

Trail of the Incas: 21 Days

Information Kit

Chile, Bolivia and Peru:

A truly exhilarating motorcycle road trip from the Pacific to the Andes.



From the Pacific shores to hidden antiquities deep within the Andes, this is an epic ride that offers a landscape of extremes. Tiny-whitewashed Andean villages punctuate the red-rock desert landscapes of the Atacama, picture-postcard snow-capped volcanoes rise from high altitude desert floors, to be met by the greatest salt flats on earth, glowing under an infinite star laden sky. Yet magnificent scenery is only part of the appeal with cities that bankrolled the Conquistadors and Incan ruins seemingly at every turn, this is a ride for the ages.

Itinerary

Joining Day: Santiago

Your Santiago airport transfer will take you directly to our joining hotel, ready for an early start tomorrow. Today you will meet your crew for your tour briefing and welcome dinner.

Day One: Iquique

A morning flight takes us to northern Chile and the seaside resort town of Iquique.

Days Two & Three: San Pedro de Atacama

A fantastic ride day as we travel into the Atacama Desert, known as the driest desert in the world. San Pedro de Atacama is recognised as the archaeological capital of Chile as it has many beautiful natural and cultural attractions. We spend two nights here in this wonderful adobe village where it hasn't rained for over 400 years. We visit the Valle de la Luna for a spectacular sunset over the Atacama.

Day Four: Ollague

Today we leave San Pedro on well-paved roads through the desert to the town of Calama. From Calama we remain on paved roads then onto good gravel roads towards the high mountain town of Ollague, passing the stunning Volcano Ollague along the way. We will overnight here in basic accommodation in this remote, unique town. Today's ride offers us spectacular views of the Atacama Desert, a dramatic landscape that incorporates desert, salt flats, volcanoes, geysers and hot springs with an enjoyable mix of paved and dirt roads.

Days Five & Six: Uyuni

Today's ride will see us cross a remote border into Bolivia and descend across the open, rugged landscape until we reach the edge of the Salar de Uyuni. Most of the ride today is on dirt, is remote and is absolutely stunning, this is a ride you won't forget. Upon arriving into Uyuni an enjoyable evening will be spent at the Tonito Hotel, which has the best pizza restaurant in Bolivia and possibly the most amazing star-laden sky on earth. Two nights are spent here allowing us to visit what must be some of the most remarkable scenery on earth, the 11,000 sq km / 4000 sq mi landscape of bright-white salt, rock formations and cacti-studded islands of the Salar de Uyuni. The drive across here can be hallucinogenic; being out on the vast expanse of the Salar, everything is a reflection of everything else, it's impossible to define where the horizon is. We take a 4x4 across the Salar to Fish Island where we view the giant cacti and enjoy a picnic lunch. We eventually return to Uyuni at sunset to visit the train cemetery. A wonderful collection of old steam trains simply driven into the desert and left to rust. It is said that one of the abandoned locomotives was the last train that Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid robbed, just that no one knows which one!



Days Seven & Eight: Potosi

The scenery today is similar to that of the Wild West with canyon lands, rocky outcrops and the ever-present mountains all around, it's absolutely wonderful. An occasional oasis dots the landscape and brings with it poplar and willow trees. Today we will be visiting a small Bolivian school that we have sponsored for over 10 years now, so if you would like to donate some gifts it would be much appreciated. Fresh fruit and veggies, sporting supplies (basket, volley and soccer balls are great gifts along with general schooling supplies). The school is located in Chaquilla some 50 km / 31 mi from Potosi. The best place to purchase any donations will be in Uyuni. The following day is yours to relax and wander this fascinating UNESCO listed city, which was once one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the world due to the abundance of silver, and still is the highest city on earth. It was Potosi that bankrolled the Spanish Conquistadors as they plundered the South American continent. Visit La Casa del la Moneda (the mint) museum or the Cathedral in the Plaza de Armas. However, the highlight of today is a visit to a working mine at Cerro Rico, a tour you will never forget (optional). You get the chance to witness the incredibly harsh conditions the miners still work under and learn some of the 500 years of mining history, where else can you offer dynamite and 95% proof alcohol to miners as gifts?

Days Nine & Ten: La Paz

Riding west from Potosi through the mountains of the Cordilleras de Azanaques and de Los Frailes, the roads reach heights of 5,200 metres / 17,160 feet. There is not a lot of traffic on this road and we pass through a few small villages that remind us that people actually live out here. After this high-altitude ride, we reach El Alto where we leave our bikes and take a transfer down into La Paz, you will soon see why we don't ride into La Paz. A full day in La Paz allows us time to explore the city including a city tour visiting the witches market, government house, Plaza Murillo residential area and Valle de la Luna (Moon Valley). La Paz has one of the most dramatic settings of any city in the world, made all that more imposing with the towering snow-capped Mt. Illimani looming above. For the more adventurous, or slightly mad, riders can experience the Death Road motorcycle trip (optional). This is an amazing ride down what is regarded as the world's most dangerous road a short distance out of La Paz.

Days Eleven & Twelve: Puno

An early morning transfer will have us reunited with our bikes before riding out toward the Bolivia/Peru border. We take a rickety ferry across an inlet of Lake Titicaca where it is advisable for riders to literally hang onto their bikes to save them going overboard. Riding along the shores of Lake Titicaca we shall have great views of the snow-capped Andes far off in the distance. We arrive at the Peruvian city of Puno spectacularly set on the shores of Lake Titicaca. The following day we take a boat excursion to the amazing "Uros", the floating reed islands of Lake Titicaca. The floating reed islands have to be seen to be believed, they actually float and support entire communities, one island even has a school, just don't stand in the one spot for too long as you will eventually begin to sink! The views across the lake are astounding, ringed by snow-capped peaks and Bolivia in the distance. You will return to the hotel by lunchtime and you have an afternoon to explore Puno or relax in the hotel.

Days Thirteen & Fourteen: Cusco

Traveling northwest the ride will take us through the town of Juliaca and high into the Andes crossing the 4,319 m / 14,252 ft pass at La Raya, before reaching the wonderful city and Incan capital, Cusco. Today's ride is spectacular with the towering snow-capped peaks of the Andes all around dotted with centuries-old Andean villages. We arrive at what the Incans call the "Naval of the universe" Cusco. We spend a full day in Cusco to explore this amazing city built on the still visible ruins of Incan fortresses. Cusco is a fantastic mix of Incan and Spanish cultures and is South America's oldest continually inhabited city. Cusco is home to narrow cobblestoned streets, ornate cathedrals, and colourfully dressed indigenous Quechan peoples walking their llamas to market past high-end restaurants or McDonalds! Our hotel is located close to the impressive Plaza de Armas (main plaza) where we can enjoy a drink or meal at the legendary biker's bar, Norton's Rats overlooking the Plaza.

Day Fifteen: Aguas Calientes

Leaving Cusco, we ride the world-renowned Sacred Valley, dissected by the silt-laden Urubamba River and dotted with enormous Incan ruins dating back millennia before parking the bikes in Ollantaytambo in the shadows of an enormous Incan fortress. It's the end of the road, literally, forcing us to catch a train to Aguas Calientes, which is the base for the legendary Machu Picchu. There is time in the late afternoon to visit the local hot springs before dinner. We overnight in the town of Aguas Calientes.

Day Sixteen: Cusco

Today we catch the early bus for a 20-minute ride to the global icon that is the Incan fortress of Machu Picchu. We have a guided tour of this world heritage site to explain the significance of this breathtaking place. After taking time to explore and soak in Machu Picchu we return to Aguas Calientes and have some lunch before taking an afternoon train to Ollantaytambo, where we collect the bikes and take a wonderful "shortcut" via a high plateau that offers superb views of the ever-present snow-capped peaks of the Andes, to Cusco.



Day Seventeen: Chivay

We ride toward the world's deepest canyon of Colca Canyon staying at Chivay, home of the giant Condors. The ride is magnificent as we get off the "Gringo Trail". It is in these very mountains that the mighty Amazon River begins its journey. The hot springs of Chivay are a perfect way to relax and unwind after a hard day's ride.

Day Eighteen: Arequipa

An early start to the lookout 'Cruz del Condor' where we can get up close and personal with the amazing condors. Returning to Arequipa we will have some time to explore what is considered to be the finest "Plaza de Armas" in all of South America.

Day Nineteen: Tacna

Departing Arequipa, we ride south along the spine of the Andes as the road winds its way through seemingly endless valleys and small Peruvian villages to the southern Peruvian city of Tacna, formerly a part of Chile.

Day Twenty: Iquique

We cross into Chile today and into a stark yet beautiful Atacama Desert landscape. We eventually descend from the desert into Iquique spectacularly set on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Iquique is known for its superb beaches, casino and laid-back lifestyle.

Day Twenty-One: Santiago

A morning flight takes us to Santiago and our final night of the tour.

Departure day: Santiago

Spend some time in Santiago or fly home, the choice is yours.

Ride Details

Ride Grade: 3

Grade 3 doesn't mean we are climbing cliff faces and forwarding raging torrents, it means we spend a few days on dirt roads that "could" be a little challenging "if" there has been recent rains. 2 wheel-drive cars and semi-trailers often use these tracks, so they are **NOT** extreme.

90% of this ride is on pavement: Some sections of pavement can be potholed and narrow and have wild animals, wandering pedestrians, heavy traffic and less than careful erratic drivers where indicators are considered a silly extravagance. Some of these roads are twisting and have tall shoulders and little road signage.

10% is off-road: Riding from Uyuni to San Pedro de Atacama, there are sections of hard, and sometimes corrugated dirt, with loose gravel that can have washouts. There are also some sections of sand, and the potential of a couple of very shallow creek crossings with muddy entrances and exits.

Distances

The biggest riding day is 540 km / 340 mi with the shortest being 80 km / 50 mi. Most riding days we average around 250 – 300 km / 160 – 190 mi with numerous rest days included where the bike is available for more riding if desired, (subject to any maintenance requirements). The total distance is approximately 3,660 km / 2,774 mi

Bikes

We operate a brand of bike that needs no introduction, the BMW. Our fleet consists of the BMW F700 GS / F800 GS, R1200 GS. All bikes come equipped with crash protection and a top-box.

Experience required

Some off-road riding experience is preferred for this tour mainly due to the fact that the potential exists for a couple of sections of challenging riding, as with any dirt tracks they are constantly changing depending on recent weather and heavy truck traffic activity. Co-riders can travel in the support vehicle at anytime if any dirt becomes too challenging. Although not a requirement Compass Expeditions does recommend an off road training course that gives riders of all levels the tools to tackle off road riding. Contact us for more information on training events we run and recommended schools.

All riders **must** have a valid motorcycle license.

Weather

We run this tour at the best time of year to be riding the Andes, when there is little rain, the skies are blue and the mountains are visible. When at altitude, such as Bolivia, it will be very cold in the mornings but quickly become warm during the day. It is rare but not impossible for some high Andean passes to experience very late snows, as with any mountainous region we must expect variable weather conditions throughout the day.



Highlights

- San Pedro de Atacama
 - Valle de la Luna
- High Andean Scenery
 - Salar De Uyuni
 - Floating Uros Islands
 - Cusco
- Riding the Sacred Valley
 - Machu Picchu
 - Colca Canyon
 - Andean Condors
 - Chivay Hot Springs



Meals

The food options on the Trail of the Incas tour are extremely varied. All types of western style meals are available, even McDonalds, as well as some local delicacies, such as the famous Cuy (Guinea Pig) in Peru, wonderful asado in Argentina or the amazing seafood in Iquique. On all ride days we include our legendary picnic lunches, prepared on the spot, in our mobile kitchen. Not pre-prepared sandwiches left festering in your top box all day. Our picnic lunches are wholesome and filling, and our carefully selected and tested restaurants offer both traditional and western style foods. Of course all breakfasts are included, and those with particular dietary requirements are easily catered for.

Breakfasts: **22**
Lunches: **14**
Dinners: **8**

Accommodation

Our hotels are generally 3 and 4 stars, and are chosen for their location, cleanliness, suitability for motorcycle groups and ambience. On a couple of occasions, such as the Bolivia / Chile border town of Ollague, the accommodation will be basic. Some hotels have restaurants and bars attached.

Accommodation is an important part of your ride experience, and after many years in South America we believe we offer a superb mix of excellent boutique hotels.

Accommodation: **22 nights**

Tour Inclusions

- Airport Transfers
- Motorcycle rental as per your selection
 - Fuel
 - Tolls
- Support vehicle with passenger carrying ability
- Services of ride leader and support vehicle driver
 - Pre-departure material and route maps
 - Access to satellite phone, pay per minute
 - Compass Expeditions polo shirt
- Train and entrance to Machu Picchu and guided tour
 - Lake Titicaca Excursion
 - La Paz city tour
 - Uyuni salt flats 4x4 excursion
- Entrances to all National Parks mentioned in the itinerary
- Two internal flights in Chile: Santiago to Iquique and return at the end of the tour

Your Responsibilities

Riding equipment

You will need to bring the following riding gear:

Riding jacket and pants: every weather event should be expected, from cold mornings on the Altiplano, to the higher temperatures as the day warms up. The sun is intense at these altitudes; therefore a multi layer jacket and pants are essential. The jacket and pants ideally need to have internal removable liners, and have Kevlar crash protection and a waterproof pocket for your documents and small camera. Preferably, your jacket and pants should be 100% waterproof or carry a set of waterproofs in your top-box.

Helmet: Your helmet should be full faced and of a good quality. Ensure you have a spare visor or replace before departing if scratched. Motocross style helmets are unsuitable for long distance rides, on what may be sometimes dusty surfaces, as you will experience considerable dust ingress. Internal drop down tinted visors are great, but not so if you need prescription sunglasses.

Boots: Ideally, motocross style boots would be best, but bulky and impractical to carry. When choosing a boot, it is essential to choose a boot that offers the most rigid ankle protection possible. Ankle injuries are the most common injuries we experience. Pack a set of walking boots in your top-box for those off bike excursions.

Gloves: We recommend the use of both summer and winter (ideally waterproof) gloves, as the weather is extremely changeable.

Additional items: Silk neck warmer, great for keeping the wind out. Earplugs, great for keeping the noise out.

Travel insurance

It is compulsory to have travel insurance to tour with us. It just makes sense! Your insurance must cover you for any incident you may have whilst riding a motorcycle 700cc and over. We have negotiated a 10% discount with various insurance providers around the world, who WILL offer coverage for you, for the activity of riding a motorcycle 700cc and over in foreign lands. For more information return to the "tour page" and click on the "insurance" tab.

Passport & Visas

Your passport will need to be valid for at least six months **AFTER** completion of your ride. Your passport should have at least one full page available, for each country you will be visiting. Compass Expeditions has teamed up with the world leaders in visa procurement, CIBT, who have created a special Compass Expeditions visa application page. They have offices in Australia, USA, Canada, UK, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore and numerous European countries. Tour participants can obtain their own visas if preferred, however, for a small charge, CIBT can obtain your visa and negotiate any issues that might arise. Links to CIBT / Compass page for visa applications, for other nationalities please contact us directly:

Australia: <https://visalink.com.au/compassexp>
Canada: <http://www.cibtvisas.ca/compass>
USA: <http://www.cibtvisas.com/compassexp>
France: <http://www.cibtvisas.fr/compassexp>
UK: <http://cibtvisas.co.uk/compassexp>

Most nationalities do not require a visa for Chile, Peru or Bolivia. US clients will need a visa for Bolivia (subject to change). It is the participant's responsibility to ensure they have any visas that may be required.

This ride visits Chile, Bolivia and Peru.

Vaccinations

A Yellow Fever vaccination is mandatory for travel within South America, and may well be asked for when returning to your home country. We highly recommend that you speak with your doctor, and/or check out the World Health Organization website at www.who.int/country and have a look at their excellent International Travel and Health book, available online. In Australia, visit the Australian Medical Centre website at www.traveldoctor.com.au or phone 1300 65 88 44. For our U.S clients, visit www.cdc.gov/travel/ and for our U.K clients, go to www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/, for travel health recommendations in general, go to www.mdtravelhealth.com, now part of red travel.



You've made a booking, what happens next?

Once a booking has been made, you will receive an automated booking confirmation. Soon after, you will receive a "welcome" email, and then receive our comprehensive pre departure booklet in the post. This booklet will prepare you for your adventure and has more details on what to bring and what to expect. We email a "tour dossier" 90 days before departure; this dossier is full of information, including historical & country information. The more you read, the more you will get out of your ride.



Thanks for spending your time reading this information kit. We hope it has inspired you to challenge yourself, if not riding with us then just riding and enjoying this remarkable world that we live in.

If you have further questions, please contact us.

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