

Hi everyone !

We hope you are all full well and in good form.

On our side, we are doing very well after 1 month of adventures in Bolivia.

But do you know where Bolivia is and do you know its flag?

As soon as we arrived here, we took advantage of a bike break to do ... guess what? The ascent of a summit at 19,974ft, the Huyana potosi!



It is an ascent that is done in two days, with a guide and few equipment (crampons, ice axes, ropes ...). The first day we start with a relatively easy climb of 2-3 hours in a rocky path with little snow. We arrive at a refuge at 16,404ft altitude.



This is where we spend the night ... finally part of the night because we wake up at midnight to attack the last part of the climb that will bring us to the summit at 19,974ft.





Well equipped against the cold (here it is 14°F) we begin the climb at 1am, lit by our headlamps, crampons to the feet and roped to avoid falls in the crevices around us.



But why climb in the middle of the night? Just to come down from the top in the early morning before the heat can melt the snow, which can cause avalanches.

After a few hours, Kalima has difficulty breathing and needs to stop every 2 minutes to catch her breath. We all wonder if she will be able to reach the summit because there is still 2-3 hours of climbing and she suffers from the altitude.



We continue step by step. Kalima does not want to go down again until she gets to the top and shows a lot of courage to finally see the summit at the same time as the sunrise.



The show is breathtaking (this is the case to say) and there are only a few meters to finally be almost on the roof of the world at over 19,974ft altitude. We are on the crest and there is little room to stand, it is not the moment to fall!





10 minutes to enjoy this incredible view and it's time to start the descent before the avalanche risks are too big.







This is the first time we have climbed so high. In Europe the highest peak, Mont Blanc is 15,778ft. We exceeded it by 4196ft! We arrive in La Paz tired but with images full in our head and in the camera. We go to bed in the middle of the afternoon and sleep a good two hours to recover a little.

The rest of our journey will take us to the salt desert of Uyuni but before we have to cycle through Chile and follow the road Vigognes wilderness with very few villages and access to water. It's time to buy lot of provisions for the days to come, cut off from the world.



To cross the border from Bolivia to Chile, it is forbidden to take fresh products such as vegetables, fruits or fresh eggs. So we have to cook our eggs and carry only pasta, rice, canned sauces and bread under vacuum.





We are traveling this time with Julie, a friend of Kalima from France, who came to pedal with us two weeks. But that's not all, because on the way we find Thorve (a German we met in Peru at Lake Titicaca) and Agnes (a French who travels with him) and two days later Emile (a Swedish crossed in Cuzco) and Nico (a Swiss crossed in Cuzco too). The world of bicycle travelers is small and we often come across the road again. So here we are 7 cyclists for these few days to Uyuni!



This road is beautiful and takes us through a landscape of volcanoes, hot springs and salars, populated by vicuñas and flamingos.



Hot spring where we camped after a hot bath at 104°F!

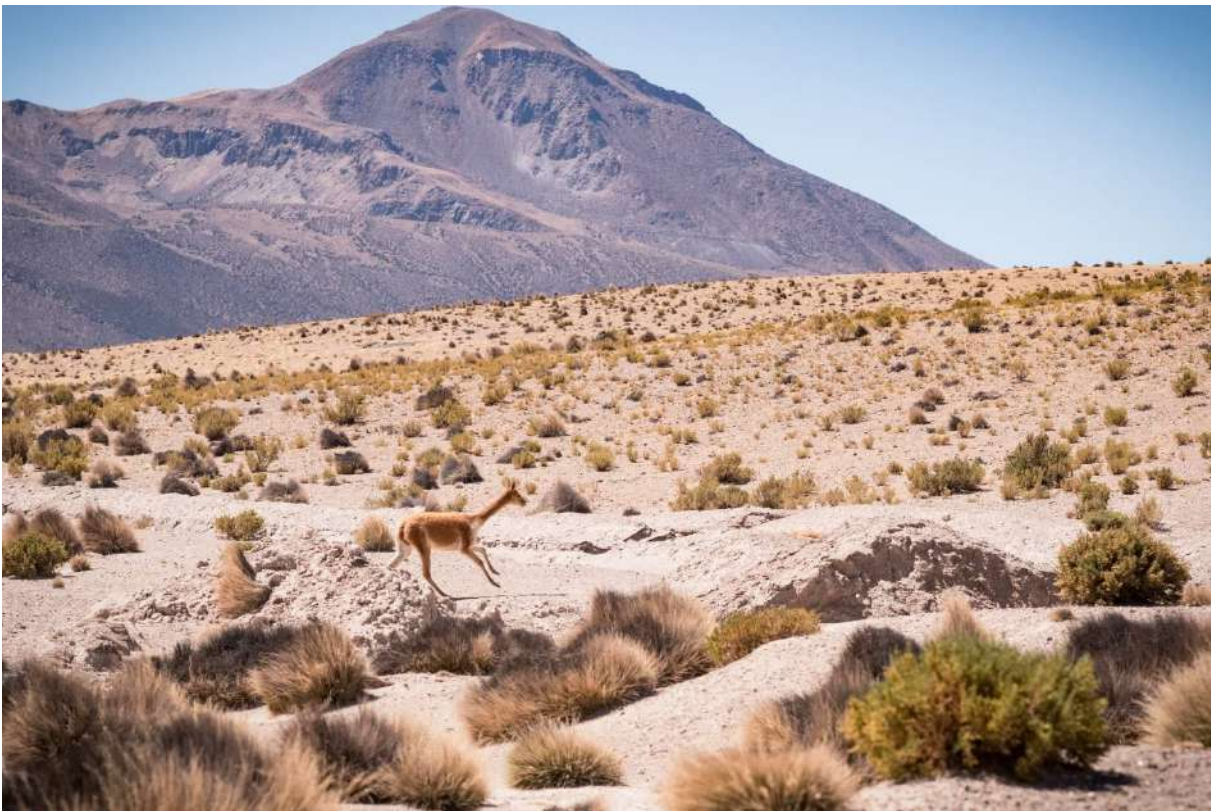


Hot bath and little mud mask for Sylvain!





Sleeping volcano ... for a while ..



Vicuna





Flamingos seen from the drone

But these landscapes are worthy. We spend our first night at 5°F but not too cold at night (we sleep fully dressed with two down jackets, a hat, two pairs of socks and a very good sleeping bag). In the morning we find that it has frozen in the tent, the phones have no battery and you must unfreeze the water and the box of peaches if you want to have breakfast.



We arrive in view of the Salar and it is time to separate to finish this last stage the 3 of us.

Do you know the Salar of Uyuni?

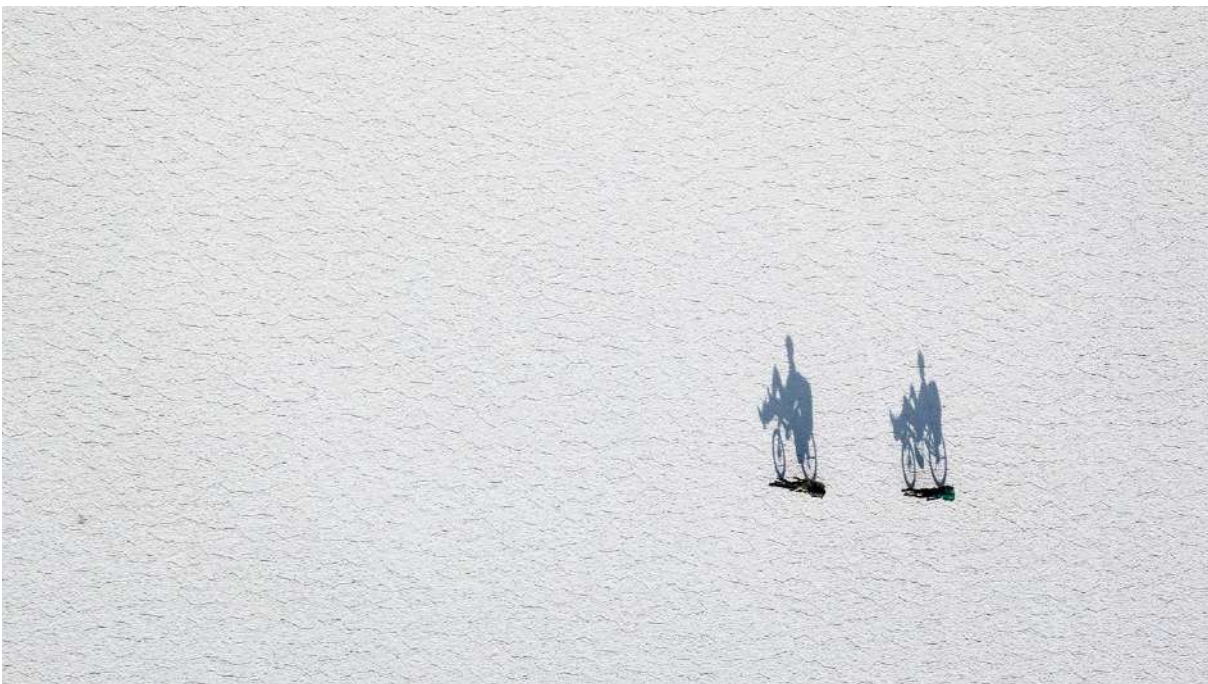
It is a gigantic salt desert perched at 12,000ft above sea level, born from the evaporation of a salt lake.





We feel as if we are boating on this gigantic expanse of salt and we are only going to keep in sight the islands in the distance.

It is also an opportunity to make pretty pictures of day and night.



View of the drone, our shadow plays with us.



Do any of you have any idea what this red light in the sky is like? Answer in the next letter!

This letter was a bit long, it's time for us to prepare for Argentina!

See you soon for new adventures!

Sylvain and Kalima

Written on November 6, 2019