



## 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.

<b>Pack Trip</b>	<b>14 days / 9 days riding</b>	<b>From £2,080</b>	
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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 - No riding

Tribeca hotel

On arrival at Buenos Aires airport, you will be transferred to your hotel where you will meet your guide. There is time to explore this modern and eclectic city known as the Paris of South America. In the evening you can opt to have a tango lesson or to attend a dinner and tango show (optional, extra cost)

Please note - if you choose not to take part in Buenos Aires activities, there will be a discount.

### Day 3 — 3: BUENOS AIRES - 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, 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 4 — 4: SALTA - PIEDRA DEL MOLINO - PAPACHACRA - 3 hours riding

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After breakfast you are transferred to meet your 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).

You meet your horses and gauchos at Piedra del Molino (3,348m) and have lunch by the corral.

You start riding in a southerly direction and will reach Peñas Blancas (2750m) before sunset to spend the night in a cabin with beds after crossing a small range of hills to your left. On the way there are herds of wild donkeys set free by the Spanish Conquistadors.

## Day 5 — 5: PAPACHACRA - ISONZA - 5-6 hours riding

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After breakfast, pack up camp and get ready to ride. Today you ride along the river - a lifeline for this valley over the years. On your way you can see, here and there, the small houses made with mud and archeological remains of ancient settlements.

Lunch is taken at Peñas Blancas (2,760m). The riding in the afternoon is along a sandy river bed that is great for cantering and you will take advantage of that! On the way you stop to see the ancient pictographs painted by local Indians centuries ago. You will also visit Isonza which is a working ranch with its ancient way of life still intact and Leuca Burgos who makes goat cheese.

## Day 6 — 6: ISONZA - AMBLAYO - 5-6 hours riding

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During the morning you will experience the everyday activities of the ranch and its way of life: the way they milk their goats, make cheese and grow their crops hasn't changed since the Incas.

Today's ride takes you west until reaching the very steep Chilo slopes which divide two valleys. The view is magnificent. You then turn south and ride past Yaslaguala. There are many giant cactii on the hillsides.

After lunch, ride to Amblayo town (2,400m) where you spend the night. It has only 150 inhabitants and is renowned for its goats cheese. The town's main means of transportation is on horseback and to arrive on horseback to this tiny town with almost no cars is an unforgettable experience. Your route to Amblayo passes through areas where there are lots of archaeological remains, such as pieces of painted pottery scattered around. You can look at them, but not remove them.

Spend the night in Amblayo, in simple rooms with beds and with bathrooms with hot water.

## Day 7 — 7: AMBLAYO - 3 hours riding

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After breakfast there is time to enjoy this picturesque town and visit its ancient chapel and 17th century paintings brought from Peru. After lunch you ride to the foothills of the Sierra Pelada - these multicoloured hills are unique. You will also ride along the Río Salado which is a great place for cantering! Spend a second night in Amblayo with a traditional goat barbecue for dinner.

## Day 8 — 8: AMBLAYO - EL CHURQUI - 5-6 hours riding

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Today's ride will provide a day full of contrasts.

Start by riding east and crossing the Dead Lion range. The desert gradually gives way to high altitude grasslands - this is the land of the condor and once you have reached c. 3,000m you should have the chance to see some.

Descend through dense forest into the Lerma Valley. At sunset, arrive at El Churqui mountain camp (1,960m) where dinner will be waiting for you. Overnight in a basic cabin (sleeping bags required). Toilets are available and there is running (cold) water.

## Day 9 — 9: EL CHURQUI - AYUSO - 5-6 hours riding

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Riding west you will again cross the Dead Lion range but this time you ride through the narrow trails of the Enchanted valley until reaching Ayuso (2,500m). Ayuso, overlooking the Calchaqui valley is home to a local family and the ancient mud bricks that have been used to build their small house

will feel a world away from what you are used to.

Overnight in tents, toilet and cold running water available.

## Day 10 — 10: AYUSO - 5-6 hours riding

Today you ride a circuit around the Cerro Bola (Ball mountain). As you will be leaving all your belongings in Ayuso, it is a perfect opportunity for canter along the dry river beds of the Salado river. Have lunch under the shade of the huge, ancient algarrobo trees before returning to your camp at Ayuso.

## Day 11 — 11: AYUSO - RASTROJITOS - 5-6 hours riding

Leave Ayuso behind and ride through narrow creeks into the Calchaquí Valley and on towards your next stop at Rastrojitos (1,900m). Cafayate Creek has rock formations that resemble the Grand Canyon, only smaller and these are iconic of the region. Camp near a small mountain shelter at Rastrojitos where a typical meal of goat cooked in the mud oven will be waiting for you.

## Day 12 — 12: RASTROJITOS - PUENTE MORALES - SALTA - 3 hours riding

 Del Virrey

Ride downhill towards the Las Conchas River - some parts of the trail will be very slow as it is very steep but fun. Today you have the chance to see one of the best views in Salta. You end the ride at Las Conchas river at Puente Morales (1,300m) and say farewell to your horses and their gauchos.

You will be transferred back to Salta and to your hotel. A farewell dinner with the group is taken in town.

## Day 13 — 13: 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 14 — 14: ARRIVAL HOME

Arrival back into your home airport

### DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
23/03/2024	05/04/2024	£2,080	Open
20/05/2024	02/06/2024	£2,080	Open
07/07/2024	20/07/2024	£2,080	Open
11/08/2024	24/08/2024	£2,080	Open
05/10/2024	18/10/2024	£2,080	Open
16/11/2024	29/11/2024	£2,080	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. \$250/€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/€195/£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

- 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

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### 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

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### 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

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## ACCOMMODATION

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Single room/tent supplement

## TRANSPORT

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Airport transfers in Buenos Aires

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

### Horses

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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

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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

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#### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

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

Rider weight limit 100kg.

#### PACE

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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 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](#) .