

The Dakar Rally Comes to Argentina During 1 to 15 January 2012

This year's Dakar Rally will take place between 1st and 15th January, in the rugged and challenging terrain of the South American continent. Starting in Mar del Plata, Argentina on New Year's Day, the route travels across the Argentinean plains into Chile and then up through Peru to arrive on the coast in Lima, Peru's capital, on 15th January.

December 11, 2011 (FPRC) -- There are fourteen stages in the rally, five in Argentina, five in Chile and the final four in Peru. The first five stages take the competitors climbing up into the Andes via a difficult route consisting of canyons and dunes. The Chilean section carries on climbing up into the Andes, crossing the Atacama Desert en route. The final section, in Peru, sees competitors continuing through the Altiplano before heading down to the coast for the finish.

The Dakar's history began in 1977 when motorcyclist, Thierry Sabine, got lost in the Libyan desert and the Paris-Dakar rally was born. The event followed a similar route for many years, but relocated to the South American continent in 2009. This year's route is different from previous years, but promises as many challenges for the competitors and much excitement for spectators.

The entry list filled up extremely quickly once it was open and there are a total of 465 different vehicles competing this year, with drivers from 50 nations. There will be 171 cars, 185 motorbikes, 76 trucks and 33 quad bikes at the start, up 15% from last year's numbers.

Hotels in Buenos Aires City Centre are just a short distance from the airport, from where there are direct flights to Mar del Plata, for the start of the rally. Four-day hospitality packages from Buenos Aires are available from 30th December. These start at Buenos Aires airport, before spending a day watching technical checks, followed by dinner with the competitors, a New Year's Eve party, a day at the rally in the VIP area, before returning to Buenos Aires for shopping in the city's glamorous Palermo district.

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