

# ATACAMA DESERT PHOTO TOUR





Join us for a nature  
photography journey through  
Chile's Atacama Desert.



We'll explore one of the world's most extreme and visually striking landscapes - a mosaic of salt pans, geyser fields, high-altitude lakes, and volcanic amphitheatres teeming with wildlife and cultural history. This six-day adventure is designed for photographers and nature lovers alike. Each day brings a new visual feast: flamingos wading through pink-hued lagoons, herds of vicuñas silhouetted against snow-capped volcanoes, and ancient petroglyphs etched into desert rock. From the surreal textures of Valle de la Luna to the steaming El Tatio geysers, you'll photograph scenes that feel otherworldly.

We'll be based in San Pedro de Atacama, a charming desert town surrounded by dramatic scenery. Our small group will travel in private vehicles with expert naturalist guides who know the region intimately. You'll visit remote locations at optimal times for light and wildlife, with plenty of opportunities to refine your craft and capture the essence of this high-altitude desert.

Expect sightings of up to three flamingo species, rare birds like the Horned Coot and Puna Rhea, and mammals including foxes, guanacos, and the elusive mountain vizcacha. The landscapes alone - rainbow-colored valleys, turquoise lakes, and towering rock formations - are worth the journey.





## HIGHLIGHTS:

The Atacama Desert is the driest place on Earth, yet it offers a breathtaking array of landscapes and wildlife. From towering volcanoes and snow-dusted peaks to sweeping puna grasslands and shimmering salt pans, the region is a photographer's dream. Among its high-altitude lagoons, you'll find up to three species of flamingos - Chilean, Andean, and the rare James's, wading through pastel-colored waters in surreal desert light.

Beyond its natural wonders, the Atacama holds deep cultural significance. You'll explore ancient pukaras, ayllus, and ritual villages that reveal the legacy of remarkable pre-Hispanic civilizations. A visit to the El Tatio Geyser fields (one of the world's highest and third largest geothermal zones) offers dramatic steam columns and mineral-rich pools at sunrise. Wildlife encounters include herds of vicuñas and guanacos, elusive foxes, and striking bird species like the Puna Rhea and the endangered Horned Coot. Every moment here is a chance to capture the extraordinary.



## PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE:

The Atacama Desert offers one of the most varied and visually arresting photography environments on Earth. From sunrise steam rising over the El Tatio Geysers to the pastel reflections of flamingos in high-altitude lagoons, every day presents a new palette of light, texture, and wildlife.

You'll photograph ancient petroglyphs carved into desert rock, towering volcanoes mirrored in turquoise lakes, and surreal mineral formations in Valle de la Luna and Rainbow Valley. The region's extreme dryness and elevation also make it one of the best places in the world for astrophotography, with crystal-clear views of the Milky Way and dramatic silhouettes of the Andes.

Wildlife photographers will find plenty to focus on: up to three flamingo species, herds of vicuñas and guanacos, elusive foxes, and rare birds like the Horned Coot and Puna Rhea.

Landscape photographers can play with scale, color, and contrast in vast saltpans, folded canyons, and volcanic amphitheaters.

Cultural photography also shines here, with visits to pre-Hispanic fortresses and desert villages offering rich human context. Whether you're shooting wide-angle vistas or intimate wildlife portraits, this trip is designed to maximize your creative potential in one of the planet's most photogenic regions.





## YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE:

At Penda, we collaborate with only the best professional photographic guides, chosen for their expertise, teaching ability, and commitment to your experience. They prioritise creating exceptional photographic opportunities and adapt their guidance to suit your individual skills and goals, whether you're a beginner or a seasoned photographer.

For full details about the specific guide leading this tour, please visit the [tour page](#) on our website.



## ACCOMMODATION & FACILITIES:

We'll stay at La Casa de Don Tomás, a charming lodge in the heart of San Pedro de Atacama. While the setting is remote and steeped in desert beauty, the accommodation is warm, welcoming, and well-equipped for comfort.

Nestled in one of the driest places on Earth, La Casa de Don Tomás offers a tranquil base from which to explore the salt flats, geysers, volcanoes, and hot springs of the Atacama Desert. Your room will be a cozy, garden-facing retreat with a private bathroom, comfortable beds, and hot water. All rooms come with free Wi-Fi and parking, and while the Wi-Fi is available, it's best not to rely on high speeds - this is a place to disconnect and soak in the silence.

The lodge itself is designed to feel like home, with thoughtful touches that reflect the textures and colors of the desert. There's a peaceful outdoor area where you can relax after a day of exploration, and the staff are known for their warm hospitality.

Since we're surrounded by nature, you might spot desert wildlife while enjoying your morning coffee or unwinding in the garden. The atmosphere is quiet and introspective - perfect for photographers.

## Meals:

Meals are included from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 6. Each day, you'll be treated to three prepared meals in the lodge's dining area - think fresh ingredients, vibrant local flavors, and dishes that celebrate the culinary soul of the Atacama region. Whether it's a hearty breakfast to fuel your adventures or a candlelit dinner to wind down under desert skies, every bite is crafted to nourish and delight.





## HEALTH & FITNESS LEVEL REQUIRED:

This destination sits at a higher elevation than most travelers are used to, which means your body may need a little time to adjust to the thinner, drier air. To help you feel your best, we recommend staying well hydrated, limiting alcohol, and taking it easy as you settle in. Most guests acclimate comfortably with these simple steps.

Our itinerary includes relaxed daily walks and short hikes (typically 2–3 km / 1.2–2 miles), so a basic level of fitness will help you enjoy the experience fully. For those curious to learn more, we suggest reading up on High-Altitude Travel & Altitude Wellness — it's a great way to feel confident and prepared



## PRICE

**For up-to-date information on dates, rates, and availability, please visit our website**

### Included:

- Accommodation
- All meals
- Internal flights
- Airport transfers
- All transport and entrance fees
- Photographic tutoring
- Guide services as per the itinerary

### Excluded:

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Tipping
- à la carte dishes
- Alcoholic drinks
- Laundry
- Telephone Calls
- Any items of a personal nature







## RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

We recommend the following equipment. If you'd like to discuss your specific gear, just reach out, and we'll be happy to advise.

### Recommended Camera Gear:

- DSLR or mirrorless camera
- Range of lenses; ideally ranging from wide angle for landscape to telephoto for wildlife
- Tripod/Monopod (useful)
- Sturdy camera bag
- Enough spare batteries and memory cards (you'll be able to charge your batteries at our accommodation)
- Hard drive and a laptop / external drive
- Laptop with editing software
- Waterproof camera backpack
- Neutral density filter | Polarizing filters

### Essential Travel Gear:

- Breathable, waterproof jacket for cold weather
- Down jacket & Down/fleece vest
- Fleece jacket or fleece sweater
- Base layers (shirt/trousers)
- Trekking pants, preferably with some insulation
- Rain trousers to put over your main trousers, for additional insulation (in windy conditions)
- Sturdy walking shoes
- Warm socks and underwear
- Woolen/fleece hat & Waterproof hat
- Scarf & Light waterproof gloves
- Sunscreen (at least 50 fps), Sun hat, Lip balm & Sunglasses
- Binoculars
- Ziplock bags for litter
- Books for long rides
- Slippers or sneakers
- Small backpack for carrying belongings during excursions



## WHY PENDA

Everything is built around photography.

- Our photography tours are created by photographers, for photographers. Our itineraries are designed around creating the best possible photographic opportunities. We'll make sure to bring you to the right place, at the right moment.
- We're travel experts. We love travel, and have many years of experience in creating and running tours, workshops, volunteer programs, and safaris. We know what makes a great holiday, and will match every person with their perfect experience.
- Our photography tours are led by top photographers. Each photo tour or safari is guided by an experienced professional photographer, who is dedicated to creating the best possible experience for you by taking you to the right spots, and tutoring you at the same time.
- We respect what we photograph. We're committed to exploring and adhering to the most ethical ways of photographing new places.





## CARBON FOOTPRINT COMPENSATION:

If you join one of our trips, we'll plant a tree on your behalf. We've teamed up with Greenpop to make this happen. Greenpop is a nonprofit organization dedicated to reforestation, urban greening, and environmental education across Sub-Saharan Africa. They restore and protect ancient African forests by using a sustainable development approach. They also provide green spaces and food gardens in under-resourced urban areas, improving food security, creating opportunities for income generation and spreading environmental awareness in the process.

If you join us on one of our photography adventures, Greenpop will plant a tree for you – and you'll get a certificate with the GPS coordinates of your tree, so that you'll know exactly where it's growing.







## CONTACT US

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