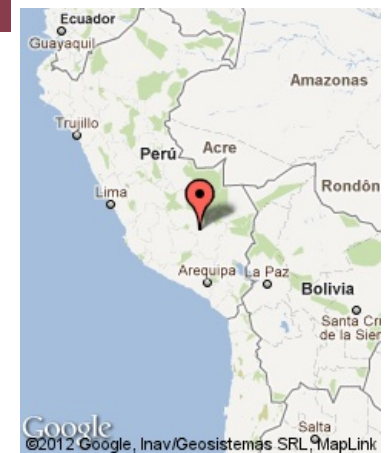


The Salkantay Trail to Machu Picchu



Highlights

Although Machu Picchu is the goal at the end of the trek, this route has so much along the way you will be surprised at how much the area has to offer besides the world-famous ruins. Hiking along the Salkantay Trail (Salcantay) to **Machu Picchu**, you will camp between snow-capped mountains, visit small towns nestled in the Andes and even have a chance to soak in medicinal hot springs. The hiking will get your blood pumping but the gorgeous views and the friendly people will definitely be enough to keep your mind busy.

The Andes are the longest continuous mountain chain in the world, running through seven countries in South America. Hidden in this magnificent mountain range is a vast collection of archaeological sites dating back to the ancient Inca empire and an abundance of flora and fauna. Within Peru, many people associate hiking in the Andes with the well known and well-trodden Inca trail. However, the Salkantay Trail offers a pretty impressive alternative trail to Machu Picchu. Voted by the National Geographic as one of the world's most beautiful treks, the hike involves traversing the high pass of the Salkantay mountain and culminates in a visit of course to see Machu Picchu, the amazing Inca city only discovered in 1911.

Mother nature (or Pachamama, as the indigenous people of the Andes call her) is the real highlight of this trip as you walk in the shadow of Humantay, a snow covered mountain and beautiful little valleys called Checchicancha and Soraypampa - and that's just on day one! You will also hike past many different kinds of indigenous trees, plants and orchids and see how nature and humans coexist as you pass villages and farmers' corn and fruit fields. This is more than just seeing Inca ruins, this will give you a sense of how the communities in the Andes live - it is a living place after all. After days of tough hiking, you will be able to dip your weary body in the natural hot springs near Santa Teresa a welcome relief for your muscles! The final day of the trip starts off with watching the sun rise over Machu Picchu before enjoying a guided tour of the ancient city. Afterwards its back to Cusco by bus, with a smug feeling that not only have you achieved a great physical challenge and seen some magnificent ruins, but you've chosen to trek the path less trodden!

Is it for me?

If you want to participate on a trek where you will push yourself physically, but at the same time gain an insight into an ancient people and culture, then this will be right up your street. If you need to be surgically separated from your hair straighteners, then please stop reading, there is not a plug socket in sight on the Salkantay trail!!!

Let's not beat about the bush here, this trek is about hiking so you do need to be in good shape to participate. It is recommended that you do some regular exercise in the month before you depart. That said, you don't have to be a fitness freak; children as young as 7 and adults of 68 have completed the trail. You will be hiking at altitude, so it is recommended that you **acclimatise** for a couple of days before embarking on the trip.

The high season on the trail is from May – September so you will need to book quite a way in advance. If you want to trek in quieter times, you may want to consider dates outside of the high season, but avoid January and February as the paths are too boggy then.

The maximum group size is 16 people. The guide to walkers ration is 1 : 9. Don't worry about being rushed along too fast, there will be plenty of time for comfort breaks and chances to admire the views along the way. The guide

Prices from

465 GBP (5 days) per person

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will always walk at the back with the last person in the group, so you really don't need to be concerned about taking too long. This is a cultural journey, not a running race!

This trek is organized by a professional and licensed tour operator who has been operating in the region for the past 12 years.

Accommodation

You will be camping every night except in Aguas Calientes on the last night of the trip, when you will be staying in a hostel, so your accommodations will mostly be tents and sleeping bags. The tents are 4 man tents, but actually only sleep 2 people in each, giving you a bit more space. All of the camping equipment and luggage (7kgs worth) will be carried from campsite to campsite by horses. There is a horseman in charge of this. Your cook usually goes ahead of the group to have your meals ready when you reach each campsite and he and your horseman will set up camp for you!

Most meals are included in the tour price and you'll have a cook who will concoct tasty and filling meals that will give you the energy you need to make it to Machu Picchu. Breakfasts typically of porridge, scrambled eggs or bread, lunch and dinner start with soup, followed by a main course and a dessert. There will also be snacks available when you arrive at the campsite in the afternoon and then dinner. Vegetarians can be accommodated for too so no worries if you have special dietary needs. Water is also provided during the trek.

Itinerary

Day One: This trip starts early - at five in the morning! You will be driven about four hours to Mollepata with an optional breakfast in a restaurant (cost not included). After another half an hour in the van you will reach Markocasa, where the hiking begins. After about an hour you'll reach Cruzpata where you need to have your camera ready for the amazing views of Humantay, the snow-covered mountain in the distance. Three more hours of trekking over mountain streams will take you to Checchicancha, a beautiful little community where you'll stop to have lunch. The afternoon will consist of another hike of three or four hours until you reach Soraypampa, a picturesque village with views of the gorgeous mountains and friendly locals, where you'll spend the night.

Day Two: Another early start on day two as you will have a lot of trail to cover. You will ascend three hours to a high pass (4,800 meters/ 13,780 feet) where you'll be able to see not only Humantay but also another glacier peak called Salkantay. After a rest for photos you'll hike down a bit to Huayracmachay for lunch and a chance to rest your legs. The trek then continues for another three hours until you reach your campsite for the night at Chaullay.

Day Three: After breakfast you'll walk on a narrow trail on the side of a mountain through Colpapampa. This is a gorgeous part of the walk where you will see all kinds of plant life, from multiple orchid species to the corn and fruit fields of the locals. Along the way you'll be rewarded for all your walking by passing by a gorgeous waterfall. After five hours on the trail you will get to La Playa where you will hop in a truck for 45 minutes which will take you to the town of Santa Teresa. After setting up camp you'll have the opportunity to visit the natural, medicinal hot springs which are about 45 minutes away. After an invigorating soak you'll return to the campsite for dinner and a good night's sleep.

Day Four: After breakfast and a one hour bus ride you'll walk for two hours until you reach the Urubamba River and have lunch by the hydro-electric station there. Then you will trek another three hours down the valley to Aguas Calientes. Here is the only time you won't be camping so you will check into the hotel then it's dinner and a rest before an early start to day five.

Day Five: You will have to get up early today as the plan is to see the sunrise over Machu Picchu! You will be happy you did, as that morning will stay with you forever. You will then have a fully guided tour for two hours and have time to explore the ancient city and the surrounding area for a while before you return on a train to Cusco / Ollantaytambo and a transfer back to your hotel.

Details

Getting there

Cusco can be reached from Lima by plane (flight time is about one hour). Lima can be reached by most other major world cities.

Price includes

Price includes transfer from your hotel to the start of trek, an English speaking guide, return Vistadome train tickets, waterproof duffles to put your luggage in, 7kg luggage allowance to be ported by the horses, hot water for washing and boiled water for drinking, meals except breakfast on day one and meals on day five, entrance fees for trails and Machu Picchu, tents and hotel in Aguas Calientes.

The price quoted is based on 2 people sharing for the 5 day / 4 night trip.

Prices vary depending on the number of people travelling in your group and others already booked on your chosen tour dates. If you have flexible dates we can usually accommodate single travellers and couples at the lowest quoted price (for 5 or more people). Please ask for details.

Private treks just for your group are available, please contact us if you would like to discuss this option.

When is best

This trek is best avoided in January & February as it gets very boggy in the rainy season.

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

Recommended kit list Pair of hiking shoes and plenty of socks; Insect repellent; Sun block; Dark glasses (shades); Rain coat or rain poncho; Light clothing for the day and warm for the night; Trekking trousers (the ones you unzip for shorts); Hat or sun cap; Water Bottle; Sleeping bag (unless you rent one).

Reviews (1)

Reviews of this experience

“ I cannot imagine a better guide than Odon. From the very first time we met, he has been funny, kind, supportive, very knowledgeable and a real pleasure to be with. The fact is I was not fit enough to do this like some of the other young fit people, but he made me feel welcome and cared for - a wonderful man and a wonderful experience. Apart from my shame at taking the horse, I have loved almost every minute of this trek and Odon has been the second best part of it - countryside came first :) ”

Charles reviewing The Salkantay Trail to Machu Picchu