

Salar de Arizaro

Location: Argentina

Salar de Arizaro is a large salt flat of the Andes in north-western Argentina. It is located between the villages of Tolar Grande and Caipe and near Mina La Casualidad, in Los Andes Department, Salta Province. Located in the central-western area of the Puna de Atacama, it covers an area of 1,600 km². Per extension, the Salar de Arizaro is the 6th largest salt flat in the World and the 2nd largest in Argentina after the Salinas Grandes. The salar area is mined for metallic and non-metallic resources, as it is rich in salt, marble, iron, copper and onyx. The nearest salt flats are the ones of Antofalla, Hombre Muerto (both in north of Catamarca Province), Pocitos (in the east) and the Salinas Grandes of Jujuy and Salta provinces. The Salar de Arizaro is crossed in the middle by the Salta–Antofagasta railway and by the Provincial Route 27 (part of the former RN 59). A particular characteristic of it is a conical hill named Cerro Cono (or Cono de Arita), a sandstone-formation. The Cono de Arita is at the southern end of the Salar de Arizaro, which more than 3,690 meters above sea level. This salt flat is the largest in Argentina and the third in the world, after Uyuni in Bolivia, and Atacama in Chile. The name of

the salar means “roost of the vulture” in the Kunza or Atacameña language and it is due to the condors that flew over the area when the cattle were transferred on foot to Chile by this route, it was a long journey that the inhabitants made to be able to sell them. Another name used to refer to this salt flat in Quechua was ‘hurtful footprints’ due to the sharp salt and the peaks that form on the surface.