

La Paz to Salta: Cycling the Salt Flats



Pre-Summit Adventure Offer

\$1750 USD per person, 3 hosted* and 8 non-hosted spaces available

**We have a strong preference for at least one media (writer, or editor) among the 3 hosted delegates.*



[La Paz to Salta: Cycling the Salt Flats - Photos from the route](#)

[Route details for South American Epic - Cycling the Salt Flats](#)

A True Challenge in an Other-Worldly Place

From the capital of Bolivia, cycle over a thousand kilometers (700 miles) across Salar de Uyuni, the famed Bolivian Salt Flats. Arrive to ATWS like no other delegate – by bicycle, from another country – having accomplished a true challenge alongside the adventure seekers on the South American Epic. This other-worldly adventure is not a luxury experience. This is a real physical and mental challenge that will be sure to reward those that immerse themselves in the experience. An extreme adventure in an extreme setting.



Highlights

- Salar de Uyuni – world’s largest salt flat
- ‘The Great Train Graveyard’ in Uyuni
- Andean flamingoes, llamas, and other wildlife
- Tunupa and Cerro Choroluque Volcanoes
- Descent from the Altiplano into Argentina
- Joining the brave cyclists of the South American Epic

What is the South American Epic? Why Should You Join?



[video](#) produced/edited by ATTA member Gregg Bleakney/[WhereNext](#)

This **13-day adventure** is part of the 13,500 km (8,300 mile), five and a half month [South American Epic](#) – the world’s longest supported group cycling expedition. Join the rugged amateur cyclists already on route from Cartagena, Colombia as they cross the Bolivian Salt Flats from La Paz to Salta. Then wish them luck as they pedal further south on their way to Ushuaia, Argentina at the southern tip on the continent.



About this Pre-Summit Adventure

- \$1750 USD/person (registration fee of \$150 USD is waived for delegates)
- 3 hosted delegate spots, as well as up to 8 non-hosted delegates
- This trip is rated **(5) Challenging** – must be very physically fit, expedition cycling experience preferred; up to 10+ hours activity/day; difficult terrain, climbing, inclement weather (cold) and altitude that should be expected.

- PSA starts October 3 in La Paz (arrive earlier for altitude acclimatization)
- Cycling starts from La Paz, October 4
- Ends in Salta, Argentina October 15
- 13 total days, 10 cycling days covering 1,150 km (715 miles)
- 9,855 m (32,333') of climbing, 10,415 m (34,170') descending
- 1 rest day in Uyuni, Bolivia
- Vehicles will carry the baggage, and pick up tired, sick, or injured riders (as there is limited seating in support vehicles the expectation is that you will ride each day at least half the distance)
- Staff includes a tour leader that oversees logistics and share route details.
- There is a cook to prepare all camp meals
- Bike mechanic, and medic on staff and available at set hours each evening



The Experience

Salar de Uyuni – the Salt Flats of Bolivia. At 10,582 square kilometers, it is the largest salt flat in the world. Before making it this far south, however, you will cross the Altiplano, which despite being challenging (high winds and intense UV sun during the day combined with frigid cold nights), is also surprisingly beautiful. Long, straight roads are flanked by mountains, making for some incredible sunsets and gorgeous bush camps. Then we enter the salt flats. Here's how it was described by our communications director last year [for our blog](#):

“Vast and snow-white, it explodes into a wide-open sea of salt for as far as the eye can see, making for a surreal surface to ride a bike on. Aymara legend has it that Tunupa Volcano married nearby Kusku, who eventually ran away with Kusina. Grieving Tunupa started to cry while breast-feeding her son, her tears mixing with the milk and spilling out onto the dried-up lake to form the salt flat.”



A rest day in Uyuni will give the cyclists further opportunity to explore the Salar if they wish or the 'Great Train Graveyard.' Then is time to head out of the salt and head for Argentina. But it won't be before two of the most challenging stages of the tour – climbing, winds, cold nights and morning, and rough and deteriorating roads. Then the last few days as we drop down from Bolivian plateau we move into more moderate temperatures and have access to delicious Argentinian wine and cuisine.

Day to Day Itinerary

Day	Date	Stage	Start	Finish	Distance (km)	Climb (m)	Descend (m)
Monday	October 2, 2017	0	arrival to group's hotel				
Tuesday	October 3, 2017	1	prep in La Paz				
Wednesday	October 4, 2017	2	La Paz	Patacamaya	104	1350	1210
Thursday	October 5, 2017	3	Patacamaya	Oruro	115	700	790
Friday	October 6, 2017	4	Oruro	Challapata	132	530	530
Saturday	October 7, 2017	5	Challapata	Meteor Crater	106	980	980
Sunday	October 8, 2017	6	Meteor Crater	Conqueza	77	590	650
Monday	October 9, 2017	7	Conqueza	Uyuni	135	675	660
Tuesday	October 10, 2017	8	Rest day Uyuni				
Wednesday	October 11, 2017	9	Uyuni	Atocha	101	560	490
Thursday	October 12, 2017	10	Atocha	Salo	81	1960	2490
Friday	October 13, 2017	11	Salo	La Quiaca	118	1560	1315
Saturday	October 14, 2017	12	La Quiaca	Humahuaca	154	950	1300
Sunday	October 15, 2017	13	Transfer to Salta		250		

Oct. 3 is the first day of your PSA

Adjusting to the Altitude and Getting to our Hostel in La Paz

La Paz, Bolivia is situated at a very high altitude – some parts of the city are at over 4100 m above sea level – so please arrive at least 3 to 4 days in advance to allow your body to adjust.

Because delegates will be arriving on different flights and different days for their acclimatization, we will provide advice and support for your airport transfer, and hotel accommodations, but please understand these are your responsibility to arrange and are at your own expense before the PSA starts.

October 2, Day 0 – Arrival to the Group’s Hostel

If you have arrived early (which we highly recommend to acclimatize to the altitude) then tonight you can transfer to the group’s hostel where you will be paired with another cyclist in a double occupancy room. There are no planned activities today, and the PSA officially starts tomorrow.

October 3, Day 1 – Meeting the staff and cyclists

After your first night sleeping at altitude, you will get some breakfast and find our staff. The bike mechanic will be on hand to help re-assemble your bike, and the tour leader will orient you to the daily routines you can expect during the cycling days. It’s a relaxed informal day, and a chance to meet the other participants and staff and rest up for the big start tomorrow.

October 4, Day 2 – La Paz to Patacamaya

104 km

↑1350 m, ↓1210 m

We make our first pedal strokes leaving the hostel in La Paz. Our adventure starts with a ride out of La Paz in the early morning to beat the traffic. Your first challenge will be the first 13 km out of the city which is all uphill. After that it's a gentle grade the rest of the way but delegates are encouraged to consider only cycling the 2nd half today as they continue to acclimatize and find their cycling legs. We will be camping on a soccer field near the town of Patacamaya.



October 5, Day 3 – Patacamaya to Oruro

115 km

↑700 m, ↓790 m

This pleasant, scenic ride amongst rolling green hills dotted with several villages along the way will make you feel like the adventure has really begun as you cycle further and further away from civilization. Camping tonight and the following few is basic and temperatures drop significantly at night.

October 6, Day 4 – Oruro to Challapata

132 km

↑530 m, ↓530 m

Limited climbing today starting from busy town of Oruro. Camping near Challapata railway station tonight. Last full day on paved roads for a while.

October 7, Day 5 – Challapata to Meteor Crater

106 km

↑980 m, ↓980 m

There's a good chance as you are cycling today you will spot Andean flamingoes, llamas and other wildlife. The stage is mostly paved, except the final 15 km as we approach the salt flats. We are camping next to a meteor crater tonight.



October 8, Day 6 – Meteor Crater to Conqueza

77 km

↑590 m, ↓650 m

Change of scenery today as we enter the salt flats, with great views of Tupuna Volcano all day long.

October 9, Day 7 – Conqueza to Uyuni

135 km

↑675 m, ↓660 m

Deep in the salt flats navigation becomes challenging with your depth perception playing tricks on you. Stick to the tracks left by vehicles and heed the advice of your tour leader. Tonight we stay in a hotel in the town of Uyuni.



October 10, Day 8 – Rest Day Uyuni

We have a non-cycling day in Uyuni, and this is the last full cycling day in the salt flats so the rest day is a good opportunity for video and photography. This is your last night in a hotel bed for a few nights so enjoy it. Take time to explore *The Great Train Graveyard* - 'On the outskirts of a desert trading village high on the Andean plain, steel giants have been destroyed by salt winds' from [Atlas Obscura describing the scene](#)

October 11, Day 9 – Uyuni to Atocha

101 km

↑560 m, ↓490 m

Things start to get increasingly challenging for the second half of this adventure. Expect strong head winds, icy early morning temperatures, and deteriorating road conditions just to make it even more challenging. It would be fair to describe the conditions as harsh for today and tomorrow. Camping tonight at a local school.



October 12, Day 10 – Atocha to Salo

81 km

↑1960 m, ↓2490 m

This will prove to be one of the toughest stages on the adventure. Over 81 km you will climb almost 2000 m in total on challenging unpaved dirt roads. These are the stages you will remember. This is where the adventure gets real. Great views of Cerro Choroluque Volcano today.

October 13, Day 11 – Salo to La Quiaca

118 km

↑1560 m, ↓1315 m

This will be another challenging stage, with a lot of climbing. We cross into Argentina today, and get to treat ourselves to a shower and a room for the night at a small hotel, but it's clean, has Wi-Fi and a bar – everything a cyclist dreams of after a grueling couple days in the salt flats.



October 14, Day 12 – La Quiaca to Humahuaca

154 km

↑950 m, ↓1300 m

We really start to feel things changing....

“Cold Bolivian Andes melted into meandering rivers, twisting through red rocky corridors. The geography of Argentina was equally rivaled by its culture and cuisine. The distinct European influence of Argentina was pleasantly obvious as soon as we passed through the small frontier town of Chocaya.” [from our blog](#).

Combine all of that with another full day on paved roads, and more descending than climbing today – what a great way to finish up!

October 15, Day 13 – transfer to Salta

After packing up your tent for the last time, and having your final bowl of camp porridge, you will wave goodbye to your new cycling friends as they continue on their way down South America thru Salta and onwards towards the southern tip in Ushuaia. A vehicle will meet you at the campsite, and you and your gear will be transported to Salta and dropped at your respective hotels to rest and prepare yourself for ATWS.

What's Included

- 2 nights in double occupancy hostel room in La Paz (October 2 and 3 - last 2 nights before cycling starts)
- 3 nights in hotels, and 8 nights camping accommodations along the cycling route
- 4 meals each cycling day (camp breakfast, roadside lunch, post-ride soup, and camp dinner)
- Staff support – tour leader, bike mechanic, medic, and chef
- Vehicle support for baggage, and emergencies
- Transfer to Salta October 15

What's Not Included and What to Pack

- Transfer from the airport in La Paz
- Additional nights in La Paz as recommended to acclimatize
- Bicycle
- Camping gear
- Cycling gear (including colder weather gear)
- Meals in Uyuni on the rest day
- Gratuities for the support staff
- Flights to La Paz

Note – a complete packing list will be shared with those who register. [This is a general list](#) to give you an idea of common items that are needed on our cycling tours.

Price, Payment, and Number of Participants

\$1750 USD (includes waived registration fee of \$150). This is more than \$500 savings from the listed price. Note – this is a special rate only for the ATWS delegates. Please be aware that you are joining a group of cyclists who were not given this special pricing and so we ask that you keep this information private.

Payment will be made either by US cheque or by bank wire transfer. Banking details will be shared at time of registration. TDA Global Cycling is offering 3 hosted delegates*, as well as up to 8 non-hosted delegate spots.

**We have a strong preference for at least one media (writer, or editor) among the 3 hosted delegates.*



Registration and Preparing for the Adventure

Once you are confirmed you will need to register on our system. At this point you will get the same treatment as the other cyclists on the tour and expected to complete all the same pre-tour info and forms and read the corresponding bulletins that get sent to you in the months leading up to the tour. These bulletins are a great resource in preparing for this adventure.

Our staff are on hand to answer questions throughout your preparations for the tour to help feel fully prepared for the experience.

Cancellation

Cancellation of a booking must be provided by written notice to the TDA Global Cycling. If the cancellation is made 90 days or more before the start of the Tour, 90% of the Entry Fee payment will be refunded to the Rider. If the cancellation is made 30 days or more before the start of the Tour, 25% of the Entry Fee payment will be refunded to the Rider. If the cancellation is made less than 30 days before the start of the Tour there is no refund. Any refund amount will be based on the currency exchange rate at the time of the initial payment.

Riders can choose to “roll over” the Entry Fee payment to any other tour run by the Company as long as the tour starts within two years of the roll over request. If the rider chooses to roll over the entry fee 90 days or more before the start of the Tour 100% of the entry fee is rolled over. If the rider chooses to roll over the entry fee 30 days or more from the start of the Tour 50% of the Entry Fee is rolled over. Less than 30 days before the start of the Tour 25% of the entry fee can be rolled over. The Rider will be responsible to pay the registration fee for the new tour and the difference in price if there is an increase in the Entry Fee and will no longer be eligible for a refund. The Entry Fee is non-transferable as of start date of the Tour.



Who is TDA Global Cycling?

Cycling the Salt Flats and the South American Epic are organized and operated by TDA Global Cycling – leaders in long distance supported cycling expeditions. We are now operating on 6 continents and in over 60 countries. Our annual Cairo to Cape Town cycling expedition is celebrating its 15th consecutive year taking amateur cyclists across the entire African continent. Each year, through our TDA Foundation we donate bicycles to health care workers in East Africa who use the bicycles to be able to access patients in remote regions.

“leading long distance tour operator”

Newsweek

“TDA is the perfect Lonely Planet adventure”

Tony Wheeler, founder of Lonely Planet

“monstrous adventure that transports you– physically, mentally, and perhaps spiritually – to places you never thought possible”

Velo News

