



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	 11 days / 9 days riding	 From £2,202	
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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: ARRIVAL IN SALTA - No riding

 Del Virrey

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.

In the afternoon you will meet your guide and visit the MAAM (Museum of High Altitude Archaeology). Recently opened to show the items found at an Inca human sacrifice site on top of the Lullailaco volcano (6730m high), it holds the best preserved mummies worldwide. Dinner is taken as a group in the evening.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 2 — 2: SALTA - PENAS BLANCAS - 3 hours riding

After breakfast, you will drive to meet the horses. The drive takes you along the Cuesta del Obispo with its breathtaking views and the Cardones National Park, where you can usually spot guanacos (Andean camelidae). When you reach Piedra del Molino (3,348m high), you will meet the horses and

gauchos. Lunch by the corral. You will start your ride going south at this high-altitude spot. You will reach Peñas Blancas (a 200-year-old mud hut / house at 2,750m high) before sunset 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.

Overnight at Peñas Blancas.

Day 3 — 3: PENAS BLANCAS - 5-6 hours riding

After breakfast, you get ready to ride. Today, you ride along the lifeline this valley has had for centuries. On your way, you can see small houses made of mud and archaeological remains of ancient settlements. Lunch at a dry riverbed, which is great for cantering. You will stop to see ancient pictographs painted by local Indians centuries ago. You 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.

Overnight at Peñas Blancas.

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

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

Overnight at Peñas Blancas.

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

Today you'll head mainly south towards Yaslaguala. The giant cacti are all over and set the stage. After lunch, you'll ride to Amblayo town (2,450m high), where you will spend the night. It has only 150 dwellers, and its main mode 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, you will ride first through archaeological areas where you can see pieces of painted pottery scattered around. (We agree not to remove any findings).

Overnight at Amblayo.

Day 6 — 6: AMBLAYO - 5-6 hours riding

After breakfast, you'll get the chance to enjoy this picturesque town. You'll visit its ancient chapel and its 17th-century paintings brought from Peru, and have a chat with its neighbours.

After lunch, you'll ride to the foothills of the Sierra Pelada. These multicoloured hills are unique. You will also ride the Río Salado, which is a great place for cantering! Later, you'll enjoy a traditional goat barbecue at dinner.

Overnight at Amblayo.

Day 7 — 7: DEAD LION RANGE - 5-6 hours riding

The riding will provide a day full of contrasts. Riding east, you will cross the Dead Lion range. The desert gradually gives way to high-altitude grasslands. This is the land of the condor. Once you reach approximately 3,000m, you will have the chance to see some. You'll start your descent into the dense forest of the Lerma Valley. At sunset, you'll arrive at El Churqui mountain camp (1,960m high), where you will enjoy a home-made meal.

Overnight in the cabin.

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

Riding west, you will cross the Dead Lion range again, but now through narrow trails of the Enchanted Valley until you reach Ayuso (2,500m 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. You'll put up the tents for the night.

Overnight camping.

Day 9 — 9: CERRO BOLA - AYUSO - 5-6 hours riding

As the past two days have been spent crossing high mountains, this day you 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. You will spend the night again at Ayuso, so you will just carry the essentials for the day.

Overnight camping.

Day 10 — 10: AYUSO - PUENTE MORALES - SALTA - 3 hours riding

 Del Virrey

Today you'll leave Ayuso, riding through narrow creeks well south into the Calchaquí Valleys towards our next stop at Rastrojitos (1,900 meters high). You 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. You'll have lunch on the way at the creek and then ride downhill towards the Las Conchas River. Some parts of the trail will be done very slowly as it is very steep. Today, you will have the chance to see one of the best views in Salta. Las Conchas River is the end point. Say farewell to the horses at Puente Morales (1,300m high). Then you'll be transferred back to Salta city where you can check in at the hotel and have a shower before a farewell dinner.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 11 — 11: DEPARTURE

After breakfast, you will be transferred to Salta airport in time for your flight home.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
12/09/2026	22/09/2026	£2,202	Open
21/11/2026	01/12/2026	£2,202	Open
30/03/2027	09/04/2027	£2,202	Open

Price details

- Flights are not included but can be booked for you upon request.

- Rates are per person based on two riders sharing a twin, double or triple room in hotels. Riders will share rooms and tents during the ride.

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 riders, plus guides.

- It is possible to confirm a departure for 2-5 riders on payment of a small group supplement. If the group has reached 6 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.

For 4-5 riders, the supplement is \$340 / €290 / £255 per person

For 2-3 riders, the supplement is \$550 / €470 / £410 per person

- To guarantee your own room in the hotel and a single tent during camping nights, there is a single supplement of c. \$195 / €170 / £150. Other accommodation during the trail is shared. If you sign up to the ride as a solo rider and there are no other riders to share your room, you will be charged the single room supplement. You will then be reimbursed if a sharer is found for you at a later date.

- Airport transfers to and from Salta City airport are included. Please arrive before 04:00 pm.

- You may be able to rent a sleeping bag and mattress for US\$25 (payable locally), but these are subject to availability, so please let us know upon booking/as early as possible. Helmets are also available to borrow, free of charge, but Equus Journeys strongly recommends that you bring your own to ensure the correct fit.

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

Horses

You will ride Argentine criollo or Peruvian paso horses 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

You will spend two nights in a hotel in Salta, on the first and last days of the trip.

During the trail, accommodation varies and is very basic. It includes:

- Three nights at Peñas Blancas, staying in a 200-year-old mud hut / house. Riders will share a dormitory style room with bunk beds, sheets and blankets. There is a toilet, but no showers.
- Two nights in Amblayo staying in the house of a local family. Riders will share a dormitory style room with bunk beds. There is a shower and a toilet (bathroom shared).
- One night sleeping on the floor in sleeping bags in a cabin in El Churqui. There is a toilet (not always working) and a stream where you can wash.
- Two nights camping in Ayuso at the home of a local family (a mud hut). There is a toilet and a sink to wash in.

Please note: You will need to bring a sleeping bag. Sleeping bags and mattresses may be available to rent, subject to availability.

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 pack carefully and sensibly: the following guide is here to give you an idea of what to bring. There will be no support vehicle, so you will carry all of your personal belongings on your horses in saddlebags. There is not an exact weight limit, but you will need to pack very lightly. We recommend layers, and thin, warm clothes for cold weather. You will be provided with saddlebags to carry your belongings. You can leave extra luggage in the hotel and pick it up after the ride, but please be aware that internal flights in Argentina may have a lower luggage allowance than your international flight.

Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommends 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 / headband for evenings

Upper body

- Thermals in case of cold weather (can also be worn at night)
- Long sleeved tops to provide protection from the sun or to keep warm
- 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

- 1 or 2 pairs of lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- 1 pair of casual trousers for evenings, such as jeans or tracksuit bottoms (optional)
- Thermals in case of cold weather

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding/hiking boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps.
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings (that can get wet)
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves (optional)

Nightwear

- Sleeping bag with a comfort rating of minus 5c. We also suggest adding a liner, such as silk or fleece for extra warmth
- Pyjamas

Other useful items

- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding

- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night
- Ear plugs and eye mask (for light sleepers)
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre)
- Wet wipes for when no washing facilities are available
- Swimsuit (optional) - there is a small pool in the hotel but no swimming on the ride
- Binoculars (optional)

Personal hygiene items

- Soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrush, deodorant, etc.
- Small towel

Medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent (optional)
- Painkillers, plasters, anti-histamines, antiseptic cream
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses and eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication, re-hydration sachets
- Handwash gel

Other recommendations:

- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes / any essentials and valuables in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- Please print copies of your passport and insurance documents and take them with you.
- Backpacks should not 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).
- Please take your rubbish home with you and try to leave excess packaging material at home before travelling.

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](#) .