

MENDOZA – SAN JUAN – EL ELQUI AN ADVENTURE IN THE ANDES HEIGHTS

Three nights – four days
Option four night in La Serena
Total kilometers 1.695

DAY 1

375 km.

We commence our trip crossing the majestic **Andes Mountain Range** which 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 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 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 around the world.

After lunch in Uspallata we will head off towards Tupungato, where we will lodge in a beautiful vineyard in the heartland of the Mendoza Wine Region. Shortly after our arrival and once we have had a chance to clean up, we will go on a short wine tour and have the opportunity to do a little wine tasting.

In the evening we will share a typical **Argentine barbecue** which will not only consist of the world famous Argentine meat but also cooked in their traditional way – "cordero al espada" (lamb on a sword). This meal will be accompanied with wines from the local vineyard.

Lodging and Dinner in Mendoza Vineyard

DAY 2

300 km.

We will start our day with a short ride around the wine district

Every year, as of early January, the climate starts to change throughout the Province and everybody prepares to start the most important of all the Mendoza festivities, the **National Grape Harvest Feast**. The great feast consists in honoring the fruit and the wine laborers of Mendoza, and

the relationship of man with this land and with nature; in short, it is the great feast of wine, which marks a successful harvest of the vine. Every year, around 50.000 tourists from all over the world come to the city to enjoy the great feast of this land.

After touring the vinyards, we will commence our trip towards our destination for the day, Barreal which is located in the Province of San Juan. To reach the village of Barreal, we will climb up a series of **365 bends** on a gravel road (**los Caracoles**) which will delight us with some very interesting flora and fauna and a spectacular view of the Andes mountains range. We should get to see some wild vicuna!!

After conquering the amazing Caracoles we will reach a plateau of 3000m and ride through some fantastic scenery on a gravel road until we reach the **old Paramillo mine** which was discovered and worked by the **Jesuits** in 1614. We will stop here for a short mine tour and for lunch.

After lunch we will head towards Barreal which is reknown for its clear skies, hence the location of the Leoncito Astronomical Observatory which is installed a few kilometers outside of 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.

Night guided visit to the Observatory. Opcional

Lodging and dinner in Country house- Barreal

DAY 3 470 km.

Today we will cross back over the Andes Mountain range through the amazing "Paso de Aguas Negras", which is a gravel road connecting Argentina and Chile. The highest point of this crossing is 4,700m above sea level.

The aridity of its surroundings shows the complex geological diversity of these mountains, reflecting a range of multi-mineral colors such as yellow, green, red, white, brown and orange.

As we start moving to the highest point you will perceive what might seem to be lonely patches of snow. As we move forward these white patches of snow get more shaped, they are the penitents, a strange formation of ice that arises from a combination of wind and the sun on large accumulations of snow in areas of extreme aridity, this phenomenon is very unique.

The road will take us up to the 4700 meters, where we'll find the border with Chile

Once in Chile we'll begin our journey towards the mystical Elqui Valley. Its skies are one of the clearest in the southern hemisphere, which is why international organizations have established astronomical observatories on the summits of the surrounding hills.

A few kilometers from Vicuña Town starts the Route of Pisco, which is a grape grown and in the heart of the Valle de Elqui. Chile is very well known not just for its fabulous wines but also for it's local drink Pisco Souer.

We will Lodge at a local hotel which is quite difference and may just delight you with an experiece you may not have had before!

Oh, and we will of course have a welcome cool Pisco Souer drink waiting for you upon our arrival!

DAY 4
550 km.

Return to Santiago. We will pass through the lovely coastal town of La Serena and then continue south on Ruta 5 (mainly coastal road) until we reach Santiago. Whilst this section of the road may not be as interesting as the previous days, it is a great road to show of your on-road riding skills.

OPTIONAL FIFTH DAY

Should your party wish to stop in La Serena for the night, this can be easily arranged at the time of booking.

END OF TOUR

Prices (Based on double occupancy)

Rider with BMW R 1200 GS 2008 / 2009 Model	- US\$ 2,185
Pillion passenger / support vehicle passenger	- US\$ 735
Single room supplement (optional)	- US\$ 185

* Based on 6 riders

Includes

- Bilingual Motorcycle guide (English and Spanish) for the entire tour
- Lodging for 3 nights with american breakfast included
- One Dinner (Argentine BBQ with two glasses per person)
- Two lunches
- Guided wine tour with tasting
- Fuel and oils for entire trip
- 4 x 4 Support vehicle with driver
- One spare motorbike towed on a trailer
- Motorbike Spare Parts
- One celular phone per rider
- Coffee, tea, soft drinks, biscuits
- Motorbikes with panniers and tank bag
- Maps of Chile, Argentine
- Documents for borders crossing
- Insurance in Argentina for third parties.
- Insurance for third parties in Chile
- Satelital phone for emergiencies
- Personal gift from South Amercia Motor Bike Tours