunches
- Motorbikes with panniers and tank bag
- Maps of Chile and Argentina
- Documents for borders crossing
- Admission and guides fees to see the Geysers del Tatio in Atacama
- Hotel transfer (Antofagasta)
- Insurance in Argentina for third parties.
- Insurance for third parties in Chile
- Storage and parking for the motorbikes
- Transportation of the motorbikes from Antofagasta to Santiago
- Satellite phone for receiving calls
- Personal gift from South America Motorbike Tours