JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



DISCOVERY GROUP TOURS

JACANA: CROSSING THE CONTINENT

19 days from **£4,583pp**

PERU / LIMA / CUSCO / SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS / MACHU PICCHU / LAKE TITICACA / LAKE TITICACA – PERUVIAN SIDE / LAKE TITICACA – BOLIVIAN SIDE / BOLIVIA / LA PAZ AND THE ALTIPLANO / PARAGUAY / ASUNCION AND THE HEARTLAND / IGUAZÚ FALLS / IGUAZU FALLS – ARGENTINIAN SIDE / IGUAZU FALLS – BRAZILIAN



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

A panoramic group tour from the Andes through the South American heartland to the Atlantic Ocean in Brazil. Includes the Inca heritage of Peru, the icy peaks and plains of Bolivia, remote Paraguay and the epic Iguazú Falls.

	Fly to Lima, Peru, arriving the same day.
DAY 1	Overnight at your hotel in Lima.
DAY 2	Fly to Cusco.
DAY 3	Guided tour of Cusco and the surrounding sites.
DAY 4	Full-day excursion to the Sacred Valley, overnight there.
DAY 5	Train to Machu Picchu, guided tour. Overnight in nearby village.
DAY 6	Optional re-entry to the Inca site. Return by train and bus to Cusco.
DAY 7	Day at leisure in Cusco.
DAY 8	Scenic bus ride to Puno.
DAY 9	Visit the Uros Islands and travel to Copacabana, Bolivia.
DAY 10	Boat trip to Sun Island and overland to La Paz.
DAY 11	Guided tour of La Paz.
DAYS 12-13	Fly to Asuncion, Paraguay.
DAYS 14-15	By road into Argentina and visit the Iguazu Falls.
DAY 16	Visit the Brazilian side of the falls and fly onto Rio de Janeiro.
DAY 17	Guided tour of the city including Sugarloaf Mountain.
DAY 18	Further exploration of Rio including Corcovado Mountain.
DAY 19	Depart for international flight or extension.
	UK clients arrive home the following day.

ITINERARY

An epic journey that traverses this diverse continent from the Pacific to the Atlantic in just under three exhilarating weeks. Landscapes of infinite variety unfold before you; The dramatic peaks of the Andes, and the shimmering lakes and bleak beauty of the altiplano eventually give way to sultry forests and wide, white-sand beaches. The human story is no less captivating; histories are preserved in the magnificent Inca temples and glorious colonial architecture, and the bustling villages and markets offer an insight into contemporary ways of life. The trip begins in Lima and quickly moves onto Cusco, the capital of the Inca empire, and a visit to the awe inspiring ruins of Machu Picchu. Cross the saphire waters of Lake Titicaca into Bolivia, before venturing into little known, atmospheric Paraguay. You continue onto the thundering Iguazú Falls, and the trip finishes in Rio de Janeiro, a spellbinding city in a peerless location, sandwiched between steep forested mountains and the Atlantic.

Fly to Lima, Peru, arriving the same day.



DAY 1

Overnight at your hotel in Lima.

Those passengers arriving on an international flight will be met by the Journey Latin America tour leader or a local representative at the airport and escorted to the group hotel.

The City of Kings was once the capital of Spanish America, and the remnants of its glorious past can still be seen in the faded grandeur of the colonial churches and splendid, traditional wooden balconies in the city centre. The explosive growth of the last 50 years, so typical of capital cities in the developing world, has transformed Lima into a bustling and chaotic low-rise city of over 10 million people. Away from the busy centre, there are some superb traditional restaurants as well as archaeological museums filled to the rafters with pre-Columbian treasures. In crowded streets, throngs of traffic race out towards Miraflores, on the coast, a modern middle-class suburb where your hotel is located. There will be a walking tour of the colonial centre with your tour leader the following morning.

DAY 2

Fly to Cusco.



A short 90 minute flight takes you into the Andes and the famous city of Cusco. The name Cusco derives from the Quechua word for navel, indicating its location at the centre of the Inca Empire. Its many impressive, original Inca walls display extraordinary craftsmanship, and the squares are dotted with ornate colonial churches. It's a vibrant, lively city, where shoeshine boys and postcard sellers jostle for your attention on cobbled streets lined with handicraft shops and cafés. In the evening, the town centre fills with people flocking to the many restaurants, bars and clubs.

DAY 3

Guided tour of Cusco and the surrounding sites.



An experienced guide gives you a detailed tour of Cusco, which includes a visit to several nearby Inca ruins. You visit Q'oricancha, once the principal Inca Sun Temple, with extraordinarily intricate stonework, and then explore the colossal zigzag walls of Sacsayhuamán, brooding on a hillside above Cusco. In 1536 a desperate and defining 3 day battle was fought between the Spaniards and the Incas around this fortress; the first conquistadors to see it were overawed and centuries later it is still an extraordinary and imposing sight.

DAY 4

Full-day excursion to the Sacred Valley, overnight there.



This full-day adventure visits several of the villages and archaeological sites which pepper the Sacred Valley of the Incas. The Pisac complex, set high above the eponymous village, is composed of steep terraces; their engineering and preservation are unrivalled, and you can clamber among the ancient walls and explore the ruins of temples, residences and storehouses. It takes about an hour and a half to explore the site, after which you stop off in the village below where an arts and crafts market spills across the main square, stalls laden with tapestries and weavings crafted in the surrounding villages.

Continue along this picturesque, patchwork valley to Ollantaytambo, the snow-capped Andean cordillera forming a stunning backdrop. The Inca fortress towering above the adobe village is well preserved and there are wonderful views down over the gentle sloping hillsides and into the fertile valley. You spend the night in the Sacred Valley.

DAY 5

Train to Machu Picchu, guided tour. Overnight in nearby village.



A dramatic 2hr train journey from Ollantaytambo delivers you to the ruins of Machu Picchu. As the river Urubamba enters its narrow gorge between thickly-forested granite hills, there is room only for a single rail track, which hugs the right bank and passes through hamlets which are no more than a collection of shacks. The citadel is then reached by minibus up a sinuous road.

In 1911 the American explorer Hiram Bingham discovered the ruins buried beneath tropical cloud forest. It is the city's location which most captures the imagination, on a ridge spur amid forested peaks and above a roaring river canyon. Following a guided tour of the ruins you spend the night at the spa village of Machu Picchu, a couple of kilometres upstream.

Fancy hiking some of the Inca Trail without interrupting your tour? We can organise for you to walk the mini Inca Trail on this day, but still, have a guided tour of the ruins and stay with the group in the evening. Please ask us for more details.

DAY 6

Optional re-entry to the Inca site. Return by train and bus to Cusco.

You have the optional opportunity to revisit the ruins, rail schedules permitting. There is also the chance for the more challenging hike to Huayna Picchu, the conical peak which juts out behind the ruins for wonderful views over the site. If you think you'd like to re-visit the site or climb Huayna Picchu please enquire with the office, as spaces are limited and it's necessary to pre-book

You may prefer to relax and wander the narrow vehicle-free streets of Machu Picchu village, lined with souvenir shops and cafés. You return to Cusco on the afternoon train, arriving in the early evening.

DAY 7

Day at leisure in Cusco.



There are a number of optional excursions in the surrounding region. About an hour's drive from Cusco is Moray, where ancient agricultural irrigation paths form circular depressions in the earth, and there are wonderful views into the Sacred Valley and of the snowy peak of Mount Veronica. From here it is a short walk to the salt pans at Maras, circular pans of glistening white carved into the mountain side. Ask your tour leader for more optional excursions into the region, including horse riding and white water rafting on the Urubamba river.

DAY 8

Scenic bus ride to Puno.

A scenic day-long bus ride takes you from Cusco to Puno (7 hours). The drive begins by climbing up through the fertile fields of corn and potatoes to the roads highest pass at la Raya (4,200m). After this you travel across the altiplano, a large, windswept plain, punctuated by occasional market towns, where bowler-hatted indigenous women tend herds of llamas and alpacas. You arrive into Puno in the early evening.

DAY 9

Visit the Uros Islands and travel to Copacabana, Bolivia.



There is a morning excursion to the famous Uros Islands. You alight on a floating island, made entirely of tortora reeds – the same material used to build their canoes and even their homes. The inhabitants earn their living mainly through selling handicrafts to tourists and, while this is a unique experience, it has the air of a visit to a living museum.

Later continue across the Bolivian border to the small lakeside town of Copacabana. This pretty little town is a religious sanctuary (it gave Rio's famous beach its name), and its whitewashed buildings and Moorish-style basilica are striking against a clear blue Andean sky. The Basilica is frequented by pilgrims to the miraculous 16th-century Dark Virgin of the Lake, and they bring their rickety cars to the forecourt, bedecked in flowers, to be blessed by her. If you have the energy in this rarefied air, climb the stations of the cross for views out over the lake and the snow-capped cordillera in the distance.

DAY 10

Boat trip to Sun Island and overland to La Paz.



From Copacabana there is an included boat trip to Isla del Sol (Sun Island). Legend has it that this mystical spot marked the beginning of Inca civilisation. The children of the sun god sprung from the lake's depths to found the mighty empire in Cusco, and a rock at the northern end of the island was their birthplace.

Later in the day we will drive across the altiplano's windswept plains to La Paz (4hrs). At over 3,500m, La Paz is the highest capital city in the world. It is a glittering mosaic of tin, slate and tile roofs, interspersed with a line of skyscrapers that march down the valley. Beyond, keeping an eye on it all, is the colossal snow-capped Mount Illimani. This busy, commercial city has a 60% indigenous population; women dress in voluminous multi-coloured skirts, bowler hats and have centre-partings, as decreed by the Spanish monarch 3 centuries ago.

DAY 11

Guided tour of La Paz.



On your full day in the city, there will be a guided tour, beginning in the historic centre with its quaint Spanish colonial buildings, from the Governmental Palace to the cathedral. Another highlight in the heart of the city is the famous Witches' Market, brimming with potions, amulets and ritual offerings including gruesome dried llama fetuses. We'll jump on some public buses to get a real feel for the city, and then we'll take to the skies on board the cablecars that zigzag the city, all the way up to El Alto for magnificent views of the city.

DAYS 12-13

Fly to Asuncion, Paraguay.



Depart for the airport in El Alto and board a flight (normally via Santa Cruz – 3.5hrs) to Asuncion. This rather old world, eclectic city is located on the shores of the Río Paraguay, and an air of nostalgia permeates its busy streets. Paraguay feels caught in a time warp, the legacy of years of isolation from the outside world under the rule of a series of dictators. The wide, tree-lined avenues, parks and stately buildings are impressive, and you will explore them on your walking tour of the capital.

DAYS 14-15

By road into Argentina and visit the Iguazu Falls.



The adventure continues with a road journey (7 hours) across the Argentinean border to the town of Puerto Iguazu. The Iguazú Falls are unquestionably one of the most extraordinary natural wonders in the world. A total of 275 falls thunder through dense forest over a 2.5km stretch. The u-shaped Devil's Throat is the main gorge, where the frothy water of the Iguazú River crashes over a 1.5km-wide precipice and columns of vapour are thrown skyward. Elsewhere the river flows decorously through the rainforest breaking up into dozens of smaller falls. You might spot toucans with their outsized bright orange beaks perched in the foliage above the tumultuous waters.

On your full day based here there is an expedition to the Argentine side of the falls with your tour leader. From the National Park Visitor Centre, where there is a display that illustrates the biodiversity of the region's tropical rainforest, a little natural-gas-powered train transfers you to Cataratas Station where the Upper Walk begins. This sequence of causeways and passarelles links dozens of tiny basalt islands at the top of a sheer rock face and the walkways cross the myriad streams of the River Iguazú as they cascade over the lip of the precipice. Your breath is quite literally taken away as the water thunders on to the rocks below.

The train continues to Devil's Throat Station where a 1km-long walkway leads across the river to the thunderous Garganta del Diablo, The Devil's Throat. From this vantage point you can feel the incredible power of the water, and the flow is mesmeric as it plummets into the vortex below.

DAY 16

Visit the Brazilian side of the falls and fly onto Rio de Janeiro.



In the morning you'll head out to the Brazilian side of the falls, from where there is a broad panorama of these magnificent cataracts, and there are some excellent opportunities to photograph the full sweep of the cascades. Continue onto Foz do Iguaçú airport and fly to Rio de Janeiro (2 hours).

Rio de Janeiro is the most romantic, intriguing and beautiful city on the continent. Sumptuous apartments overlook sparkling bays against a backdrop of half-built slum dwellings, favelas, which cling precariously to the hillsides. Rio has an awesome bay-side location among near-vertical granite mountains.

Here, tropical foliage swoops down to white-to-toffee coloured sandy beaches in turn battered by the huge waves of Atlantic surf. The drive into the city gives a fleeting glimpse of the docks and commercial centre as you head towards the magnificent stretch of sand at Copacabana beach; your hotel is close by.

DAY 17

Guided tour of the city including Sugarloaf Mountain.



Today there is a tour to familiarise yourself with this most iconic of cities. As part of this we also include a trip to Pão de Açucar (Sugar Loaf Mountain). Ride the cable-car up the twin granite mountains protruding from the ocean and enjoy the magnificent views back over the beaches, Botafogo Bay with its bobbing yachts and into the mountains beyond. Theres a lovely (and safe) nature walk round the foot of the mountain, or you could pop for a beer into the nearby villagey quarter of Urca, leafy home of artists and TV stars.

DAY 18

Further exploration of Rio including Corcovado Mountain.



In the morning you'll board a steep rack-and-pinion railway which glides up through tropical Tijuca National Park, the largest urban forest in the world dripping with fruit and flowers, to reach the summit of Corcovado Mountain. Here the famous 40m art deco Christ the Redeemer statue soars above the city, arms outspread benevolently. On a clear day, the views over the city and out across the ocean and outlying islands are stupendous.

The afternoon is at leisure. A popular optional excursion is a visit to the exotic Botanical Gardens. Walk along the splendid Avenue of the Royal Palms, and see if you can catch a glimpse of the toucans and marmosets that frequent the park, attracted by thousands of species of tropical and subtropical plants. There are also glass houses sheltering bromeliads, and a research institute here.

DAY 19

Depart for international flight or extension.

UK clients arrive home the following day.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Lima: walking tour of colonial centre
- Machu Picchu: guided tour of the ruins
- Sacred Valley: guided tour
- Cusco: guided city tour
- Lake Titicaca: Uros Islands
- Lake Titicaca: boat trip to Sun Island
- La Paz: walking tour of the city and cable cars
- Asuncion: walking tour of the city
- Iguazú: Iguazú Falls (Brazilian and Argentine sides)
- Rio: city tour, Sugarloaf and Corcovado mountain

ESSENTIALS

To find out more about how our group tours including group sizes, solo travellers and why to choose us. Please click **here**.

On this tour, you'll be accompanied from start to finish by one of **our exceptional Journey Latin America tour leaders**. From the moment you land in Latin America until the day the tour ends they will deal with all the practicalities, expertly adapting to the circumstances and individual needs of the group. Rather than different guides in different cities, your leader will get to know the group and keep you informed and entertained as you go.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

19 days, 18 nights: Lima 1; Cusco 2; Sacred Valley 1; Machu Picchu 1; Cusco 2; Puno 1; Copacabana 1; La Paz 2; Asunción 2; Puerto Iguazu 2; Rio de Janeiro 3.

ACCOMMODATION

For our Discovery Journeys we aim to use good quality, value-for-money accommodation, in a mix of larger more modern and smaller family run hotels. All the properties we use are well maintained and rooms will have a private bathroom with hot water.

The focus of these trips is on getting outside, seeing the sights, and experiencing local restaurants and cafes, therefore a few hotels may not have evening dining facilities. If you prefer more luxurious accommodation, please see the Hummingbird Tour which follows a very similar route.

Examples of hotels include:
Lima: Hotel El Tambo
Cusco: Hotel Ruinas
Sacred Valley: Tunupa Lodge
Machu Picchu: Hatun Inti Classic
Puno: Hotel Intiqa
Copacabana (Lake Titicaca): Rosario del Lago
La Paz: Hotel Rosario
Asunción: Hotel Palmaroga
Puerto Iguazu: Mercure
Rio de Janeiro: Windsor Copa Hotel

On very rare occasions these hotels can change, however please speak to one of our consultants who can provide full details for each departure if you have any doubts. Address and contact details will be sent out with your final documents.

TRANSPORT

3 flights, 2 train journeys (2 and 3.5 hours), 4 road journeys (longest 7 hours). The only journeys using a public vehicle is Puno to Cusco. The rest will be done using private vehicles for the group.

MEALS

Breakfast daily.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

On this tour the price includes excursions in all the places you visit as per the itinerary. There will however likely be some free time when you may choose to take part in an optional excursion. These are booked locally through your tour leader once you are in Latin America, however we are more than happy to advise you of what is on offer in advance of your holiday so you can best plan the excursions that suit you.

On all tours that visit Cusco we offer the chance to hike the mini Inca Trail as well as revisit Machu Picchu on the morning after the first visit. Time permitting, we may also be able to offer the climb up Huayna Picchu. If you are interested in any of these optional excursions, please speak to your travel expert in advance to arrange.

TRAVELLING ALONE

There is no extra cost for single travellers who are willing to share a room. You will be accommodated with another same-

sex member of the group who is also travelling solo. For single travellers who wish to have their own room there are a limited number of single rooms available, which carry a surcharge.

TRIP SUITABILITY

The pace of this trip is fast; there are some early mornings and long days spent travelling (albeit with frequent stops and fantastic scenery). The streets in Cusco and La Paz are cobbled and steep and you must be cautious at altitude. You should consult your tour leader to make sure your chosen optional excursions are suitable for you.

CLIMATE

The rainy season in the Andes runs between November and April when there are showers most afternoons. At altitude the sun can be strong in the day but temperature can drop significantly at night. As a broad overview Brazil and Argentina have the opposite seasons to the UK, meaning November to February tend to be the warmest summer months and it can be especially warm in tropical Iguazú. We run this tour year round.

A comprehensive overview of the weather in all the regions you are visiting can be found in our Destination pages. Our Travel Experts can answer your questions on climate and further details will be sent with your confirmation documents.

ALTITUDE

Some of the excursions in and around La Paz, Lake Titicaca, Cusco and the Sacred Valley are at high altitude (over 3,000m). Symptoms of altitude sickness vary; most common are mild headaches, slight nausea and breathlessness. Most people are unaffected and if you drink plenty of water and allow your body to acclimatise (don't exert yourself or drink alcohol) in the first couple of days after arrival, you will minimise your chances of suffering any symptoms. Please refer to our Briefing Dossier for further information.

CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT AND LUGGAGE

For day-to-day wear you should go prepared to encounter all seasons. Both warm clothing and a sun hat are essential at altitude; a light fleece jacket and a Gore-Tex outer shell makes a good combination. Trousers or shorts made from light, quick-drying synthetic materials also work well. It can get very cold at altitude, particularly after sundown and so warm clothes are essential as is a good waterproof jacket. Strong, comfortable footwear is essential and you should bring insect repellent, sun block and sunglasses.

Due to luggage restrictions on the train to Machu Picchu, you will leave the bulk of your baggage in the Cusco hotel, which will be waiting for you on your return. You can take up to 5kgs per person on the train. An overnight holdall/rucksack is recommended to separate your luggage for the time spent away.

MONEY

Please see the Country Info tab on this holiday for our latest currency information and advice about how to take your spending money. Tipping in Latin America is almost always done using cash. It is customary to tip tour leaders, local guides, drivers, boat crews and other service providers such as restaurant staff and porters. Full tipping guidelines are sent with your confirmation documents as is advice on local costs.

HEALTH, ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND INSURANCE

For health information on travelling to Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil including recommended vaccinations, please see https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/

A Yellow Fever certificate is required for passengers under the age of 60 for entry into Paraguay. An exemption certificate is available from travel clinics in the UK if you're unable to have the vaccine for medical reasons.

All Latin American countries have specific entry regulations related to Covid 19. Please also check our Travel Hub for further information.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports should be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Other nationalities should enquire with us or check with the consulates.

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on the Travel insurance website.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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