



Salta High Inca Trail

ARGENTINA

On this **horseback trail ride** follow ancient Incan pathways through the high Andes of North-west Argentina. Ride through tropical forests, canter along sandy river beds and cross the Calchaqui desert to the high altitude grasslands at 3,000m where condors circle overhead. On this **horse riding holiday through the Andes**, you will experience local Argentinian culture, archaeology, tango lessons (optional!) and traditional goat's cheese. Explore stunning and varied landscapes as you both camp under the stars and receive a warm welcome in comfortable boutique hotels.

Pack Trip	 13 days / 9 days riding	 From £2,169	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Wide variety of natural landscapes - Andes mountains, desert valleys, cacti, pampas and rainforest
- Warm welcome in the local villages and immersion in the culture of the gaucho
- Discover Salta - the jewel of colonial architecture in northern Argentina
- Experience an evening of tango in Buenos Aires before the ride begins (optional)

Day 1 — 1: EUROPE - BUENOS AIRES

International flight to Buenos Aires. It is likely that you will depart in the evening and arrive the following morning. Flights are not included but we can book them for you on request.

Day 2 — 2: BUENOS AIRES - SALTA - No riding



You will be transferred to the domestic airport for your flight to Salta (flight not included but we can book it for you on request). On arrival at Salta airport you will be transferred to your hotel, where you will meet your guide.

In the afternoon you will visit the MAAM (Museum of High Altitude Archaeology) (closed Mondays). Recently opened to show the items found at an Inca human sacrifice site on top of the Lullailloco volcano (6730m high), it holds the best preserved mummies worldwide.

Dinner is taken as a group in the evening.

Day 3 — 3: SALTA - PENAS BLANCAS - 3 hours riding

After breakfast, we will drive to meet our horses. The drive takes us along the Cuesta del Obispo with its breathtaking views and the Cardones National Park, where you can usually spot guanacos (Andean camelidae). This is a program in itself. When we reach Piedra del Molino (3,348 meters high), we meet the horses and gauchos. Lunch by the corral. We start our ride going south at this high-altitude spot. We will reach Peñas Blancas (2,750 meters high) before sunset to spend the night in a cabin with beds, after crossing a small range of hills to our left. On the way, there are herds of wild donkeys set free by the Spanish Conquistadors.

Day 4 — 4: PENAS BLANCAS - 5-6 hours riding

After breakfast, we get ready to ride. Today, we ride along the lifeline this valley has had for centuries. On our way, we can see small houses made of mud and archaeological remains of ancient settlements. Lunch at a dry riverbed, which is great for cantering, and we will take advantage of that. We will stop to see ancient pictographs painted by local Indians centuries ago. We will visit Isonza, a working ranch where the ancient way of life is still intact. The way they milk the goats, make cheese, and grow their crops is centuries old, inherited from Inca times. Night at Peñas Blancas.

Day 5 — 5: PENAS BLANCAS - 5-6 hours riding

The ride takes us west at the beginning until we reach the very steep Chilo slopes, which divide two valleys. The view is magnificent and makes us feel the power of nature. We ride down the Chilo slopes, a truly unique experience. Lunch before starting the ride uphill on the way back to Peñas Blancas.

Day 6 — 6: PENAS BLANCAS - AMBLAYO - 5-6 hours riding

We move mainly south towards Yaslaguala. The giant cacti are all over and set the stage. After lunch, we ride to Amblayo town (2,450 meters high), where we will spend the night. It has only 150 dwellers, and its main means of transportation is on horseback. It is renowned for its goat cheese. Sense the feeling of arriving on horseback in this tiny town with almost no cars! An unforgettable experience. To get there, we will ride first through archaeological areas where you can see pieces of painted pottery scattered around. We look with agreement not to remove any of the findings. Night at Amblayo. Rooms with beds, bathroom with hot water. Electricity available.

Day 7 — 7: AMBLAYO - 5-6 hours riding

After breakfast, enjoy this picturesque town. Visit its ancient chapel and its 17th-century paintings brought from Peru, and have a chat with its neighbors. After lunch, we ride to the foothills of the Sierra Pelada. These multicolored hills are unique. We will also ride the Río Salado, which is a great place for cantering! Night at Amblayo. Traditional goat barbecue at dinner.

Day 8 — 8: DEAD LION RANGE - 5-6 hours riding

The riding will provide a day full of contrasts. Riding east, we will cross the Dead Lion range. The desert gradually gives way to high-altitude grasslands. This is the land of the condor. Once we reach approximately 3,000 meters, we will have the chance to see some. We start our descent into the dense forest of the Lerma Valley. At sunset, we arrive at El Churqui mountain camp (1,960 meters high), where we will be awaited with an energizing homemade meal. We sleep inside a cabin in sleeping bags. Toilet available and cold running water.

Day 9 — 9: DEAD LION RANGE - AYUSO - 5-6 hours riding

Riding west, we will cross the Dead Lion range again, but now through narrow trails of the Enchanted Valley until we reach Ayuso (2,500 meters high). This is the home of a local family in a place that overlooks the Calchaquí Valley. These ancient mud bricks that make the small house will make you feel in a world so different from your own. We put up the tents for the night. Toilet available and cold running water.

Day 10 — 10: CERRO BOLA - AYUSO - 5-6 hours riding

As the past two days have been spent crossing high mountains, this day we will go around the Cerro Bola (Ball Mountain). It is a perfect day to canter along the dry riverbeds of the Salado River and have lunch in the shade of the ancient algarrobo trees. We will spend the night again at Ayuso, so we will just carry the essentials for the day.

Day 11 — 11: AYUSO - PUENTE MORALES - SALTA - 3 hours riding

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We leave Ayuso, riding through narrow creeks well south into the Calchaquí Valleys towards our next stop at Rastrojitos (1,900 meters high). We have now moved into the Cafayate Creek, which has rock formations that resemble the Grand Canyon, only smaller, and are the icon of the region. Lunch on the way at the creek. We ride downhill towards the Las Conchas River. Some parts of our trail will be done very slowly as it is very steep and fun. Today,

we will have the chance to see one of the best views in Salta. Las Conchas River is our ending point. Say farewell to the horses at Puente Morales (1,300 meters high). Transfer back to Salta city. End of the ride. Check-in at the hotel. Farewell dinner.

Day 12 — 12: SALTA - BUENOS AIRES - DEPARTURE

After breakfast you will be transferred to Salta airport for your flight back to Buenos Aires and connecting flight back. Flights are not included but we can book them for you on request.

Additional excursions can be organised upon request: Salta city tour, Quebrada de Humahuaca, winery tours...

Day 13 — 13: ARRIVAL HOME

Arrival back into your home airport

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
26/03/2025	07/04/2025	£2,169	Open
09/06/2025	21/06/2025	£2,169	Open
11/08/2025	23/08/2025	£2,169	Open
13/10/2025	25/10/2025	£2,169	Open
17/11/2025	29/11/2025	£2,169	Open

Price details

- Flights are not included but can be booked for you on request
 - Transfers in Buenos Aires are not included but can be booked upon request.
 - There is a small group supplement payable if the group size is less than 6 riders.
If the group size is 4-5 riders then the supplement is c. \$290/€250/£220 per person
If the group size is 2-3 riders then the supplement is c. \$495/€495/£435 per person
 - There is a single supplement of c. \$195/€185/£170 if you end up in a single room/tent. This supplement will be added to your invoice and refunded if a sharer is found for you. Some rooms during the trail offer no single room option and will be shared.
 - The usual group size is 2 - 10 riders plus guides
 - If you have previously completed this ride and are re-booking within 12 months then there is a 5% discount on the ride price.
 - There is a rider weight limit of 100kg
 - It may be possible to rent a sleeping bag for \$25/€23/£20 per sleeping bag. Please ask your travel advisor in advance. A sleeping mat is free of charge.
 - Please note - if you choose not to take part in Buenos Aires activities, there will be a discount.
- Please Note
- The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.
- The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

LOGISTICS

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

Logistics: pack mules

1 cook

Gauchos in charge of looking after the horses

INLAND TRANSPORT

Airport transfers in Salta

ACCOMMODATION

Full board accommodation during the ride

Standard Hotel in Buenos Aires (twin or triple room)

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

First aid kit

Satellite phone for emergency calls

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

Meals in Buenos Aires and while travelling

TRANSPORTS

International flights bookable on request

Domestic flights

EXTRA

Small group supplement

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

INSURANCE

Visas and personal purchase

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room/tent supplement

TRANSPORT

Airport transfers in Buenos Aires

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

You will ride Argentine Criollo's or Peruvian Paso's which are sure footed, energetic and ideally suited for long hours in the saddle over rough terrain. The saddles are local gaucho saddles which have sheepskin covers to make them comfortable.

Guide & local team

Your guide speaks both English and Spanish - he will be assisted by a team of cooks and back-up guides/grooms. The transfer driver may only speak Spanish.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be comfortable riding at all paces across varied terrain.

Rider weight limit 100kg.

PACE

The majority of the ride is at a walk due to the terrain and the pack mules, but there are occasional opportunities to canter, in particular on the days without pack mules.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You will be asked to groom, tack and untack your horse. A team of gauchos will feed and water the horses, as well as look after the pack mules. You will be asked to participate in camp tasks such as erecting and dismantling tents.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be fit enough for a trail of many days in a remote and challenging location. The terrain can be rough sometimes and some days can be long.

Previous experience of riding a trail for several days is an advantage but is not required. Riders who do not ride regularly are requested to get riding fit before the holiday.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Saddle bags are provided for you to carry belongings required during the day, and the rest is carried by the pack horses.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

For the nights in Buenos Aires and Salta you stay in renovated boutique hotels or estancias.

Whilst on the trail you camp in three person tents which are shared between two people, or five person tents which are shared between three people. The first two nights are spent near the family ranch at Penas Blancas in cabins (running water but no showers, rooms with bunk beds). Some nights you may stay in a refuge or family home in the mountains.

MEALS

Most meals are prepared over a wood fire. The food is traditional, tasty and plentiful with many fresh and local products. Lunches are usually picnics. Local wine is provided with evening meals.

WATER

You collect your own water from the rivers you pass along the route - the water is clean and pure. Camps are always situated near to fresh water and you cross rivers during the day where you can also re-fill your water bottles. You may wish to take water purification tablets such as Micropur for the water if you are worried.

CLIMATE

Situated at an altitude of 1,000m, Salta has a mild, temperate climate but experiences distinct seasons. Being in the north of Argentina, the seasonal characteristics are different to those further south.

The summer season can experience rains from November/December to March, whilst the winter season experiences very little rain from April to October. Temperatures range from 3 - 29c, but winter can be quite a bit colder, with frosts common during July. The days are usually sunny and nice but the evenings and nights might be cold.

You should pack for extreme weathers as the mountains can be notoriously unkind, but you may be lucky and visit during a beautiful hot and dry period.

TIPS

Tips are welcome but not expected. You should tip what you feel the service is worth and what you feel comfortable with. We would recommend c. USD 10 per day, which can be given to your guide to share amongst the whole team.

PACKING LIST

PLEASE NOTE: You will be carrying your belongings with you in the saddlebags. Please pack carefully and make sure to keep the total weight under 10 kgs for the comfort of all.

Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun and dust
- Warm hat

Upper body

- Thermals in case of cold weather (can also be worn at night)
- Down jacket or warm coat for the cold evenings
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm polar fleece or equivalent (plus a spare in case one gets wet)
- Waterproof jacket - rain can be difficult to predict and it's better to be prepared.

Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Waterproof over trousers
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- Thermals in case of cold weather

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Good walking boots (or hybrid walking/riding boots)
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Nightwear

- Sleeping bag with a comfort rating of at least minus 5c, preferably minus 10c. We also suggest adding a liner, such as silk or fleece for extra warmth
- Thermarest pad or similar insulating mattress

Our Recommendations

- You should use a soft sided suitcase which can easily be transported - we recommend a large backpack or rucksack of c. 60-80 litres. Remember that your luggage is carried by pack horses!
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- Please be aware that internal flights in Argentina may have a lower luggage allowance than your international flight and you should pack according to the lowest limit.

Other useful items

- Swimsuit - for swimming/bathing in rivers
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)

- Water bottle - 2 x 1 litre, or equivalent
- Wet wipes for when washing water isn't available

In your luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag.
- Swiss army knife or equivalent
- Lighter for burning toilet paper

In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Micropur or similar water purification tablets
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel
- Toilet paper

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .