

The Salkantay Trail

Luxury lodge-based trek to Machu Picchu



Experience the mountains of Peru in comfort on this lodge-based trek to Machu Picchu. An alternative to the standard camping-based routes, on the Salkantay Trail you will stay in top-quality mountain lodges, all of them located in pristine areas on a remote trail to Machu Picchu. The route you take is the lesser-trodden Salkantay Trail—a longer, higher and less crowded alternative to the famous Inca Trail.

This trekking itinerary begins in Cusco, Peru. We can arrange your flights from the UK to Cusco, and additional accommodation before and after the trek as needed. Please contact us for rates.

Day 1: Cusco to Salkantay Lodge

You will be met at your hotel in Cusco after an early breakfast by your guide & driver and set off immediately for Soraypampa.

The first leg of the journey is by car (for 3-4 hours), along winding mountain roads with marvellous scenery. There will be time for a number of stops – at the Tarawasi Inca ruins, just outside the town of Limatambo (1 hour from Cusco), and at the mountain village of Mollepata, where you can sample the local coffee – before you reach the small settlement of Marcoccasa, the start point for your trek.

From Marcoccasa, it's a 5-6 hour trek to Soraypampa, on an old trail known as the *Camino Real* ('Royal Path'). This first walk is a good chance for you to adjust to the altitude and the mountain

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

terrain. We'll proceed at a leisurely pace, with plenty of time to take in the scenery. Expect to arrive at Salkantay Lodge late afternoon.



Salkantay Lodge takes its name from the majestic Mt. Salkantay, the second most sacred peak in Inca mythology and, at 6,270m (20,600ft), the highest in the region. After a warm welcome by the friendly staff you will be shown to your room. There will be time to wash and freshen up before tea and cookies are served in the fireplace lounge. Your walking guide will then hold a briefing on the journey ahead, followed by aperitifs and dinner.

Trekking time: 6 hours (including picnic lunch en-route)

Hiking level: Moderate

Day 2: Hike to Humantay Lake

Today is a chance for you to further acclimatise, with a relatively moderate hike on the slopes above Salkantay Lodge to Humantay Lake, which is fed by the hanging glaciers of Mt. Humantay. Today's hike is optional, but recommended. Those feeling brave might even like to take a swim in the lake! There's also the option of a horseback ride around the lake – let us know in advance if this of interest.

Return to the lodge in time for lunch, after which you might like to find time for a relaxing soak in the outdoor jacuzzi (particularly if you skipped the glacial lake swim!) Afternoon at leisure.

This evening, enjoy another multi-course dinner, before retreating to the warmth and comfort of your room.



Trekking time: 4 hours

Hiking level: Moderate to challenging

Day 3: Cross the Salkantay Pass

Wake to an early breakfast, ready to begin trekking around 8am.



This morning's hike will see you climb the Rio Blanco Valley, circle Humantay Peak (with dramatic views of Mt. Salkantay), before crossing the Salkantay Pass, the highest point of the trek at 4,640m. This will be the toughest and longest day of the trek, with a total altitude gain of 750m.

Much of the morning will be spent climbing uphill; the trail climbs steadily as you journey up the valley, then more steeply as you approach the Pass. Your reward, on reaching the top of the Pass, is marvellous views of the snow-capped Vilcabamba Peaks and the southern face of Salkantay. A leisurely afternoon's trekking follows as you descend to Wayra Lodge, where you rest tonight.

'Wayra' means wind, and it's a fitting name for this cosy lodge, which sits on a windswept plateau beneath Mt Humantay. A warm room and hot shower awaits you on arrival, then time for rest before a delicious multi-course dinner served in the lodge dining room.



Trekking time: 6–8 hours (including lunch)
Hiking level: Challenging

Day 4: Descend to Colpa Lodge

Today's mostly downhill hike will be a pleasant contrast to yesterday's steep ascent. After a leisurely breakfast at the lodge, continue your journey down to the valley floor and the

Salkantay River. You'll notice the temperature rise and the air become a little more humid as you descend further into the foothills.



Colpa Lodge, where you stay tonight, is situated on an open plateau at the confluence of three rivers. It offers six cosy guest rooms and an outdoor jacuzzi with magnificent views of the surrounding mountains.

The rest of the afternoon is free for you to relax or to explore the nearby orchid trail.

In the evening, enjoy a traditional Pachamanca dinner, a festive Peruvian meal cooked by layering meat and vegetables with hot stones, which are then baked.

Trekking time: 3-4 hours

Hiking level: Easy to moderate

Day 5: Hike the Santa Teresa River Valley

This morning will see you follow a well-trodden trail through the Santa Teresa River Valley. This is a populated area with several small villages, and during the morning's trek you'll pass farmer's fields and fruit & coffee plantations – producing, many claim, some of the best organic coffees grown anywhere in Latin America! A hot picnic lunch will be served by the river.

You'll re-join with your transfer vehicle at the end of the valley where the road meets the trail, and drive the short distance to the start of the Llactapata Inca Trail (30 minutes' drive). From the head of this recently-restored trail it's a short walk to Lucma, a gorgeous lodge set in an avocado orchard.



Dinner and overnight at Lucma Lodge.

Trekking time: 5-6 hours (including lunch)

Hiking level: Moderate to challenging

Day 6: Llactapata Pass, train to Aguas Calientes

Set off early after a fulsome breakfast for the last day of your trek. This morning will you see climb 2-3 hours as you cross the Llactapata Pass (2,735m), where you will be greeted with your first view of the spectacular Machu Picchu sanctuary from the south – a unique view onto the sanctuary that very few trekkers get to experience. There will be time to explore the Llactapata Ruins, followed by lunch at a scenic viewpoint looking out to Machu Picchu.



After lunch, descend to the Aobamba River on a trail that cuts through forests of bamboo and plantations. The last leg of your journey is by train to Aguas Calientes, the gateway town to Machu Picchu. On arrival, check-in at a local hotel for a celebratory dinner with your guide and a briefing on tomorrow's visit to the ancient site.

Trekking time: 4–6 hours

Hiking level: Moderate to challenging

Day 7: Visit Machu Picchu Sanctuary, return to Cusco

Wake to an early breakfast at the hotel, then make your way to the bus station for the 30-minute ride to the Machu Picchu Sanctuary.

Your guide will lead you on a two-hour tour of the site, providing an introduction to its history, from its construction in the 15th-century to its rediscovery in the early 20th-century. After the tour you will have the rest of the morning free to explore the site at your own pace.



After exploring Machu Picchu, return to Aguas Calientes by bus, arriving in time for a late lunch. From Aguas Calientes, catch the train to Ollantaytambo (1½ hours), then a private vehicle will carry you back to Cusco (a further 1½ hours), where your tour ends. You will be dropped off at your hotel on arriving into Cusco in the evening.

NB. If you're keen to do some more walking, you can complete an optional climb to Huayna Picchu or Machu Picchu Mountain today.



Price Guide:

Low Season: Mar 1st - 31st & Nov 1st - Dec 14th

£2,615 / US\$3,300

High Season: Apr 1st - Oct 31st & Dec 15th - 31st

£3,490 / US\$4,400

For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Accommodation (full-board basis) as outlined in itinerary
- All meals (except dinner on day 7)
- English-speaking guide for duration of tour
- Private driver
- Train tickets
- Porter service during trek
- Entrance fees to all sights mentioned in itinerary

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Visas
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips
- Drinks

Booking Details

The Salkantay Trail can be booked on a private basis or you can opt to join a **guaranteed departure**. The guaranteed departures run throughout the trekking season and are open to anyone to join. They will depart with a minimum of 2 guests and accommodate a maximum of 16. For more information, or for a list of available departure dates, please [contact our team](#).

This lodge-based trek is organised by Mountain Lodges of Peru, and is one of several treks that they offer in the Peruvian Andes. We offer published rates on all MLP itineraries, and for UK travellers we can also help with flight-inclusive packages which are protected under our ATOL licence.