Red Hot Chile Trekking in the Atacama Desert

Trip Code: CAE

Version:

WALK & TREK	GUIDED GROUP	6 MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Trek through a truly alien landscape of salt flats, ancient rock art, volcanoes and lunar valleys
- Camp beneath some of the clearest night skies on Earth and visit a world-renowned observatory
- Discover the El Tatio Geysers and the stunning high-altitude lagoons of Laguna Blanca and Laguna

Verde
- Watch the sunset over the Valley of the Moon and enjoy the hot springs of Chaxa Lagoon
- Summit Lascar Volcano (5,592m) for an unforgettable high-altitude finale

AT A GLANCE

- 8 days trekking
- Max altitude - 5,592m
- Join at Calma

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

Journey into one of the most extraordinary landscapes on Earth on this high-altitude trekking adventure through Chile's Atacama Desert. A land of vast salt flats, steaming geysers, flamingo-filled lagoons and sculpted volcanic terrain, the Atacama feels more like another planet than anywhere else on Earth. Based in the desert oasis of San Pedro de Atacama in a comfortable hotel, you'll enjoy a carefully paced programme of acclimatisation walks that gradually lead you higher into the Altiplano. Along the way you'll discover ancient pre-Inca sites, abandoned fortresses and rock art sites, hidden valleys and some of Chile's most spectacular high-altitude lagoons: their vivid colours and volcanic backdrops making them among the country's most photographed landscapes.

Two nights of remote camping take you far from the lights of civilisation, where you'll sleep beneath some of the darkest skies on Earth. Combined with a visit to a local astronomical observatory, this is one of the finest places in the world to experience the night sky, with countless stars and the Milky Way stretching overhead.

As the journey unfolds, the landscape grows ever more dramatic, culminating in an ascent of Láscar Volcano, rising above 5,400 metres on the edge of the Altiplano. With expert local guides, gradual acclimatisation and a perfect balance of challenge and reward, this is a once-in-a-lifetime trek for adventurous travellers seeking raw nature, high places and unforgettable horizons.

Itinerary update: *Our summit day now features an ascent of Láscar Volcano (5,592m), replacing the more technically demanding Licancabur Volcano. This change offers a higher summit success rate while still delivering an outstanding high-altitude challenge. If volcanic activity or conditions make a summit attempt unsuitable, an alternative high-altitude walk will be offered.*

Is this holiday for you?

This fantastic holiday offers a unique trekking experience in the extraordinary Atacama Desert. Graded 6 the trekking is moderate to challenging and is designed for fit, active travellers comfortable walking 4-7 hours a day over varied desert terrain, including rocky trails, sandy valleys, and high-altitude slopes. The journey reaches elevations of 4,000 to 5,500m, culminating in the summit of Láscar Volcano, so a reasonable level of fitness and some previous trekking experience is strongly recommended.

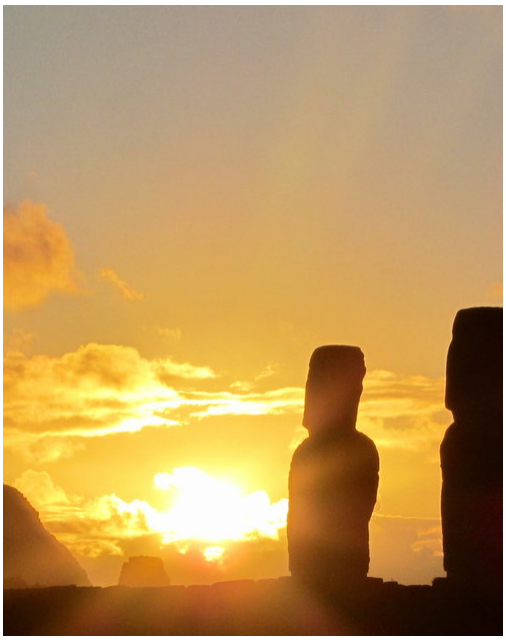
Accommodation combines comfortable hotels with remote desert camping, where nights are cold and skies are spectacularly clear. If you enjoy high-altitude adventure, consecutive days of trekking, and exploring extreme landscapes with a mix of culture, wildlife, and volcanic scenery, this is the perfect adventure for you.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



'Rapa Nui' - Easter Island Active Extension

Easter Island, known as Rapa Nui to its native inhabitants, is a vast National Park filled with diverse archaeological treasures. The island is famed for its iconic "moai" statues–towering stone heads that serve as enduring remnants of its rich and ancient culture. This heritage continues to thrive through the island's vibrant traditions and rituals.

During this program, you'll explore Rano Raraku, the island's most renowned site where many of the moai were skilfully carved. You'll marvel at the stunning petroglyphs of Orongo, trek up Maunga Terevaka–the highest volcano on Rapa Nui–and venture into two captivating caves that showcase the island's unique history and natural beauty.

4 days from
¤9,223,372,036,854,776,000 per person

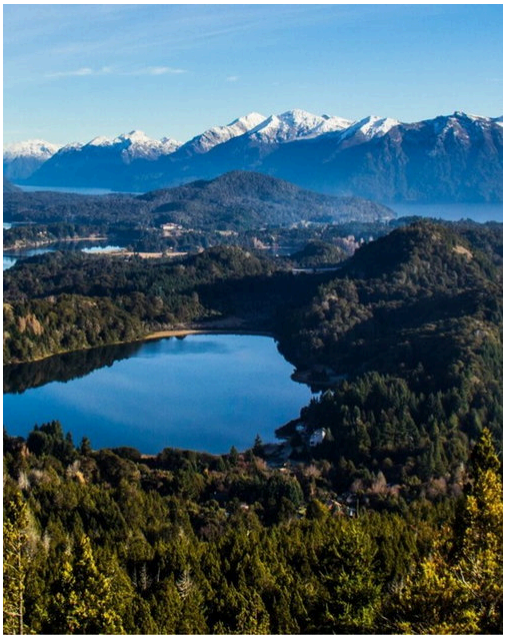


Tierra del Fuego "Land of Fire"

Tierra del Fuego or "Land of Fire" is a breath taking island divided between Argentina and Chile and a must see destination for anyone travelling to Patagonia.

KE's excellent extension explores this beautiful part of the world with inflatable canoes, boat and on foot. Containing one of the most famous stretches of water in the world - The Beagle Channel you will motor and paddle along wonderful waterways, hike secret trails, visit the famed Gable Island with its beaver dams, look for exciting birdlife including seals and meet the penguins on Martillo Island! Staying where the Andes meet the ocean, Ushuaia is the world's most southern town and the perfect place to enjoy, pre- or post-trek.

4 days from
¤9,223,372,036,854,776,000 per person



Patagonia Lake District Extension

A four-day immersion into Argentina's Lake District, where turquoise waters, alpine forests and Andean panoramas set the stage for soft adventure. The program combines guided outdoor activities with free time to explore the town at your own pace.

Highlights include a full-day hike in Llao-Llao Municipal Park with views of Nahuel Huapi and Moreno Lakes, as well as a kayaking and trekking experience at Lake Mascardi. Private services and English-speaking guides provide flexibility and comfort throughout the journey, while centrally located accommodations allow easy access to Bariloche's main attractions.

Ideal for travelers seeking light adventure and scenic landscapes, this extension offers a well-balanced introduction to Patagonia's Lake District.

4 days from
¤9,223,372,036,854,776,000 per person



Patagonia El Chalten Extension

El Chaltén is a top-rated hiking destination in Argentina. This charming little village sits at the foot of Mt. Fitz Roy, surrounded by glaciers, lakes, rivers and forests. With endless options for exploration, we have hand-picked two of the best day walks from this hiker's paradise.

We first hike to Laguna de los Tres with magnificent views of the formidable Mt. Fitz Roy - one of the most impressive vistas in all of Patagonia. Our second day walk takes us through forests and canyons on our way to Laguna Torre, again providing incredible views of the rocky high peaks of Patagonia's Southern Ice Field. From Laguna Torre we have views of the stunning Cerro Torre, once thought to be the hardest mountain to climb in the world. After 3 nights to explore the food and delights of El Chaltén we transfer back to El Calafate.

This extension fits in perfectly, post-tour, with KE's Patagonia Paine Circuit and is a wonderful way to see the very best of this magnificent area.



El Calafate and Perito Moreno Glacier

Set in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Los Glaciares National Park, Perito Moreno Glacier is a "must-see" for any Patagonia traveller!

Starting in El Calafate, we transfer to Los Glaciares National Park where we explore the walkways and viewpoints that give us a unique panorama of the 5km ice wall at the head of the glacier. As an active glacier we may see dramatic icefalls as the ice carves off and plummets into Lago Argentino (Argentina's biggest lake). After exploring on foot, we take to the water on our Nautical Safari Tour. Here we cruise across Lake Rico, passing between icebergs that have calved off the glacier. As we reach 'Icebergs Channel', at a safe distance, we sail down the headwall of the glacier, allowing for spectacular close-up views of nature at work!

This extension fits in perfectly, pre-tour, with KE's Patagonia Paine Circuit (PPC) and is a wonderful way to see this impressive natural wonder.

Holiday Information

What's Included

- An experienced English-speaking guide
- Group airport transfers on arrival and departure
- 8 nights hotel in San Pendro De Atacama
- 2 nights camping with full camping equipment including sleeping bag and mat provided
- Meals as decribed in the Meal Plan
- Night-time Astronomy tour at Observatory including transfers, entrance and snack
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- National Parks & Reserve Entrance fees

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for trek staff
- Visa fees if necessary
- Calama Airport transfers (other than group transfers)
- Departure tax (if applicable)
- Some meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in San Pedro.

There will be a single group transfer from/to the airport in Calama to the group accommodation in San Pedro.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 6 lunches and 3 dinners are included in the holiday price. We have included the Welcome dinner on your first evening and the 2 dinners whilst camping. When staying in San Pedro, with access to a wide choice of dining options and budgets, it makes sense to leave the choice to you for the lunches and evening meals that are not included. You should allow approximately $25 to $30 per meal.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

In San Pedro de Atacama there is a wide range of restaurants and bars serving a mix of local and international cuisine. On trek, varied packed lunches will be supplied. Evening meals will be plentiful and will be a delicious mixture of local and international-style, from ingredients purchased in Chile and cooked for us by professional cooks. The Empanada shop in San Pedro is an absolute must... a perfect delicious lunch for just a few dollars.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 8 nights at a pleasant hotel on the outskirts of San Pedro de Atacama, a wonderful laid-back town with a stunning backdrop and relaxed feel. The hotel with it's authentic character blends seemlessly into the surrounding landscape where you can enjoy the outdoor pool, terrace and garden. Rooms are allocated on a twin sharing basis and feature private bathrooms and free wifi. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost.

We will also spend 2 nights camping in the Atacama desert at Yerbas Buenos Campsite. Full camping equipment including 4 season 2/3 man tents for max of 2 people, sleeping bags appropriate for the climate and mattresses are provided. The site has bathrooms and a dining area ensuring adequate sanitary management and more comfortable conditions. You will just need to carry your daypack with items you need during the day. You will pack a bag for items you need for the camp and this will be transported by vehicle to the campsite. We will need to check out of the rooms for the 2 nights camping and your main baggage will be kept in storage at the hotel.

Additional hotel nights in San Pedro de Atacama are available pre and post trip. For hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website. Hotels are subject to availability and prices may vary.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be accompanied throughout the holiday by an experienced, English speaking local leader and guides.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude. Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

We estimate that $400 will cover all of your expenditures whilst in Chile, including non included meals, soft drinks, tips for local staff and any airport taxes. If you intend to purchase expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly. Credit cards can be useful here. The Chilean unit of currency is the Peso. We recommend that you carry your money in the form of US dollars currency as it will not be possible to exchange traveller's cheques. There a a number of ATMs in San Pedro but we would recommend that you obtain cash using your credit/debit card at the cash machine in the airports at either Santiago or Calama. Visa credit cards are widely accepted in Chile.

Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying ‘thank you’ to your local guides and crew. They do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. For your trek crews we recommend that you give a tip if you feel that their services have met your satisfaction. As a rough guide we suggest you allow a total of $100-$150 for tipping your crew.

Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft bag such as the KE kit bag and a daypack. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline. Whilst camping, your main baggage will be stored at the hotel as we will need to check out of our rooms for the 2 nights. You will need to pack a small bag with items you need for the camp and these will be transported by vehicle to the campsite. You will just need to carry a day pack with the items you need for a full days hike.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the ‘Dates and Prices’ table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

Flight payment

The dates shown are for the LAND ONLY itinerary, joining in San Pedro. For clients making their own flight arrangements, El Loa Airport, Calama, is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements & transfers', and 'Flights' sections in the trip dossier for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the trip is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Visa Chile

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. USA passport holders will be issued with a tourist card on arrival.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking or climbing trip getting some additional exercise. Our treks can be physically demanding, but more as a result of altitude and terrain than distances walked. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime. Running and swimming are good for developing aerobic fitness and better stamina. You should gradually increase your exercise leading up to departure, and in the month before setting off, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country.

Climate

The Atacama has a climate characterised by blue skies and mild temperatures throughout the year. At average altitudes of around 2,500 metres, temperatures range from 28°C / 82°F during the day to 0°C / 32°F at night. Higher, on the altiplano, at altitudes above 4,000 metres, average daytime temperatures range from 10°C / 50°F down to minus 10°C / plus 14°F. We can expect little, if anything, in the way of precipitation.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Chile & Easter Island - Lonely Planet.
- The Rough Guide to Chile.
- Chile & Easter Island - DK Eyewitness Travel Guide.
- Travels in a Thin Country - Sarah Wheeler.
- The Motorcycle Diaries - Ernesto "Che" Guevara.
- The House of the Spirits - Isabel Allende.

Maps

San Pedro de Atacama Region 1:350,000/1:50,000

San Pedro de Atacama Region at 1:350,000/1:50,000 in a series of contoured, GPS compatible trekking and exploration maps at various scales form Trekkingchile. The maps are annotated with tourist information and most titles include a street plan of the region`s main town. Many are illustrated with drawings of local fauna or flora.

Private Groups Information

Make this KE Adventure holiday your own!

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Would you prefer to travel with just friends and/or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local walking, biking or mountaineering club?

It's really easy to make a trip your own. Simply select from our full range of adventure holidays and choose the dates that work for you and your group.

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities and clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. Please note when packing you need to be prepared for extreme desert conditions and cold temperatures at higher altitudes, especially on the ascent of Lascar and at night whilst camping.

You should bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Walking sandals (TEVAs) or old trainers for use at river crossings
- Socks
- Trekking trousers and shorts
- Waterproof overtrousers / jacket
- Down / thermal jacket (for the ascent of Lascar and camp)
- Underwear
- Thermal baselayers (shirts / leggings as it can be cold at night)
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Scarf or buff
- Sunglasses
- Good quality thermal gloves or mittens
- Daypack 30 to 40 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters (band-aids) and blister treatment, insect repellent and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep trek bag contents dry)
- Small padlock (to lock your main trek bag)

The following items are optional:

- Trekking poles (highly recommended)
- Trainers
- Travel clothes
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Equipment provided for the camp:

- Sleeping bag (appropriate to the climate)
- Sleeping mattress

Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Land Only Information

The dates shown are for the LAND ONLY itinerary, joining in San Pedro. A single transfer from / to Calma Airport is provided.

Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London (Heathrow) to Calama, via Santiago with Iberia & LATAM. Outbound flights will depart the UK in the evening, arriving the following day (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart Calama airport in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the morning of the following day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

While many holidays visit the Atacama as part of a wider Chile itinerary, KE is the only UK tour operator offering a dedicated 8-day trekking journey through this extraordinary desert. With expert local guides, carefully planned acclimatisation, unforgettable nights beneath some of the world's clearest skies and an ascent of Chile's most active volcano, Láscar, this itinerary lets you experience the Atacama in far greater depth than other tours.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 11/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change