



Crossing the Andes at Aconcagua

ARGENTINA / CHILE

Cross the Andes on a **horseback trail** through the exact same spot that San Martín and his "Army of the Andes" did in 1817 to free the people of Chile from their European monarchs. This wilderness is flanked by the highest mountains in South America - Aconcagua and Mercedario. An adventurous trail for experienced riders looking for a truly unique riding experience in South America.

Pack Trip	 12 days / 7 days riding	 From £3,137	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- An epic journey following the route of General San Martín across the Andes with his army, from Chile to Argentina
- An exclusive chance to cross the border with special permission from the Argentine and Chilean authorities
- Change horses at the border in accordance with Chilean and Argentine law, so experience the incredible Criollo from both countries
- Amazing landscapes and mountainous passes, including seeing the largest peak in South America - Aconcagua
- Tour a vineyard in Mendoza and sample their world-renowned wines
- Possibility to explore Santiago de Chile and/or Buenos Aires if you have time for extra days

Day 1 — 1: EUROPE - SANTIAGO DE CHILE

International flight from Europe to Santiago de Chile. There are no direct flights and so you will need to change at least once and it is likely that you will fly overnight. Flights are not included.

Please note: this is a pack expedition and all luggage is carried by pack mules. Keeping this in mind, please keep your luggage under 20 kgs.

Day 2 — 2: SANTIAGO - LOS ANDES - No riding

You will likely arrive into Santiago in the morning. The transfer departs at c. midday to the town of Los Andes. The afternoon is free to explore this typical mountain town before meeting the rest of the group and your guide for dinner in the evening. Lunch is to your own account today.

Day 3 — 3: LOS ANDES - LAS TEJAS (1800m) - 4 hours riding

In the morning you will be transferred from Los Andes to Los Patos, where your Chilean horses and gauchos will be waiting. Immigration formalities are completed with the local authorities as the border itself is unattended. You ride upstream alongside the Rocin river to your first campsite at Las Tejas.

You will be following (in reverse) the route taken by San Martín's army on his way to Santiago, through the Aconcagua Valley and the Putaendo Valley. You will see the site of the Chacabuco battle which took place on the 12th February 1817. On the 14th February, San Martín and O'Higgins entered Santiago de Chile to declare independence.

Tonight is your first night camping. Dinner will most likely be a traditional 'asado' with Chilean wine. Don't forget to look up - the stars are truly spectacular...

Day 4 — 4: LAS TEJAS - EL CIENEGO (2800m) - 7 hours riding

Ride along narrow paths which criss-cross the Rocin river repeatedly. Climb a pass and see beautiful wild flowers and waterfalls below you. Lunch is a picnic taken at a bend in the river.

Your path winds higher and snow-capped peaks appear on the horizon. Your camp at El Cienego is near a water meadow which provides excellent grazing for animals so you may see goat-herders passing through with their flocks. You can swim or fish in the river or just sit back and admire the view.

Day 5 — 5: EL CIENEGO - FRONTIER POST - VALLE HERMOSO (3500m) - 6-7 hours riding

Depart camp early in the morning for the ride to the international border, which is at 3,500m. You have to leave your Chilean horse behind and carry your belongings c. 200m across "no-mans land" to your new Argentine team. You have lunch here, at the side of a former Inca settlement.

Setting out on your Argentine horse, the view is spectacular - snow-capped mountains surround a valley which descends smoothly and then suddenly dips to the Volcan river, lazing amidst a glacial plain. From here Aconcagua (6,962m) seems very close - it is 35km as the condor flies! Your camp is at Valle Hermoso - the "Beautiful Valley".

Day 6 — 6: VALLE HERMOSO - up to 4 hours riding

Today you have the option to rest or to ride in the area around camp. If you wish to rest in camp or perhaps fish in the river for trout then you can do. If you wish to ride, then the route goes along the valley to get a closer view of Mount Aconcagua. It is an easy going ride and at you can take your own pace. Return to camp for dinner.

Day 7 — 7: VALLE HERMOSO - RANCHO DE LATA (3550m) - 9 hours riding

Leave Valle Hermoso behind you and ride along the Los Patos Valley. Today is the longest day in the saddle, so you get as close to the foothills as possible. This valley was once at the bottom of the sea and you can find marine fossils on the path! Your camp at Rancho de Lata is at 3,500m.

Day 8 — 8: RANCHO DE LATA - ESPINACITO (4500m) - PENON COLORADO(2913m) - 5 hours riding

Today you ride up to Espinacito pass at 4,500m. This is the highest point of the journey and it's a slow day with plenty of stops for the horses. The view from the top is incredible and you can appreciate the titanic efforts that the Army of the Andes had to overcome. Descend to 2,913m to camp at Peñón Colorado.

Day 9 — 9: PENON COLORADO (2913m) - HORNILLAS - UPSALLATA (Argentina) - 4 hours riding

After breakfast you ride to Hornillas, at 2,050m. The challenge is almost over as you follow a path through a sandy canyon to reach Los Patos amongst poplars, willows and cypress trees. Say farewell to your horses and depart by minibus (c. 3 hours) to Upsallata and complete passport formalities for entering Argentina. Spend the night at a hotel in the small town and a final dinner with your group and guides.

Day 10 — 10: USPALLATA - No riding

A day for a well deserved rest in this mountain villa with several optional activities like rafting, biking, trekking, or just relaxing at the pool. Night in hotel.

Day 11 — 11: USPALLATA - MENDOZA - BUENOS AIRES - No riding

An early start from Uspallata as you are transferred to Luján de Cuyo in Mendoza. This area is now known worldwide for producing several of Argentina's best wines. Your visit to Mendoza would not be complete without a visit to the famous Club Tapiz boutique winery. During this private visit you will have the chance to taste their premium wines directly from the oak casks. Lunch is taken at the winery and then you are transferred to Mendoza city airport for your flight to either Buenos Aires or Santiago, and then your connecting flight back home - arrival at the airport around 4:30pm at the earliest.

If you wish to continue your trip with extensions (visits of Buenos Aires, outdoor pursuits), please contact us.

Day 12 — 12: EUROPE

Arrival back in Europe in the early afternoon.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
07/01/2025	18/01/2025	£3,137	Guaranteed departure
25/01/2025	05/02/2025	£3,137	Guaranteed departure
23/02/2025	06/03/2025	£3,137	Open

Price details

- Flights or transportation to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room/tent during the ride.

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 5 riders and a maximum of 15 international riders, plus guides.

- There is a small group supplement payable if the group is less than 6 riders:

For groups of 4-5 riders the supplement is c. €800/£700/\$830 per person.

For groups of 2 riders, the supplement is c. €1900/£1650/\$1900 per person.

- If you end up in a single room/tent then there is a single supplement payable (c. \$350/€340/£300). This will be invoiced to you when you book and refunded once a sharer is found.

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

SUPPORT TEAM

1 local English and Spanish speaking horse guide

1 assistant guide

LOGISTIC

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

Guides and gauchos in charge of the horses

pack mules

INLAND TRANSPORTS

Airport transfers (except if your arrival is different from the others riders)

all inland transports

ACCOMMODATION

Double or Triple room in hotel standard 3* in Santiago and Upsallata

2 persons in a 3 men tent or 3 persons in a 5 men tent

MEALS

Full board from diner D2 to lunch D11

Mineral water and wine served at meal time during the trek

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Big saddle bags to carry some of your staff during the ride
Iridium satellite phone for emergency calls
First aid kit and oxygen bottles

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Free lunches on D2 and D12. Free dinner on D11
Beverage and personal extra

TRANSPORTS

International flights bookable on request
Domestic flights Mendoza - Santiago
International airport exit fees

EXTRA

Tips to local team
Small group supplement

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurances are not included. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend to take out an insurance policy as soon as your travel is booked in case of cancellation.

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room/tent supplement

EXTRA

2 days extension in Buenos aires. Please contact us.

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

Criollo horses are a breed which originated from the Spanish horses imported by the conquistadors. You change horses at the border. Chilean Criollo's are generally smaller than their Argentine cousins. Both breeds are sturdy, docile and sure-footed - ideal for mountainous terrain.

The tack is traditional gaucho saddles with sheepskin covers for comfort.

Rider weight limit: 100 kilo/15 st 5 lbs/200 lbs. Heavier riders please contact us.

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 do not need to be an expert rider as the trip is not fast and is not technically complicated. However, you do need to be balanced in the saddle for the steep climbs and ascents, and you must be able to put your trust in your horse.

PACE

The pace is slow due to the terrain and the pack horses.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You will be expected to groom, tack and untack your horse as well as assist around camp (erecting tents, collecting firewood etc).

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be fit for the long hours in the saddle and the altitude. You will ride between 1,800m and 4,500m and there are some steep vertical drops and difficult terrain. There will be times when you need to walk on foot and this can be difficult at altitude.

You need to remember that you are a long way from civilisation and medical help. If you have a medical condition please contact us before booking - we will require a certificate from your physician authorising you to do the ride. Tell your doctor that you are going to be riding and camping at 4500 mts. (13 500 ft.) altitude.

There can be extreme temperature variations in the mountains - up to 30c in the day and dropping to -5c at night. It can be sunny but it can also be very windy!

Your belongings are carried by pack horses. You must have previous experience of camping trails lasting at least a couple of days. Previous experience of a riding trail would be advantageous too.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

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

South American Recado saddles, comfortable for long rides.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

On the trail you stay in three man tents (shared between two people) or five man tents (shared between three people). Sleeping bags and mats can be rented to you on a first-come first-served basis, please contact us at the time of your booking.

There are no bathrooms and no showers on the trail. The first and last night are spent in hotels.

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.

Vegetarian diets can be accommodated with plenty of advance notice - let us know at the time of booking. Vegan and coeliac diets cannot be accommodated on this trail unless willing to bring your own camping 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

The seasons in Argentina are the reverse of the UK and their summer is our winter. During the winter months, the Andes mountains have snow on the high passes and so this Andean crossing ride can only run during the warmer summer months.

Daytime temperatures can be high (10-30c), but night temperatures are cold and can drop to below freezing at high altitudes. You will need to be prepared for extreme temperatures and the mountains can throw inclement weather at you with no warning. It can also be windy, so good mountain clothing is essential.

Before/after the ride in Santiago/Mendoza/Buenos Aires, the weather can be hot and sunny.

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

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some sleeping bags and sleeping mats are available for rent for \$25. If you prefer this option instead of bringing your own you need to tell us in advance. Riding helmets, chaps or rain capes are NOT available and you must bring your own.

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 bum bag 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
- Bum bag 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](#) .