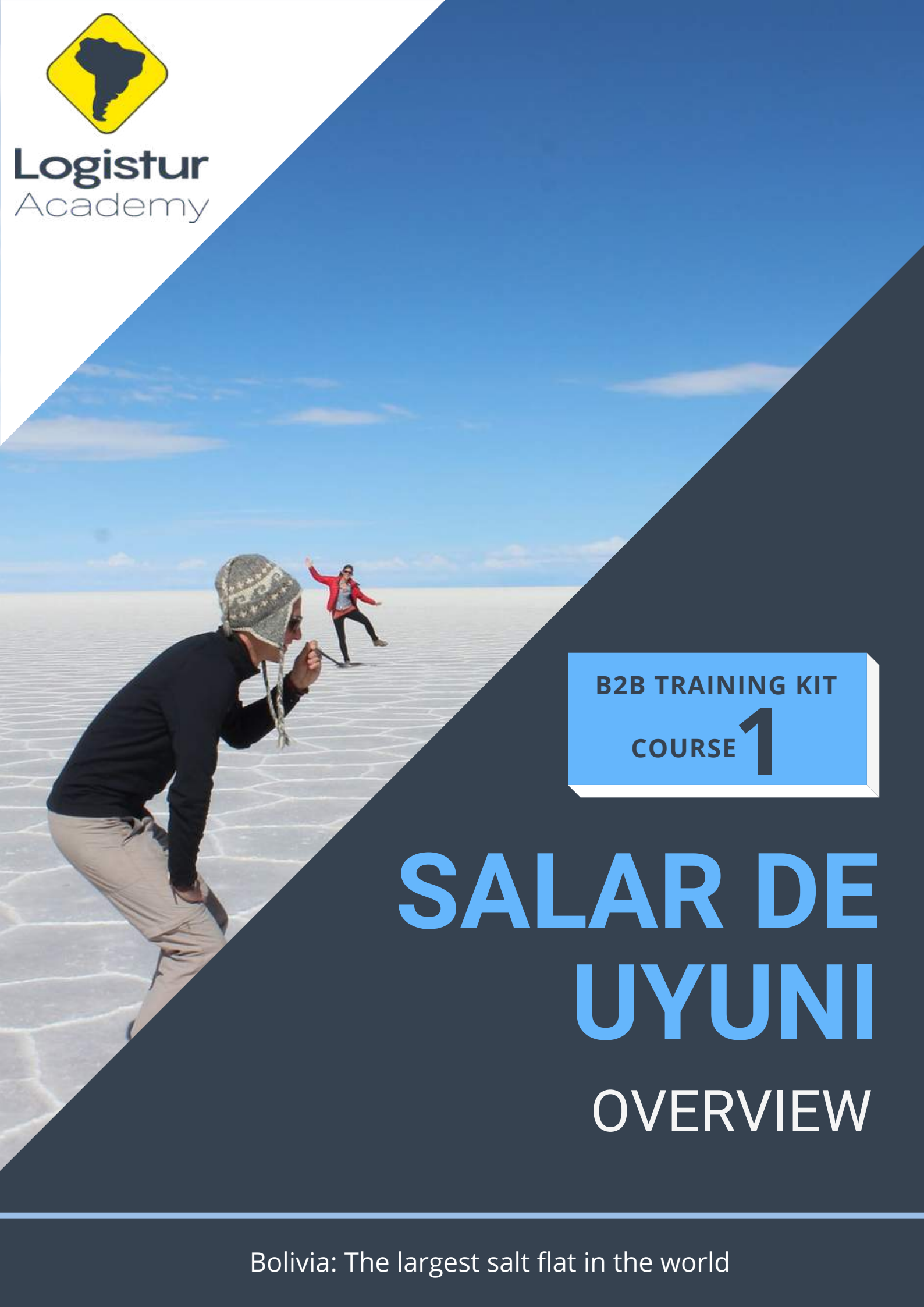




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B2B TRAINING KIT

COURSE 1

SALAR DE UYUNI

OVERVIEW

Bolivia: The largest salt flat in the world

Content

Everything you need to know about the Bolivian destination, that attracts thousands of visitors and should not be missing in the portfolio of your travel agency.

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Introduction

Bolivia is one of the most extraordinary travel destinations in the world, on one hand because of its ancient culture, on the other hand because of its unique landscapes. Often it is especially an excursion to the Uyuni's salar that first comes into the mind of the traveler. Therefore Uyuni is one of the most interesting tourist attractions for tour operators. If your travel agency wants to offer the wonders of South America, you should not ignore this destination.

In this **course 1 (Overview of Salar de Uyuni)** we will show you everything you and your team need to know about the Salar de Uyuni. The content is divided into several chapters dealing with history, economy, demography, geographical location, places of interest in the region and much more.

In [course 2 \(Salar de Uyuni itinerary planning\)](#) you will find recommendations for your guests' arrival in this destination, details of the main attractions, available types of excursions, possible problems and useful tips for the different programs.

Finally, in [Course 3 \(20 frequently asked questions about Salar de Uyuni\)](#) we will give you a short summary of the course. This will enable you to better respond to the questions and doubts of your clients who want to take a trip to this impressive place.

We hope you enjoy this training material, which our Logistur team has created with great commitment for you and your agency.





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Salar de Uyuni



Information that every tour operator needs to know.

The Formation of the Salt Desert

Some of your customers might ask how the salt pan was created in the first place. You can give them this little insight into the history:

The area of the Salar de Uyuni was twice drenched in brackish water (water with a salt content of 0.1% to 1%) thousands of years ago: the first time was about 40,000 years ago, when the area was covered by Lake Minchin of about 36,000 km² (8,896,000 acre). The second time about 12,000 years ago, when Lake Tauca formed. Each time the water of the lakes evaporated due to the lack of tributaries and the heat caused by volcanic activity. Over time, the lakes dried up, leaving only the salt behind and shaping the desert we know today. ([National Geographic en español, 2017](#))

Like almost everything concerning pre-Columbian America, there is a legend that serves as an alternative explanation for the formation of the Salar de Uyuni. This legend is about three mountains/volcanoes in the region: Kusina, Kusku and Tunupa. In Andean mythology they were considered giants. Kusku and Tunupa fell in love and got married. But soon Kusina came to fight the romance and conquered the heart of Kusku. The huge salt lake was created from the salty tears of Tunupa, who mourned the betrayal of Kusku.

Now it is up to you which of the two stories you want to tell your customers.

Geography

Uyuni, the city where the salar with the same name is found, has about 20,000 inhabitants. It belongs to the province Antonio Quijarro in the region of Potosi. The territory of Uyuni lies between 3,665 and 5,000 meters above sea level (*12,024 and 16,404 feet above sea level*), between the meridians 66o 15' to 67o 15' west longitude and 19o 20' to 21o 00' south latitude.



Natural Resources

Experts estimate that the Salar de Uyuni contains 10 billion tons of salt. Less than 25,000 tons are extracted annually to be marketed as table salt.

In addition, the Salar de Uyuni has one of the largest lithium reserves in the world and contains significant amounts of potassium, boron and magnesium.

In recent years, the government has invested in the extraction of lithium, which is an excellent energy conductor and can therefore be supplied to the technology industry, for example in mobile phone batteries. Despite the large mineral reserves, the region today lives mainly from tourism.

Language and currency

Since 2009, the Constitution recognizes 37 official languages, the majority of which are indigenous languages. However, the most commonly used are: Spanish (throughout the country), Aymara, Quechua and Guarani.

The official currency of the country is the Boliviano (BOB).

The Area of the Salar de Uyuni

The area of the Salar de Uyuni is 10,582 km² (2,615,000 acre) at an altitude of 3,660 metres above sea level (*12,024 feet above sea level*). These dimensions make the desert the only bright natural place that can be seen from space: It served as a reference for the Apollo 11 astronauts who landed on the moon in 1969. Since then, NASA has used the Salar de Uyuni to determine the position of its satellites.

El Salar de Uyuni has 33 "Islands", small headlands surrounded by salt. The most famous of them is the Incahuasi island or also called Isla de Los Cactus. There is an obligatory stop made on all jeep excursions, because there you can see the biodiversity of the region at close range. On the Incahuasi-island there is also a high view point from which one can see the whole salt desert 360°.

Tourist Attractions in the Region

The landscapes of the Salar de Uyuni and its surroundings are so magnificent that they always make it onto the lists of the most beautiful and unusual places in the world. This explains why millions of nature lovers have the desire to travel there. The demand is growing and growing: your agency should take advantage of this.



El Salar de Uyuni is not just what you see on the Internet in the numerous photos. In reality it is so much more: Imagine a huge salt sea reflecting the light of the sky and being surrounded by the Andes, volcanoes and colorful lakes. Your gaze is captivated by pink flamingos, which are very common in the region. The rainy season means that the salt pan is now a giant mirror.

Afterwards, explore the Andean communities and ancient traditions: an enriching experience.



The region offers the perfect potential to combine different destinations, for example with San Pedro de Atacama in northern Chile.

We now give you a short summary of the most important tourist attractions that you can offer your customers in Uyuni and the surrounding region of Lipez. The Lipez region is an addition for those who want to deepen their adventure and get to know other destinations on their journey. In our [second course](#) we will describe each attraction in more detail.

Places of Interest in the Salar de Uyuni

THE CITY OF UYUNI

Die Stadt Uyuni



A city that lives from tourism in the region. Here one finds the museum "Museo Arqueológico y Antropológico de los Andes Meridionales".

RAILWAY CEMETERY

The railway cemetery of Uyuni is considered the largest in the world and houses locomotives left behind in the desert.



ISLA INCAHUASI

Die Stadt Uyuni



Famous "salt island" with centuries-old cacti and a viewpoint from which the entire Salar de Uyuni can be observed 360°.

COLCHANI, THE "GATE TO SALT"

Colchani is a village in the department of Potosí and a typical town in the region, where workers extract salt from the Salar de Uyuni.



EXCURSIONS THROUGH THE SALAR

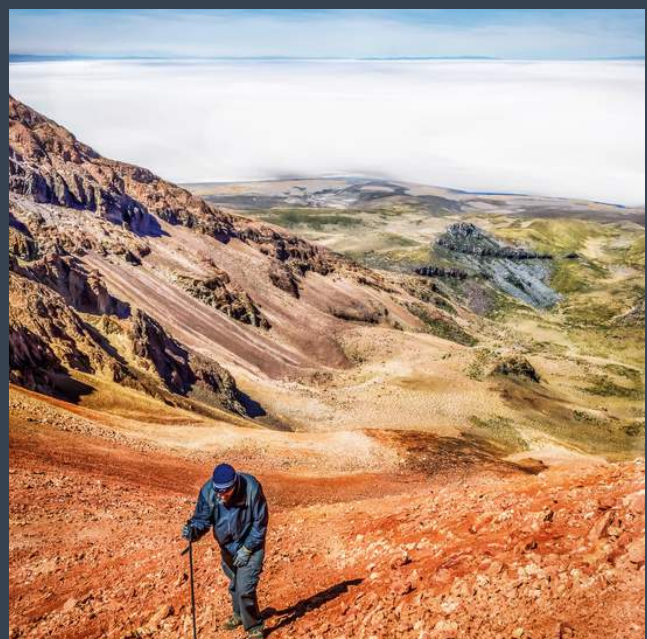
Die Stadt Uyuni



Jeep excursions through the salt desert. These can be done as a regular tour (6 people per vehicle) or as a private tour.

BESTEIGUNG DES VULKANS TUNUPA

For adventurers it is possible to make the ascent to the 1st viewpoint of the volcano (approx. 4,700 m / 15,420 ft) to enjoy a spectacular view of the Salar.



Places of Interest in the Lipez Region

LAGUNA COLORADA

Die Stadt Uyuni



An incredible red lagoon. The colour is caused by the predominant algae species and the high mineral content of the water.

LAGUNA VERDE

Depending on the strength of the wind and the sediments stirred up by it, the color of the lake changes between light turquoise and dark green.



SALVADOR DALÍ DESERT

Die Stadt Uyuni



A stone desert whose landscape reminds of the work of the Spanish surrealist painter Dalí.

GEYSERS AND HOT SPRINGS

The volcanic activity in El Salar de Uyuni forms warm thermal springs, which are ideal for revitalizing baths.



RESERVA NACIONAL EDUARDO AVAROA

Die Stadt Uyuni



It is the most visited national park in Bolivia and serves as a protection of lakes, volcanoes, geysers and much more.

Biodiversity

One of the great attractions of the Salar de Uyuni is its biodiversity. As in every desert there are only a few different species, but they are very interesting: When summer arrives at the beginning of December, the salar is home to the pink flamingos of South America. These beautiful birds migrate to the region at this time, as the rain slowly starts and the glaciers thaw. Shallow waters are created, in which the flamingos can be found.



In summer it is also possible to observe another 80 bird species, including Cornuta, Nandus and the Andean Goose. These birds also attract the beautiful Andean fox, the region's predator. In addition, travelers to the South LÍpez region may encounter the rodent Viscacha or the alpaca-like vicuña.



The salt desert of Uyuni is also home to huge cacti that grow about 1 centimeter (*0.4 inches*) per year. Many are over 10 meters (*32 feet*) high: so you can imagine how long they have been growing there. In addition, there are other bushes like Pilaya and Thola, which are used as fuel by the people of the region.





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Further Information



Below you will find important information and some tips to help your agency get to know the Salar de Uyuni destination better.

Vaccinations and Required Documents

It is important to inform your clients of the documents and vaccinations that the government requires for entry into Bolivia. EU citizens and North American citizens entering Bolivia as tourists do not need a visa for a stay of up to 90 days per calendar year. A passport is required for entry into Bolivia, which must be valid for at least another 6 months. The tourist permit is initially issued for 30 days and can be extended twice free of charge at the migration authorities for a further 30 days each time until 90 days are reached. Other restrictions apply when traveling with minors with Bolivian citizenship.

No compulsory vaccinations are required for direct entry from European or North American countries. However, upon arrival to Bolivia, Bolivian authorities will require proof of yellow fever vaccination to all travelers coming from a yellow fever area and all travelers who are visiting areas of high risk for yellow fever in the departments of Chuquisaca, La Paz, Cochabamba, Tarija, Santa Cruz, Beni and Pando.

For the latest information on vaccinations and documents, always check the official websites (e.g. Consulate of Bolivia) to be able to provide your customers with up-to-date information.

The Climate in the Uyuni Region

The climate in Salar de Uyuni is always cold at the end of the day and especially at night due to the altitude in the Andes, but be careful: at certain times of the day you can get sunburned very quickly. It is important to inform your clients in advance so that they are prepared for the trip. See below what the temperatures are like all year round:

June, July and August are the coldest months in the Salar de Uyuni. Temperatures can reach -15°C (5°F), with average temperatures ranging between 3°C and 4°C (37°F and 40°F). During this time rain is rather rare.

December, January, February and March are the months with the mildest temperatures. The lowest temperatures are between 5°C and 6°C (41°F and 43°F) and the highest can reach 21°C (70°F) between 12:00 and 16:00 o'clock. During these months is rainy season.

April, May, September, October and November are the months in the off-season when the minimum temperatures vary between 0°C and 4°C (32°F and 40°F) and the maximum temperatures between 18°C and 20°C (64°F and 68°F). During this period, rain is rare, although it can occur occasionally.

For travelers who want to combine their Salar de Uyuni trip with the Sud Lipez region, it is important to know that temperatures and altitude above sea level can be even more extreme. Therefore a good luggage planning is important.



High Season

In fact, there is no "better" or "worse" time to visit the Salar de Uyuni and the Lipez region. The temperatures between rain and drought vary greatly, as do the impressions of the region, but every moment has its own special beauty.

The high season at Salar de Uyuni starts at the beginning of each year and lasts until the end of March. It is the rainy season - large areas are covered with a thin layer of water that reflects the light and creates incredible optical effects: the salt pan transforms into a huge water mirror. During this time earth and sky merge in a unique way like nowhere else in the world, creating a true paradise for photography lovers. This phenomenon depends exclusively on the weather (rain), so its appearance can never be completely guaranteed.

However, this does not mean that your customers will not see a beautiful landscape in the remaining months. Regardless of the season, your clients will appreciate your trip to Salar de Uyuni in an amazing and surprising way. They may not see a mirror of water, but instead they can marvel at the dry, boundless salt desert: infinite white salt as far as the eye can see.



Travel Restrictions



Finally, it is important to inform your clients about the following restrictions for travel to El Salar de Uyuni:

- Not recommended for people with high blood pressure, heart failure, asthma or similar, because places with more than 4000 meters (*13,124 feet*) altitude are visited, which might be a health risk
- Travelers over 65 years of age are advised to consult their doctor for a recommendation for travel at altitudes above 4,000 m (*13,124 feet*)
- Pregnant women should always consult their doctor in advance
- Attention: some tour operators set a minimum and/or maximum age restriction and some might not allow travel for pregnant women





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Summary



Does your travel agency offer tours to South America? Then Salar de Uyuni should not be missing in your product portfolio. If we look at the number of tourists who travel there, we see that the quantity has increased dramatically in recent years: demand is growing and your agency should take advantage of this potential.

Offering travel for this destination, as for any other in South America, is not an easy task, but requires knowledge, flexibility, support and security. After all, the Salar de Uyuni is an adventurous destination in a remote high desert and sparsely populated region.

In order to offer a perfect and unforgettable tour through the Salar de Uyuni, the support of a team specialized in travel in the region is required. Do not let your agency fall into the hands of the big tour operators who offer mass tours. The special appeal of trips to Uyuni lies in the detail and the personal experience. In the end, your customers will appreciate that they did not travel in large groups with other travelers, but were able to gain individual and personal experience in this incredible place.

→ Please also read [course 2 "Travel planning Salar de Uyuni"](#). In this course we will show you everything you need to know to be able to offer this destination to your customers: Details of the places of interest, available services, accommodation, challenges, ideas for tours and much more.

→ Did you find this e-book interesting? Then you might also be interested in our [other courses](#).



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About Logistur DMC



Contact

info@logistur.travel

www.logistur.travel

Whatsapp +56 9 3388 0095



Logistur plans, implements and carries out journeys to various destinations throughout South America, according to the specific requirements of each of our partner agencies.

We have a team of experts and the necessary technology to facilitate the operational work of your agency. Put everything in our hands and you will be able to focus on the most important thing: the satisfaction of your customers and your sales.

Do you know someone for whom this e-book might be useful?

We invite you to recommend the Logistur Academy to others and to [share this link](#).