



**Argentinian  
Explorer**

## **NORTHWEST ARGENTINA IN 12 DAYS**

**From Tucumán, passing by Tafi del Valle, Salta and Train to the Clouds, Jujuy and Iruya, Laguna de los Pozuelos, Casabindo and Barrancas until Salinas Grandes.**



**12 days - 11 nights**

- ✓ **Accommodation and breakfast- Double Room**
- ✓ **Transfer IN OUT APT/HTL/APT**
- ✓ **Regular and Private Tours with Spanish & English Guide.**
- ✓ **Permanent Coordination**

### **Itinerary**

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#### **Buenos Aires – Tucumán**

We will be transferred from Ministro Pistarini (Ezeiza) International Airport to Jorge Newbery Metropolitan local Airport (Aeroparque) in Buenos Aires city to take the flight to San Miguel de Tucumán city. Reception and transfer from Tucumán's Airport to the hotel.



#### **Tafi del Valle**

Breakfast in the hotel. We visit one of the special summer places of Tucumán where lies the remains of one of the most ancient precolombian cultures of the region. We leave from San Miguel de Tucumán by the south. Before reaching our destination we visit the Jesuit Ruins of San José Lules that date from 1670 and was the site of the Jesuits until they were thrown out a century later. We also pass by the locality of Famaillá which celebrates the National Fiesta of the Empanada, a famous Argentinean food. Continuing our journey we pass by Acheral and Santa Lucía and climb the slopes between the citrus and sugar plantations. Near to La Quebrada de los Sosa we begin the mountain way and encounter the vast vegetation classic of the Tucumán forests.

We observe places like El Indio, Fin del Mundo, la Heladera. During the climb the vegetation changes significantly. We cease to find the large trees and begin to encounter other species such as alisos, sauces and pines. We then arrive at the La Angostura dam, the door to the valley. We drive for 38 Km. along this beautiful valley beginning at Tafi del Valle, and after by La Banda, El Churqui, San Isidro, Rodeo Grande, Campo Carreras, La Quesería, El Rincón, Potrerillos, El Mollar and La Angostura.



#### **Archeological Ruins of Quilmes – El Cafayate**

Breakfast in the hotel. Crossing the Abra and on the way to Ampimpa we can observe the giant cactus to our sides. A natural balcony of the Yocavil or Santa María valleys affords a good view of the town, Amaicha del Valle at a few kilometers. In this town live a unique indigenous community



of the north east, the diaguista culture who make unique things and is a famous locality for wine in earthenware pots, alfajores, nougats and small cheeses. Furthermore we can visit and explore the pre-Columbian settlements of Fuerte Quemado and el Pucará de Loma Rica, remains that have been well conserved of this town with pebbled walls using a mortar of mud and filled with debris and there you can see some of the diverse elements that they use such as San Jose and San Maria urns and objects of bone and stone.

Also the Pucará de Los Cardones is an archeological site that is conserved naturally. Here we pass trails, rivers, gorges, the dam, amongst other attractive features that we meet. Crossing the river Yocavil we enter to the ruins of the Quilmes, the remains of the biggest pre-Columbian settlement in Argentina. When defeated by the Spanish, the residents were forced to walk thousands of kilometers to Buenos Aires, to a locality that now bears its name. We make a visit to the museum and later to the fortress constructed for this community. We pass El Bañado, Colalao del Valle and continue to the town Tolombón to enter to Cafayate. On the way the countryside changes from arid to vineyards, where we meet the Cafayate soils. We sleep in Cafayate.



#### **Calchaquí Valleys – through Cafayate**

Breakfast at the hotel. We will continue our journey from Cafayate, by visiting the Calchaquí Valleys. We will visit the Cathedral “Nuestra Señora del Rosario” which contrast with the multi – coloured hills in the background and then we will cover the most traditional wineries in this beautiful city between valleys and hills of an impressive green colour, which is the most important one in the Calchaquí Valleys because of its “torrontés” wines above all, an ideal place because of the temperature and humidity to the development of this kind of grape with a sweet and fruited taste, together with their goat cheese. The name of the city was given because of an old native settlement which means “Bury of sorrows or sadness” (Sepultura de las Penas). We will be pleased to taste some wineries´wines. We will continue to visit the Archaeological Museum, a place where there is a great quantity of objects which belonged to native villages. Many people have been investigating, making excavations, restorations and exhibitions about them.

We will be wondered as soon as we watch those rare and eye-catching shapes, going through Quebrada de las Conchas, where we will be able to see figures such as the Devil´s Throat (Garganta del Diablo), the Amphitheater (Anfiteatro) a wonderful place where we can perfectly hear the echo of any sound and it is here where many festivals take place, such as the folklore; another shapes are the Obelisk (Obelisco) which makes a lonely crag, the Castles (Castillos) of an intense red colour which reminds the castles in the medieval times, the Yesera with its light sandstone formations, the House of Parrots (Casa de los Loros) named like this because there are stone walls which are the habitat for great flock of parrots during the summer; the friar (Fraile), the toad (Sapo) and the impressive Devil´s Throat in Salta, shaped as a human trachea and also called like that because of its colour.

We will make a stop in Alemania, a lonely town, but we cannot miss the visit so we can admire its old country houses between green hills, the train station which doesn´t work anymore and now we can see the beautiful work of the craftsmen who invite us to bring a nice souvenir from this town. We will get ready to descend through the valleys. We will get to Dique Cabra Corral, next to Coronel Moldes, an ideal place to practise water sports, then we will go through some towns dedicated to the farming activities such as El Carril, where we will find many stock-tobacco companies and also fig tree, walnut tree and peach tree fields; La Merced, with its clean streets and green spaces which make it so picturesque, and Cerrillos. All these towns belong to Valle de Lerma, where there are treasures which come from mines that were found and they are hidden somewhere between the hills, according to local stories. We will continue to Salta city, going through impressive landscapes that change on every curve we make in wonderful colours like the reddish hills, ochre colour of the grass, grey stones and green cactus. Night in Salta.



### **Salta - City Tour**

Breakfast at the hotel. We will start our tour along the city from the nice 9 de Julio Square, so eye-catching because of its decorated coloured quarries and its fruited trees which leave a nice fragrance in the salteño air. From the square we will be able to have a first vision of its history and colonial past, as we will be surrounded by old buildings such as the Cabildo, the Cathedral, the Church of San Francisco, the Convent of San Bernardo de las Monjas Carmelitas, one of the oldest buildings in the city which was the entrance door to the convent and it is made of carob wood that was carved by the natives in 1762; its old houses complete the historical quarter, which are today very important monuments.

Then, we will go to the impressive and most recognised hill in the salteña city: Cerro San Bernardo. Before getting to it, we will tour along the streets, getting to Güemes monument, an argentinian general who is known because of its ideals of freedom, dispise to materialism and his love to his Motherland. We will get to San Martín Park where we will find the cable railway station, our means of transport to get to the hill so we can have an amazing panoramic of the city and its surroundings, with the hills at the background.

After the ascent, we will continue to a really charming place, which is chosen by many tourists because of its wonderful natural attractions and the different activities to do: the summer village of San Lorenzo, where we will find the Quebrada, an ideal place to spend the day at the edge of the river, listening its relaxing sounds. We will enjoy our way to it, as we will go through flowered Gardens, mansions and castles which are surrounded by small hills and where we can do (horse) riding, trekking and pic-nic. We will go back to the city, going through the Handmade Market (Mercado Artesanal) first, where we will be able to get some souvenirs from this beautiful city, such as silver and pottery pieces, rustic fabric of llama wool, craftwork in leather, among others.



### **Train to the Clouds**

Breakfast at the hotel. We will get ready to travel on the Train to the Clouds from the city of Salta to Viaducto La Polvorilla, the highest spot in the tour. As we do this crossing on the train, we will see some different towns, valleys, quebradas and stations, such as Cerrillos, Rosario de Lerma, Campo Quijano, where people say hello when the train makes the horn sound. We will arrive at El Alisal, a place named this way because of the landscape which shows us many aliso trees and it is the station where the train makes the first zigzag while it moves back to reach altitude.

We continue visiting some other towns like Chorrillos, Puerta Tastil, Incahuasi, Abra Muñaco, Los Patos, then we arrive at San Antonio de los Cobres, a centennial village which is located at the edge of the river with the same name and it offers many legends and natural resources, we will continue to Mina Concordia where we will ascend 4144 metres over the level of the sea, the place where the engine´s coach will remove to be put behind and we can come back to Salta city.

Our last spot in the tour on the Train to the Clouds is the Viaducto La Polvorilla where we will descend and we will be careful, as an example we will walk slowly because we will be at the highest point and the oxigen reduces itself, so we will be careful not to suffer from "apunarse" (get sick). In some stations, we will be able to get souvenirs that the craftsmen offer us, such as the vicuña poncho, among others.



### **Salta - Jujuy**

Breakfast in the hotel. We will leave from the city of Salta to San Salvador de Jujuy. In the afternoon we visit the historic remains of the town, including the San Francisco church, the Lavalle Museum, the Government House and the room of the flag. The Government House is a beautiful French style palace. We also pass the old railway station, the artisanal way and the residential



areas like the Perales and the old rough streets with large colonial houses and their typical windows and central patios with wells. We finish our excursion in Alto La Viña where we find the Jorge Pasquini López Archeological Museum which has a unique viewpoint where we can enjoy the marvelous landscape that this northern city has.



#### **Quebrada de Humahuaca from Jujuy**

Breakfast in the hotel. We leave from San Salvador de Jujuy in the northern direction to La Quebrada de Humahuaca, a national patrimonial and cultural humanity site. The entrance to La Quebrada is León and our journey runs alongside the Rio Grande (big river). On the way we pass the towns of Yala, Lozano, León, Tumbaya and Volcán. In the world famous picturesque town of Purmamarca we encounter the mountain of the seven colours. Here we go to the walk way of Los Colorados, the fair and the church.

Leaving Purmamarca we then go Maimará where we see the Cementerio de Altura (high cemetery) and the mountain Paleta del Pintor (painter's pallet). Following on our route goes by the historical monument of La Posta de Hornillos and arrives at Tilcara where we visit el Pucara. Our sleepover destination is Humahuaca where we also visit the Monument to the Heroes of Independence, the church with its cuzqueñas paintings and optionally can go to the Benediction of San Francisco Solano.



#### **Iruya - Humahuaca**

Breakfast in the hotel. In the morning we leave Humahuaca to go to Iruya, passing by the typical picturesque Jujuy towns of Iturbe, Chaupi Rodeo and Abra del Cóndor that is at 4000 metres. We then descend to 1200m over the next 19kms where we can observe the changes in colours that mother nature offers, passing from rustic green to a royal purple or violet. The road follows the river Colanzuli until we arrive at our destination Iruya, a beautiful town that seems to emerge from the mountain. Later we return to Humahuaca.



#### **Laguna de los Pozuelos, Casabindo, Barrancas, Salinas Grandes, Jujuy**

Breakfast in the hotel. We begin a full day in order to arrive to the north of Jujuy. We take the road to Abra Pampa where we divert to enter the Laguna de los Pozuelos. This lake is in the Puna Jujeña and stretches over 30,000 acres. It is a natural reservoir with innumerable birds and was added to list of world important wetlands during the Ramsar Convention. In this journey we can appreciate the "vicuñas and guanacos", animals of the region. La Puna is on a plateau at an altitude of 3,500m and it is unique with its desolate landscape, profound salt deposits, lakes and mountains which go together to form an unrepeatable and mysterious combination of the silence playing with the immense loneliness.

We leave la Laguna de los Pozuelos to go to Casabindo known for its solid and robust stone church and that is denominated the Church of La Puna. Inside we find the Virgen de la Asunción to whom they celebrate the 15th August. This is a popular festivity with dances of the Samilantes together with the famous 'Toreo de la Vicha', bullfight, where the object is to retrieve from the spears a belt containing silver money to offer to the Virgin.

The dance of the Samilantes is local to the 'puna jujeña' and has very old antecedents. The dance imitates the 'ñandú', a small ostrich.

We leave Casabindo to go to the region of Barrancas that is 42kms to the south and visit the town of Abdon Castro Tolay that is particularly interesting because of its archeological reserve of ancient stone carvings and paintings and pictography pre-Columbian. The stone art is engraved or painted



and can be seen in pure or mixed form. The major part of this art can be found in the caves and rock ceilings.

Our itinerary takes us to las Salinas Grandes (salt flats) that are over an expanse of 25,000 acres on the border between Jujuy and Salta. This depression produces an incandescent effect with the sun shining on the white salt surface. The salts have a volcanic origin and over 10 million years have suffered constant evaporation of salt waters that now result in a salt covering of more than 30cms. We then arrive to an altitude of 3,400 metres in central Puna and can see separately the Quebrada of Humahuaca and the hills of Chañi. We then return the 190kms to Jujuy.



#### **Jujuy - Buenos Aires**

Breakfast at the Hotel. Transfer to San Salvador de Jujuy Airport. Reception at Jorge Newbery Airport (Buenos Aires). Transfer to Ministro Pistarini (Ezeiza) International Airport.