



ROUTE DETAILS

Northern Chile The Complete Route Experience



Day 1 — Santiago to Huentelauquén

Central valleys, mountain roads and the first signs of the North

The journey begins at BigTrail's headquarters in Santiago and quickly leaves the city behind, heading toward Putaendo through Chile's central agricultural valleys. From there, the route becomes quieter and more remote, crossing the dry interior landscapes of Caimanes and Illapel before reaching the Pacific coast at Huentelauquén.

- Riders can expect winding secondary roads, vineyard and orchard country, rocky hills and the gradual transition from Mediterranean vegetation to the semi-arid scenery of northern Chile. Temperatures are usually warm during the day, but the coastal air can become noticeably cooler toward the evening. Along the way, it is possible to see birds of prey, foxes and native scrubland fauna, although sightings are never guaranteed.

What to expect: Flowing pavement, changing landscapes, warm inland temperatures and a cooler coastal finish.

Day 2 — Huentelauquén to Pisco Elqui

From the Pacific coast into the Andes

- The route turns inland toward Ovalle and Río Hurtado, entering one of the most distinctive landscapes of the Norte Chico. Agricultural valleys, rocky mountains and isolated settlements gradually replace the coastal scenery. The crossing between Río Hurtado and Vicuña includes the trip's main gravel section: manageable on a Ténéré 700, but requiring more attention and a controlled pace. The reward is a remote passage through open mountain terrain before descending into the Elqui Valley. The final kilometers follow irrigated vineyards, pisco-producing estates and narrow green valleys surrounded by dry mountains. Pisco Elqui is known for exceptionally clear skies, pisco production and a desert climate with sunny days and much colder nights.

What to expect: One meaningful gravel section, bright sun, dry air and major temperature changes after sunset.

Day 3 — Pisco Elqui to Huasco

High desert valleys to the Pacific Ocean

- Leaving Pisco Elqui, the road climbs out of the green valley and enters increasingly open, mineral landscapes. The route continues north through Domeyko, El Morado and Sauce Pérez, crossing sparsely populated areas shaped by mining, wind and the scale of the Atacama Desert. This is one of the most remote-feeling days of the trip, with long visual horizons, very little shade and limited roadside services. The final section descends toward Huasco, where the desert abruptly meets the Pacific. Expect strong sunlight, dry conditions and potentially significant temperature variation between the interior and the coast. Guanacos, foxes and large birds may be seen in remote sectors, while the coastal approach can bring marine birds and occasionally sea mammals into view.

What to expect: Remote desert roads, large temperature contrasts, limited services and a dramatic arrival at the ocean.

Day 4 — Huasco to Copiapó via Bahía Inglesa

Desert coastline, white beaches and fresh seafood

- This day follows the Atacama coast north, combining desert scenery with some of Chile's most striking beaches. After leaving Huasco, the route passes through a landscape of dunes, cliffs and dry coastal plains before reaching Bahía Inglesa. Its turquoise water and pale sand create a powerful contrast with the surrounding desert, making it an ideal place for a long seafood lunch and relaxed stop. The final section continues inland toward Copiapó. Solar radiation is particularly strong in this region, so hydration, sunscreen and proper riding gear are essential. Bahía Inglesa is known for calm bays, white sand and a wide range of marine activities.

What to expect: Mostly easy pavement, intense sun, coastal winds, excellent seafood and a relaxed premium rhythm.

Day 5 — Copiapó Desert Loop

The full scale of the Atacama

- The final riding day explores the interior desert around Copiapó, using the city as a base and allowing the group to ride without luggage. The route enters wide-open terrain where colors shift between ochre, red, grey and black, with distant mountains and almost no vegetation. Depending on the final alignment, the day may include high desert roads, mining landscapes and remote viewpoints that reveal the immense scale of Atacama. Conditions can be hot and exposed during the day, with strong wind in open valleys and a rapid drop in temperature toward evening. Wildlife is sparse, which is part of the experience, although foxes, small reptiles and birds of prey may occasionally appear.

What to expect: A light-bike day, extreme openness, strong sun, wind exposure and one of the journey's most cinematic landscapes.