

Uyuni, Bolivia

Meta description

With its otherworldly landscapes and expansive, brilliant-white salt flats, a trip to Bolivia's Uyuni is an experience that will stay with you forever.

Highlights

- Experience the eerie beauty of the Uyuni de Salar
- Visit the one of the unique salt hotels
- Tour the landscape in a 4x4
- Play with perspective and compose surreal photos

Single line for homepage

Dazzling white salt flats, ethereal landscapes and rare Andean wildlife, Uyuni is out of this world.

Body copy

The small, dusty town of Uyuni sits in the southeast of Bolivia's Altiplano, a high altitude plateau in the Andes. At first, there doesn't seem to be much happening in this colonial-era mining town, except a biting cold wind that can chill you to the bone. Yet thousands of visitors pass through each year, drawn here to witness one of the most bizarre and mesmerising landscapes in the world: the Salar de Uyuni.

Sitting at an altitude of 3,653m and spanning an area of over 12,000 square kilometres, the Salar de Uyuni is the world's largest salt flat. The legacy of a huge lake, Lago Tauca, that dried up thousands of years ago, it's a surreal, otherworldly environment.

During the dry season from May to November, the thick, crusty surface is hardened by the sun. Its salty topping dazzles an intense, bright, snow-like white, broken with geometric patterns that are random yet remarkably consistent. In the wet season between December and April, a thin layer of water covers the surface, reflecting the blue sky and the distant snow-capped mountains, which appear to float in the disappearing horizon.

The harsh beauty of the landscape is a photographer's dream. Over the years, a trend has developed, with people arming themselves with toy dinosaurs, action figurines and various culinary items, and using the expansive landscape to play with depth of field and perspective to compose amusing, surreal images.

Perhaps the best way to experience this vast, inhospitable landscape is by touring it in a 4x4 vehicle, an experience that can feel a little like you're floating on air. Along the way, stop off to explore one of the region's, built entirely from salt, or watching locals salt-mining at Colchani.

While the Salar de Uyuni is the main attraction, the surrounding landscape rewards exploration. Many people combine their trip here with a visit to the Reserva de Fauna Andina Eduardo Avaroa, 160km south, which also has an ethereal beauty. Here, high altitude desert is dotted with volcanic peaks, hissing geysers and strange rock formations, while two of the region's glacial lakes are stained bright red and vivid green thanks to their high mineral content. Wildlife lovers should keep their eyes peeled for rare Andean wildlife, including the Andean fox, herds of vicunas (small South American camelids), cute viscachas (members of the chinchilla family) and three species of flamingo.

Why we love it

Standing in the middle of the salt flats in rainy season with the distant mountains floating on the horizon is one of the most remarkable sights on Earth.