Equus Journeys
HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

+44 (0) 1905 388977 info@equus-journeys.com

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Cattle Drive On The Inca Trails

ARGENTINA

On this **cattle drive through the high Andes** of northwest Argentina, you will help the local cowboys (known as gauchos) round up the cattle. Following ancient Incan pathways, you will ride up to 3000 metres (9000 feet), where the forest changes to high altitude grassland and condors circle overhead. After **driving the cattle** to the old corrals, the task is sorting, branding and doctoring - a process that involves lots of **hard work and plenty of adrenaline**. This unique holiday will introduce you to the **authentic life of the gaucho** while also exploring stunning and varied landscapes. You will also get to sample traditional goat's cheese and taste some of Argentina's best wines in an area known for its high altitude vineyards.

Cattle Drive	**9 days / 6 days riding**	**From £1,899**	





ITINERARY

Highlights

- Ride alongside the Argentine cowboys and experience the authentic life of the gaucho
- Play an active role in searching for, driving and sorting the cattle
- Discover Salta - the jewel of colonial architecture in northern Argentina
- Explore a variety of natural landscapes - mountains, valleys, rivers and giant cacti
- Visit picturesque towns and see ancient settlements
- Taste traditional goat's cheese and some of Argentina's best wines

Day 1 — 1: ARRIVAL IN SALTA - No riding

Del Virrey

You can fly to Buenos Aires and then take a domestic flight to Salta (Martín Miguel de Güemes International Airport). Flights are not included but we can book them for you on request.

Upon 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). Please note the MAAM is closed on Mondays.

Dinner and overnight at your hotel.

Day 2 — 2: SALTA - PENAS BLANCAS (2760M) - 2-3 hours riding

After breakfast, you will be driven 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). You will eventually reach Peñas Blancas (2750 meters high) where the horses and gauchos await, and then enjoy lunch.

In the afternoon, you'll ride along the lifeline that the valley has had for centuries, and start looking for the cattle spread all over. On the way, you'll spot small houses made with mud and the archaeological remains of ancient settlements. You'll stop to see the ancient pictographs painted by local Indians centuries ago. You'll visit Isonza, which is a working ranch with its ancient way of life still intact, and Leuca Burgos, who makes goat's cheese. The way they milk the goats, make cheese and grow their crops is centuries old and inherited from Inca times. On the ride, you'll also see herds of wild donkeys set free by the Spanish Conquistadors.

Overnight at a 200-year-old mud house at Peñas Blancas.

Day 3 — 3: PENAS BLANCAS - 6-9 hours riding

After breakfast, you'll get ready to ride again. The whole day will be spent screening the area and rounding up cattle. The ride takes you west at the beginning until you reach the very steep Chilo slopes, which divide two valleys and offer a magnificent view. By sunset, you'll arrive at the corrals with all the cows brought back.

Overnight at Penas Blancas.

Day 4 — 4: PENAS BLANCAS - 2 hours riding

Today you will prepare to sort, brand and doctor each of the cows and calves. The corrals were built with mud over 200 years ago and have been used ever since. Expect to witness hard work and lots of adrenaline as the herd are vaccinated. It is now when the gauchos and horses come together in a reining exhibition that made them world famous. You can choose to watch or get involved.

Overnight at Peñas Blancas.

Day 5 — 5: PENAS BLANCAS - 2 hours riding

Splitting is normally done today, as well as whatever work there is left to do from the day before. Later, you'll take a horseback ride back to Peñas Blancas.

Overnight at Peñas Blancas.

Day 6 — 6: PENAS BLANCAS - AMBLAYO - 6-9 hours riding

Get ready for a full day in the saddle today, as you drive the cattle to Amblayo to be delivered to the market. The riding today is mainly south along the valley. You will pass Yaslaguala and see giant cactii.
You'll also ride through archaeological areas where you can spot pieces of painted pottery scattered around (please do not take/remove any of the findings).

You'll arrive into Amblayo town (2400 meters high) around 5pm, and it's here you'll spend the night. The town has only 150 residents and its main means of transportation is on horseback (there are very few cars). It's also renowned for its goat's cheese.

Overnight in Amblayo at the house of a local family.

Day 7 — 7: AMBLAYO - 3 hours riding

This morning you'll have time to enjoy this picturesque town, visiting its ancient chapel and seeing its 17th century paintings brought from Peru. 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!

In the evening, you'll enjoy a traditional goat barbecue for dinner.

Overnight in Amblayo.

Day 8 — 8: AMBLAYO - CACHI - SALTA - No riding

You'll drive to Cachi this morning, an area known for its high altitude vineyards (most around 2000-2500 metres high). It's home to just 1% of all vineyards in Argentina but receives 10% of total investment, meaning that some of Argentina's best wines are made here.

Today you'll visit the Isasmendi winery and taste some of their best wines. This small, boutique winery is owned by the heirs of the last Spanish Colonial Governor. Next is lunch, and then a 3-hour transfer to Salta city. Dinner is to your own account this evening.

Overnight at the hotel.

Day 9 — 9: SALTA - BUENOS AIRES - DEPARTURE

After breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport in Salta for your domestic flight to Buenos Aires. From there, you will catch your international flight home to Europe. (Flights are not included but we can book them for you on request).

Additional days/excursions can be organised upon request:
- Salta city tour.
- Trip to Humahuaca Creek.
- Trip to Cafayate and its wineries.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
08/05/2027	16/05/2027	£1,899	Guaranteed departure
02/10/2027	10/10/2027	£1,899	Open

Price details

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

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

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 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 reaches 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 $230 / €210 / £175 per person.
For 2-3 riders the supplement is $450 / €410 / £340 per person.

- To guarantee your own room in the hotel, there is a single supplement of $140 / €130 / £105 per person. 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.
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 English-speaking horse guide
Gauchos in charge of looking after the horses

LOGISTICS

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider
1 cook
1 support vehicle

INLAND TRANSPORT

Transfers to/from Salta City airport

ACCOMMODATION

2 nights in a boutique hotel in Salta (twin or triple room)
6 nights in very basic accommodation, with shared rooms and bunk beds (only 2 of the nights include shower facilities)

MEALS

Full board, from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 9 (excludes dinner on day 8 in Salta)

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

First aid kit
Satellite phone for emergency calls
Saddle bags

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras
Meals while travelling and dinner in Salta on day 8

TRANSPORTS

International and domestic flights (bookable on request)

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

INSURANCE

Visa
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 supplement

TRANSPORT

Airport transfers in Buenos Aires

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

You will ride Argentine Criollos or Peruvian Pasos (cattle trained) which are sure footed, energetic and ideally suited for long hours in the saddle over rough terrain.

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

This ride is for experienced riders only. You need to be comfortable riding at all paces and across rough, rugged terrain. You must be in good physical condition prepared for long days in the saddle.

Rider weight limit 90kg / 14st / 198lbs (riders over 90kg please contact us).

PACE

The majority of the ride is at a walk due the terrain and nature of cattle work, but there are occasional opportunities to canter.

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.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be fit enough for riding in a remote and challenging location. The terrain can be rough and days can be long, especially when working with cattle. 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

The saddles are South American Recado saddles - suitable and comfortable for cattle work. Saddle bags are provided for you to carry belongings required during the day.

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 includes:

- Four nights at Penas 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, sheets and blankets. There is a shower and a toilet (bathroom shared).

A sleeping bag is optional on this ride.

MEALS

The food is traditional, tasty and plentiful with many fresh and local products. Hot meals are served in the evenings and lunches are usually picnics. Wine or beer is usually 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. Your luggage will be carried by a support vehicle during the ride. Please use a soft sided bag which can easily be transported. Please remember that the region can be cold and the weather changeable -- we recommend that you bring layers.

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 or headband

Upper body
- Thermals in case of cold weather (can also be worn at night)
- Long sleeved tops to provide protection from the sun or 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
- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- 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
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves (optional)

Nightwear
- Sleeping bag (optional)
- 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 bumbag 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 .