



ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF AMERICA TOURS

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CHILE

FROM EASTER ISLAND TO THE ATACAMA DESERT

June 11-26, 2027 (16 days | 16 guests)
with prehistory expert Paul G. Bahn



Rano Raraku, Rapa Nui

Archaeology-focused tours for the curious to the connoisseur.

Archaeological Institute of America Lecturer and Host



Dr. Paul G. Bahn is a leading archaeological writer, translator, and broadcaster in the field of archaeology. He is a Contributing Editor of the AIA's *Archaeology* magazine, and has written extensively on prehistoric art, including the books *Everyday Life in the Ice Age* (co-written with Elle Clifford), *Images of the Ice*

Age, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Prehistoric Art*, and *Cave Art: A Guide to the Decorated Ice Age Caves of Europe*. Dr. Bahn has authored and/or edited many books on more general archaeological subjects as well, including *The Cambridge World Prehistory*, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Archaeology*, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*, *Archaeology: The Essential Guide to Our Human Past*, and *The Penguin Archaeology Guide*. Born in Kingston-upon-Hull, Britain, he holds a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, a Corresponding Member of the AIA, and a member of numerous international professional organizations, including the Prehistoric Society and the Société Préhistorique Française.

Dr. Bahn is a gifted and popular lecturer who regularly leads AIA tours to study the prehistory of western Europe, but his research and lecturing on archaeological study tours have taken him to important archaeological sites around the world in Europe, North America, Africa, and Polynesia. In addition to his expertise in the prehistoric art of Europe, he is also a leading specialist on Rapa Nui (Easter Island), which he first visited in 1985 and to which he has been leading tours for decades (often on cruises and private jet trips), frequently combined with the astonishing archaeology of Chile's Atacama Desert. Dr. Bahn has been featured in numerous TV documentaries on the island, starting with a two-part *Nova* in 1989. For many years he was on the editorial board of the *Rapa Nui Journal*, the important publication of the Easter Island Foundation. Together with the late palynologist Professor John Flenley, Dr. Bahn published *Easter Island, Earth Island* in 1992—now in its 5th edition (Rowman & Littlefield, and Rapa Nui Press), it is the only volume that covers all aspects of the island's prehistory. It also formed the basis for the relevant section of Jared Diamond's 2005 book *Collapse*, as well as for the 1994 movie *Rapa Nui* by Kevin Reynolds and Kevin Costner.

Join an expert-led journey around Easter Island (Rapa Nui) and through northern Chile to explore Polynesian and pre-Columbian archaeology and history, guided by **renowned prehistorian and longtime AIA tour leader Paul Bahn**. Marvel at some of the most remarkable reminders of the local ancient cultures—such as **moai** (monumental statues) and **geoglyphs** (figures etched into or built on the Earth's surface)—in person, with expert insights that bring their contexts to life.

We will mull over the organization, engineering, artistry, and transportation methods involved in the production of the famous *moai*. And as we view the wide variety of geoglyphs scattered across the landscape of northern Chile, we will consider how they reflect ancient peoples' mobility via caravan routes and exchange networks, ceremony or ritual, and/or communication as route markers and visual expressions of long-distance social interactions across vast desert. Along the way, we will also learn about such significant modern concerns as archaeological and historic preservation, environmental recovery, and the reconnection of Rapa Nui with the wider Polynesian world. With all logistics managed by a **dedicated tour manager**, you are free to focus fully on exploration and learning.

Highlights:

- Spend four nights on **Rapa Nui**, seeing not only many *moai* and *ahu* (ceremonial platforms) but also **Hanga Roa**, the island's only urban settlement; **Tahai Ceremonial Complex**, one of the island's most important sites; **Ahu Akivi**, whose seven *moai* are unique in that they are inland and face the ocean; **Anakena Beach**, said to be where Polynesians first set foot on Rapa Nui; and **Papa Vaka**, whose marine petroglyphs are typical rock art of the northern coast.
- Spend five nights in the **Atacama Desert** area, viewing a variety of geoglyphs such as those in the **Lluta Valley**, known as the best-preserved in the region; **Chiza**, where some of its hundreds of figures reach up to 300 feet in size; the **Atacama Giant**, which is the world's largest prehistoric, anthropomorphic geoglyph; and **Pintados**, where more than 350 figures are spread over nearly 2.5 miles.
- Enjoy a tour and lunch at **Santa Rita Winery**, ranked "best winery in the world" by Forbes, plus visit the interesting Andean Museum on the winery's property.
- Learn about the ancient Chinchorro culture, known for its very early, sophisticated mummification process, at sites such as the **Colón 10 Museum**, where 32 mummies may be viewed with their burial goods *in situ*.
- Visit **Valparaíso**, Chile's unofficial cultural capital: a bohemian harbor town filled with faded mansions, cobblestone streets, and lively street art.

This exclusive, small-group tour is **limited to just 16 participants**. Contact us to reserve your space on this unique program.





IN-PROGRAM FLIGHTS



ITINERARY

(B)= Breakfast, (L)= Lunch, (D)= Dinner

Friday, June 11, 2027: Depart home

Saturday, June 12: Arrive Santiago, Chile | Welcome lunch | Santiago: Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art

Arrive at Santiago's Arturo Merino Benítez International Airport (SCL), where you will be met and transferred as a group (time TBD) to our hotel for an early check in. After a welcome lunch, we visit the Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art, whose collections introduce major Andean traditions, such as the Chinchorro culture's early, sophisticated mummification process, and will provide us with a broad South American archaeological framework for our upcoming site visits. Dinner is at leisure. *Two nights at the 5-star [Hotel Magnolia Santiago](#).* (L)

Sunday, June 13: Viña del Mar: Fonck Museum | Valparaíso | Santiago

After breakfast, we drive to Viña del Mar to visit the Fonck Museum, an archaeology and history museum with exhibits on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) and indigenous Chilean cultures. The museum provides an introduction to what we will see on Rapa Nui, and allows for a critical discussion of archaeological collections, museum interpretation, cultural heritage, and repatriation before our departure to the island. After lunch, we take a short drive to Valparaíso, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the "jewel of the Pacific Ocean." It is Chile's unofficial cultural capital—home to eclectic architecture, multi-colored houses, and a lively street art scene. We return to Santiago, where we gather for dinner. (B,L,D)

Monday, June 14: Fly to Rapa Nui (Easter Island) | Hanga Roa: Walking tour

Early this morning we transfer to the airport for our flight to Rapa Nui. Upon arrival, we are transferred to our hotel to settle in. Gather for a walking tour of Hanga Roa village, the only urban settlement on the island. More than 90% of the population lives in the village, which is located between the volcanoes Rano Kau and Maunga Terevaka. *Four nights at the 3-star [Hotel Taha Tai](#).* (B,L,D)



Papa Vaka, Rapa Nui



Orongo, Rapa Nui

The AIA & the AIA Tours Program

The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) is the oldest and largest archaeological organization in North America. The AIA seeks to educate people of all ages about the significance of archaeological discovery. For more than a century the AIA has been dedicated to the encouragement and support of archaeological research and publication, and to the protection of the world's archaeological resources and cultural heritage. By traveling on an AIA Tour you directly support the AIA while personally gaining the benefit of the AIA's network of scholars and worldwide contacts.

Tuesday, June 15: Rapa Nui: Tahai Ceremonial Complex, Center for Asia-Pasifika/ Rapa Nui-Chile Studies, Ahu Akivi | Hanga Roa

After breakfast, we visit the Tahai Ceremonial Complex, one of Rapa Nui's most important archaeological sites. This restored complex features ceremonial platforms (*ahu*), a traditional boat ramp, and several *moai* (megalithic statues often placed on *ahu*). After lunch, we visit Dr. Sonia Haoa Cardinali's new research center: the Center for Asia-Pasifika/Rapa Nui-Chile Studies. Dr. Haoa Cardinali is a Rapanui archaeologist renowned for her work preserving and studying the cultural heritage of Rapa Nui. The center focuses on archaeological conservation and the indigenous heritage of Rapa Nui within the greater Asian-Pacific context. Next, we visit Ahu Akivi, the site of seven restored *moai*. They are significant because they are the only *moai* built inland rather than along the coast, and are the only *moai* that face the ocean. They are located on the highest point of the island, on the side of the Maunga Terevaka volcano. Return to our hotel and gather this evening for dinner. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, June 16: Rapa Nui: Hanga Te'e, Rano Raraku Volcano, Ahu Tongariki, Papa Vaka, Puna Pau | Hanga Roa

This morning we begin our day with a visit to Hanga Te'e, home to reconstructed, traditional, boat-shaped houses and stone chicken shelters that help us to understand the everyday life of the island's early inhabitants. Next, we visit the Rano Raraku quarry, on the slope of an extinct volcanic crater, where the majority of the *moai* were carved. Here, hundreds of sculptures can be viewed in different stages of production. After lunch, we visit Ahu Tongariki, the largest and most impressive *ahu* on Rapa Nui, with 15 restored *moai* standing side by side. Next, we visit Papa Vaka, with marine petroglyphs (carvings or inscriptions on rocks)—in this case of fish, turtles, a canoe, and more—that are typical of the rock art of the north coast of Rapa Nui. We conclude our day with a visit to Puna Pau, a volcanic quarry from which was extracted the source of the reddish, cylindrical topknots (*pukao*) that were found on some of the *moai*. Return to our hotel and gather this evening for dinner. (B,L,D)

Thursday, June 17: Rapa Nui: Anakena Beach, Vinapu, Orongo | Hanga Roa

Today we visit Anakena Beach, a white coral sand beach known as the cradle of history and culture of Rapa Nui, as it is said to be the place where Polynesians first set foot on the island, led by King Hotu Matu'a. Archaeological excavations here have uncovered some of the island's earliest evidence of human occupation, such as Ahu Ature Huki (with one *moai*) and Ahu Nau Nau (with seven *moai*). After lunch and a short drive we visit Vinapu, an archaeological complex with three *ahu*. The *ahu* construction here is different here than anywhere else on Rapa Nui, as the massive stones are very smooth, regularly shaped, and fit together perfectly, very similar to Inca stone construction. Next, we visit Orongo, a spectacular ceremonial village built on the rim of the Rano Kau volcano crater. The walls of the more than 50 stone houses are flat stone slabs, and their roofs are earth-covered arches, such that they appear semi-subterranean. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Tangata Manu (Birdman cult) was centered here and people of the time left behind petroglyphs between the top of the cliff and the edge of the crater. We return to Hanga Roa and enjoy an evening walk through the village before dinner. (B,L,D)

Friday, June 18: Rapa Nui: AM at leisure | Fly to Santiago

This morning, enjoy free time to relax before our flight to Santiago. Upon a late arrival in Santiago, we check-in to our hotel that is conveniently located at the airport. *Overnight at the 4-star [Holiday Inn Santiago – Airport Terminal](#) hotel.* (B)

Saturday, June 19: Santiago: Santa Rita Winery, Museo Andino | Fly to Arica

This morning we check out of our hotel and enjoy a visit to Santa Rita Winery, which Forbes said was ranked the best winery in the world. After a tour and lunch, we visit the Museo Andino (Andean Museum), located on the grounds of the winery. The museum houses a collection of more than 3,000 archaeological and ethnographic pre-Columbian artifacts. This evening we take a flight to Arica where, upon arrival, we are transferred to our hotel. *Two nights at the 5-star [Antay Hotel & Spa](#).* (B,L)

Sunday, June 20: Arica: City center tour, Colón 10 Museum, San Miguel de Azapa Archaeological Museum | Azapa Valley geoglyphs | Lluta Valley geoglyphs | Arica

After breakfast, we take a tour of Arica's historic city center before we visit the Colón 10 Museum, an archaeological museum founded on the site of the mass burial of 32 Chinchorro mummies. The mummies can be viewed *in situ* through glass, as they were found, with their burial goods. Next, we visit the San Miguel de Azapa Archaeological Museum, which houses a vast collection from 7000 B.C. to the Spanish invasion, plus an excellent exhibit of Chinchorro mummies. On our way to lunch, we stop to view the Azapa Valley geoglyphs (figures etched on the Earth by removing darker topsoil to expose the lighter surface underneath, or by accumulating material on the surface, or by a combination of both). These pre-Columbian geoglyphs depict stylized humans, camelids, and reptiles. After lunch, we view the Lluta Valley geoglyphs, the best-preserved geoglyphs in the region, which include a frog, an eagle, llamas, and humans. Before dinner, we attend a special lecture by Bernardo Arriaza, a Chilean physical anthropologist. (B,L,D)



Chinchorro mummies, San Miguel de Azapa Archaeological Museum

Monday, June 21: Chinchorro Culture commemorative site | Chiza geoglyphs | Tiliviche | Ariqueña | Atacama Giant geoglyph | Pica

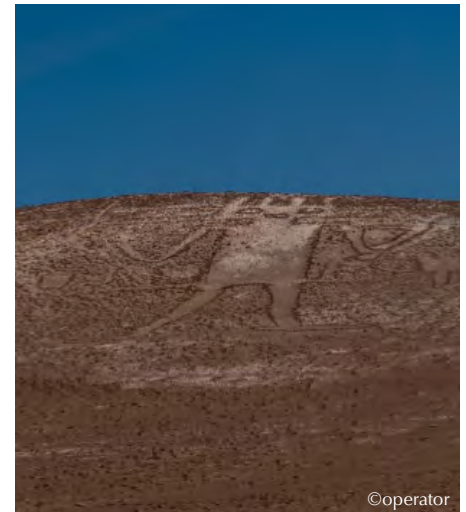
After checking out of our hotel, we begin our journey south through the Atacama Desert, stopping first at the Chinchorro Culture commemorative site, which honors the ancient Chinchorro people—marine hunter-gatherers who thrived in the arid Atacama Desert from around 5450 B.C. to 890 B.C. As we continue our travels, we view the Chiza geoglyphs, featuring hundreds of figures, some reaching up to 300 feet in size. Drive onward to Tiliviche, a historic hamlet and oasis famous for its geoglyphs of a caravan of llamas; and Ariqueña, an archaeological site known for its nearly 1.25 miles of canyon walls with more than 3,000 petroglyphs of animals and humans. After lunch, we see the Atacama Giant geoglyph (Gigante de Atacama), the world's largest prehistoric, anthropomorphic geoglyph. Continue on to Pica and check-in to our hotel. Gather for dinner. *Two nights at the 4-star [Caja Los Andes hotel](#).* (B,L,D)



Lluta Valley

Tuesday, June 22: Humberstone | Pintados geoglyphs | Pica

This morning, we set out to visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Humberstone Saltpeter Works, once a bustling settlement during Chile's golden age of nitrate, but today a "ghost town." For over 60 years, beginning in 1880, thousands of "pampinos" lived and worked here in this inhospitable desert environment to produce the fertilizer sodium nitrate that would transform agriculture in North and South America and in Europe. After lunch, we view the Pintados geoglyphs—one of northern Chile's largest and most concentrated collections of geoglyphs, with more than 350 figures spread over nearly 2.5 miles. This evening we gather for dinner. (B,L,D)



Atacama Giant geoglyph

Wednesday, June 23: Chug-Chug geoglyphs | Yervas Buenas petroglyphs | San Pedro de Atacama

This morning we travel to San Pedro de Atacama, approximately a 5.5-hour drive, stopping along the way to view the Chug-Chug geoglyphs and Yervas Buenas petroglyphs. A boxed lunch will be provided. The geoglyphs of Chug-Chug are a series of more than 500 geoglyphs of geometric and zoomorphic figures, some of which date back as early as 1000 B.C. The Yervas Buenas petroglyphs, carved thousands of years ago by pre-Columbian people, include a variety of llamas as well as flamingos, predatory animals, and a monkey. After we arrive in San Pedro de Atacama and check-in to our hotel, we gather for dinner. *Three nights at the 3-star [Hotel Kimal](#).* (B,L,D)

Thursday, June 24: San Pedro de Atacama: AM at leisure; PM Tulo

After a relaxing morning at leisure and an independent lunch, we set out to visit Tulo, an archaeological site of a former village complex consisting of numerous circular, adobe structures surrounded by a perimeter wall, that was believed to be abandoned around A.D. 300. Return to our hotel and gather for dinner this evening. (B,D)



Chinchorro Culture commemorative site



Valparaíso

What to Expect



ACTIVE: Must be able to walk three or more miles per day on mostly uneven terrain, and up and down inclines and steps.

This program involves extensive walking, often on uneven terrain or up and down stairs that may be steep and without handrails. All participants are expected to be physically active and not be an impediment to others on excursions, to enjoy traveling as part of a group, and to be ready to experience cultural differences. Participants who are not able to walk or stand unassisted for extended periods are kindly advised not to join this tour. All participants will be required to follow safety/sanitization protocols set forth by Sponsors/Operator, local staff, and host country laws. Any participant showing signs of illness will be asked to wear a mask while in close proximity to others. If the tour manager decides that a participant cannot visit a site safely or in a timely manner, their judgment will be final. Where possible, an alternate activity may be suggested; additional costs may apply. If you have any questions about your ability to participate, we suggest that you visit your personal physician with this brochure in hand, and discuss whether or not the program is appropriate for you. June is considered an autumn month in Chile, and we can expect moderate daytime temperatures at the time of our visit. While in Santiago, average daytime temperatures will be in the high 50s with nighttime temperatures dipping into the mid-40s F. Once we move out of Santiago, we can expect higher temperatures reaching into the 70s during the day and dropping to the mid-60s at night. While in Rapa Nui, participants should be prepared for rain showers. Although rare, when it rains it can be quite heavy. *Complete pre-departure details will be sent to participants.*

Friday, June 25: Toconao | Quebrada de Jere | Salar de Atacama | Valle de la Luna | San Pedro de Atacama | Farewell dinner

This morning we visit Toconao, a village dating back more than 12,000 years; and Quebrada de Jere, a ravine located just outside of the village and an oasis where fruits and vegetables are grown. Next, we drive to Salar de Atacama, the largest salt flat in Chile, and most notable for its flamingo reserve. We finish the day in Valle de la Luna (Valley of the Moon), a valley carved by wind and water which created various stone and sand formations that look somewhat similar to the surface of the moon. Return to our hotel in San Pedro de Atacama and gather this evening for our farewell dinner. (B,L,D)

Saturday, June 26: Piedra de la Coca | Fly home

On our last morning together, we visit the remote archaeological site of Piedra de la Coca, famous for ancient petroglyphs dating from A.D. 1000 to 1540. After lunch, we transfer to El Loa Airport in Calama to take a group flight to Santiago's Arturo Merino Benítez International Airport (SCL), for connections to independent flights homeward. (B,L)



Valle de la Luna, Atacama Desert



Tulor archaeological site



To reserve your space online
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Anakena Beach, Rapa Nui

Tour Prices Per Person (14 Nights)

Double Occupancy (14-16 participants)	Early Booking Savings of \$500 per person until December 15, 2026	\$12,295.....	After December 15, 2026 call for availability	\$12,795
Double Occupancy (10-13 participants)		\$12,795.....		\$13,295

Single Supplement \$1,295

*Single room supplement will be charged when requested or required (limited availability).
With fewer than 10 participants, a small group surcharge may be added.*

Prices Include:

- Leadership of **AIA lecturer/host Paul Bahn**, a professional **tour manager, and guides**
- **Fourteen nights' accommodations** as outlined in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; thirteen lunches; and eleven dinners with house wine, mineral water, and coffee, including a welcome lunch and farewell dinner
- **Arrival and departure airport transfers**
- **All entrance fees** to sites included in the itinerary
- Surface transportation via **air-conditioned motorcoach** with bottled water provided
- Four in-program flights
- Local taxes and service charges
- **All gratuities** to the tour manager, guides, drivers, waitstaff for included meals, and hotel staff
- Handling of one piece of luggage per person
- Comprehensive **pre-departure information**, including what to pack and a suggested reading/media guide

Flights & Transfers

Airfare from/to home is not included. Arrival airport transfers from Arturo Merino Benítez International Airport (SCL) and a group transfer to El Loa Airport in Calama for departure are included. All in-program group flights are included in the tour prices and will be booked for you (flight costs subject to change until ticketed). Baggage restrictions will apply and guidelines sent to confirmed participants. Once you have received your final payment invoice, you should book your flights from/to home. If you are considering booking non-refundable airline tickets before this time, please contact our office first. Your flight itinerary must be provided to our office prior to departure. *We do not accept any liability for cancellation penalties related to domestic or international airline tickets.*

Prices Do Not Include: Airfare from/to home; passport and visa fees; all airport fees and departure taxes; independent arrival/departure transfers; meals or beverages other than indicated; gratuities for porters; excess baggage charges; personal, baggage, and trip cancellation insurance; all items of a personal nature such as medical expenses, laundry, taxi, room service, telephone/fax/Wi-Fi charges; optional excursions or deviations from scheduled tour and other items not listed as included.

Payments: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour and is payable by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, or ACH transfer. Final payment is due February 11, 2027 and can be made by ACH transfer, or by credit card which is subject to a processing fee. By submitting your deposit you are bound by the terms and conditions delineated throughout this brochure or elsewhere published.

Participant Cancellation Fees: All requests by participants for cancellations must be received in writing by AIA Tours. The following cancellation terms will apply based on when the cancellation is received:

- On or before December 13, 2026: Deposit is refunded less a cancellation fee of \$500 per person.
- December 14, 2026 – February 10, 2027: Forfeit the full deposit of \$1,500 per person.
- February 11 – March 7, 2027: Cancellation fee equal to 50% of the tour cost.
- On or after March 8, 2027: No refund.

For this and other reasons, participants are strongly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance. Information will be provided with confirmation of receipt of your deposit.

Note: Prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect at the time of publication and are subject to change prior to departure. Substantial changes in tariffs, exchange rates, the price of fuel, services, and labor may increase the cost of arrangements significantly, and we reserve the right to alter our prices.

Prices, itinerary, accommodations, and leader are subject to change. Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate. It is understood that refunds cannot be made to participants who do not complete the tour for whatever reason.

Due to space limitations, this is abbreviated information. Complete terms and conditions will be sent upon confirmation or upon request, and can be viewed online at www.aiatours.org.

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For questions, and to reserve your space, please contact AIA Tours at:

800-748-6262 | Toll: 603-756-2884 | aia@studytours.org | www.aiatours.org

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Ahu Tongariki, Rapa Nui

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Lluta Valley

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Cooperator