

ASTRONOMY PROGRAM – MARCH 2017
(9 DAYS / 08 NIGHTS)
Arrive in Santiago March 18th,
Departure from USA will be March 17th

March 18th (Saturday), 2017 - Santiago

Arrive in Santiago and transfer from SCL Apt to your hotel.

Evening reception at the hotel to get acquainted with your fellow astronomers

Hotel Galerías 4* (Standard rooms ABB)

March 19th (Sunday), 2017 - Santiago

In the morning enjoy a Half Day City tour of Santiago

Chile's capital Santiago is one of the most modern and safest large cities in Latin America. It is known worldwide for its continuous development and its economic, political, and social stability. We will visit Santiago's civic center, where we will encounter Chile's historical, architectural, and cultural heritage. We will see distinguished museums, buildings, ancient churches, squares, and parks. Among them, we will visit the metropolitan cathedral, the Precolumbian Art Museum, the Plaza de Armas (main-square), the Palacio de la Moneda (the Mint Palace), the Stock Exchange, the Court House, the Forest Park, the ENTEL Tower, the Casa Colorada Museum, and the Club Hipico (Riding Club).

Another important cultural area is the Bellas Artes neighborhood, where cafés and restaurants are mixed with theaters, museums, and bookstores. We will observe large historical houses and impressive buildings of important architectural value. Here we will see the Palacio de Bellas Artes which houses the Museo Nacional de la Especialidad. We will also visit the Bohemian Bellavista neighborhood. This vast area combines the most varied costumes and handicraft trade with restaurants, art galleries, theaters, and jewelry stores. The Cerro San Cristóbal Metropolitan Park offers one of the best panoramic views of the city. The poet Pablo Neruda built one of his homes here, and today it's a museum. Finally, we will visit the exquisite neighborhoods of Las Condes, Vitacura, and Santa María de Manquehue.

In the evening, visit to OAN (National Astronomy Observatory)

We will setup a visit to the Observatory during the evening. (Great view of the city of Santiago along with some antique telescopes). Dinner that evening on the Observatory grounds with a view overlooking the city of Santiago followed by an astronomy talk.

Hotel Galerías 4* (Standard rooms ABB)

March 20th (Monday), 2017 – Santiago / La Serena

Transfer from our hotel in Santiago to the SCL airport.

Fly to La Serena and transfer from the LSC Apt to our hotel in La Serena.

Walking city tour La Serena and Coquimbo

Evening excursion to Observatory Collowara

La Serena was founded in 1544 to facilitate maritime and terrestrial communications with Peru. The city was destroyed by native peoples (Diaguitas) and re-founded in 1549 by Francisco de

Aguirre. In downtown, the architecture has colonial style, special laws allows the conservation of the buildings and churches, which are National Monuments.

Night visit to Observatory Collowara

Touristic Observatory Collowara, located in Cerro El Churqui, away 5 kilometers from Andacollo, and 59 kilometers southeast of the city of La Serena. It was inaugurated on June 25, 2004. It is a scientific, tourism and education center, which has a telescope of the highest quality that you can appreciate the full dimension space. Facilities include the projection room, entrance hall, access for disabled people and three direct observation decks.

Hotel Francisco de Aguirre 4* (Standard rooms ABB)

March 21st (Tuesday), 2017 – La Serena / Vicuña

In the morning, visit to Observatory La Silla, located in La Higuera, at 159km to the north from La Serena. Cerro La Silla presents a clear sky 300 nights per year. There are 14 telescopes. The observatory is operating with an international organization, composed by eight European countries.

Transfer to Vicuña.

During the night, visit to Observatory Cerro Mamalluca.

Located at 9 kilometers, northeast of Vicuña, Mamalluca is a project that began in 1995, and the facility has several telescopes, including a 12-inch telescope, which has CCD detectors for astrophotography, as well as computer equipment for the reduction and transfer of the observed data.

Accommodations at Hotel Vicuña 3 or similar* (Standard rooms ABB)

March 22nd (Wednesday), 2017 – Vicuña

Full day excursion - Observatory Cerro Tololo

Observatory Cerro Tololo is located inside the Elqui Valley, at 80 kilometers so east of La Serena, at Elqui Province at an elevation above 7,000 feet. CTIO is unaffected by light pollution, and it enjoys a transparent atmosphere and proximity to the desert. These characteristics combine to create one of the best places in the world for astronomical observations. This observatory has specialized telescopes and instruments that facilitate advanced scientific research. CTIO has 7 giant telescopes, including the 4-meter Blanco Telescope, which has been operating since 1976. All of the telescopes are equipped with cutting-edge cameras, spectrometers, and photometers, which are used by astronomers for scientific research.

Box Lunch on board, continue to Vicuña.

Snack at a local restaurant in Vicuña.

Night visit to Observatory El Pangue

Located 18km. south of Vicuña, approximately, Observatory El Pangue takes his name of the area where it is, Hacienda El Pangue. Equipment: Meade T630 25 "Newtonian, Dobson type mount, manual, Meade LX200R 16" Schmidt-Cassegrain computerized mount, and Orion Sky Quest 12 "Dobson type mount, manual.

Accommodations at Hotel Vicuña 3 or similar* (Standard rooms ABB)

March 23rd (Thursday) 2017 - Vicuña / San Pedro de Atacama

In the morning visit to GOSCh, Gran Observatorio Solar de Chile, located near Vicuña. This is the first urban observatory in Chile with astrophotography services. It has 2 12 inch telescopes.

Transfer from there to the La Serena Airport to fly to Calama.

Arrival in Calama and then transfer to the Hotel Casa Don Tomas.
On the way we will enjoy a late dinner at a local restaurant.

San Pedro is considered the archaeological capital of the country due to its privileged geographical environment surroundings by landscapes. San Pedro de Atacama is located 6,600 feet above sea level. The town is the center of the Indian culture of the Atacama. The Padre Le Peige museum has about 4,000 rakes, innumerable mummies, weapons and pottery in exposition.

Hotel Casa Don Tomas 4* (Standard rooms ABB)

March 24th (Friday) 2017 - San Pedro de Atacama

Afternoon visit to Observatory ALMA

ALMA hosts guided visits for groups from schools, universities, institutes and related scientific organizations. The visits include a tour of the Operations Support Facility (OSF), the camp where ALMA personnel work and where visitors can observe antenna maintenance, the control room, laboratories. For safety reasons, operations on the Chajnantor Plateau (the Array Operations Site, or AOS, where the antennas are located) are not open to visitors, due to the location at 5,000 meters above sea level.

Hotel Casa Don Tomas 4* (Standard rooms ABB)

March 25th (Saturday) 2017 - San Pedro de Atacama

Visit to Geysers El Tatio & Machuca

Relive together the ancestral ritual of waiting of the sunrise. Very early in the morning we will go less than 100 kilometers from San Pedro de Atacama into the Andes mountain range. There you will participate in one of the most astonishing phenomenon produced by nature, see contrasting colors produced by the steam columns in the highest geothermal field in the world. Take the most impressive photographs while walking across the tracks over the geothermal field. Here you will have the unique opportunity to swim in The Tatio spring waters, rich in minerals. On our return we will go next to the imposing Andes mountain range, and participate in the adventure of observing native plants and animals in their natural habitat, all this with an incomparable volcanic background in one of the most pristine places in the world. After visiting El Tatio, departure to Machuca, a small village with an antique church located near Tatio. In the afternoon, excursion to Valley of the Moon and Valley of Mars, a salt mountain range, formed by successive folding's from the bottom of an ancient lake. After a soft trekking we'll arrive to the top of a great dune. There, we'll be able to appreciate the sunset and the changes of colors on the mountains.

Nighttime observation at Solor Ayllu observing site

Hotel Casa Don Tomas 4* (Standard rooms ABB)

March 26th (Sunday) 2017 - San Pedro de Atacama

Transfer from San Pedro de Atacama to Calama Airport and then fly back to Santiago. There we will venture off airport during our layovers and have a leisurely lunch in a local vineyard. From there we will transfer back to the airport so you can make your late connection flight home.

Program includes:

- Local English speaking guide.
- Arrival and departure transfers in a private coach with local guide.
- Private coach and guide for touring days.
- Meals as mentioned (ABB = American breakfast buffet).
- Entrances fees to museums and nacional reserves.
- Cocktails and beverages as mentioned in the itinerary.
- Mineral water and coffee during excursions.
- Excursions and transfers as mentioned.
- Transfers and excursions in bus pullman.
- Private services.
- Accommodations as mentioned (depending on providers availability at the time of bookings, if not, a similar hotel will be booked).

Program does NOT include:

- International airfare to and from Santiago
- Passport & Visa fees
- Travel insurance (highly recommended)
- Airport transfers if not arriving or departing with the group
- Beverages unless otherwise noted
- Room outside of normal check-in/check-out times
- Rooms for extra nights, before or after the dates of the group.
- Optional excursions or pre and post trips
- Tips and gratuities
- Personal expenses and anything not listed in the included list

ELEVATIONS:

- Collowara: 1,300 meters
- Tololo: 2,200 meters
- El Pangué: 1,500 meters
- La Silla: 2,400 meters
- Mamalluca: 1,200 meters
- San Pedro de Atacama: 2,407 meters
- Atacama Geysers day trip: 4,320
- ALMA: Operations Base Visitor Center – 2,900 meters