JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

ACTIVE PERU: THE AUSANGATE TREK

11 days from **£2,920pp**

PERU / LIMA / CUSCO / SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS / MACHU PICCHU



WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

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

This challenging high-altitude mountain trek is close to Cusco, but with an other-wordly, wilderness feel. Overnight not in chilly tents but in small, cosy lodges run by local communities.

DAY 1	**Arrive Lima, transfer to hotel close to the Pacific coast.**
DAY 2	**Fly to Cusco.**
DAY 3	**Walking tour of the city and surrounding Inca ruins.**
DAY 4	**Walking tour of highland Chinchero and Maras villages and Moray Inca site.**
DAY 5	**Begin the Ausangate Trek, overnight basic lodge.**
DAY 6	**Hiking the Ausangate Trek, overnight basic lodge.**
DAY 7	**Hiking the Ausangate Trek, overnight basic lodge.**
DAY 8	**Hiking the Ausangate Trek, overnight basic lodge.**
DAY 9	**Return to Cusco.**
DAY 10	**Day at leisure, optional excursion to Machu Picchu.**
DAY 11	**Fly to Lima to connect with international flight home.**

ITINERARY

Ausangate is the highest snow-draped mountain in the region. The trek which visits it is close to Cusco, but little trodden and the Martian landscapes will enhance the feeling of remoteness.

Our five-day trek below its northern face (you don't climb to the peak) is one of our favourites. You'll explore part of the Vilcanota range which divides the highland empire of the Incas from the steamy jungles of the Amazon. En route you'll cross three high-altitude passes, with views of gigantic glaciers, icy lakes and jagged peaks. The area is full of wildlife, isolated farmsteads and traditional indigenous villages.

Yes it's challenging, but there is a big bonus: you aren't camping! You'll be staying in remote, basic but comfortable lodges run by the local communities, members of which you get to meet along the way. There are proper beds, bathrooms and hot food to set you up for the next day's hike.

DAY 1

Arrive Lima, transfer to hotel close to the Pacific coast.

You will be met at the airport and escorted to your hotel in the cliff-side Pacific residential and commercial district of Miraflores. The half-hour drive to the hotel through Lima's outskirts and along the coast encapsulates the invigorating buzz of a modern-day Latin American capital.



DAY 2

Fly to Cusco.

On your transfer to the airport you'll be taken on a whistle-stop tour of Lima's principal attractions, including the vast Plaza de Armas flanked by the imposing cathedral and government palace.

It's a 1-hour flight to Cusco. It is said that the city was originally built in the shape of a puma; its position atop the precipitous foothills of the Andes is without doubt a commanding one. Capital of the Inca Empire and latterly a stronghold to the Spanish conquistadors, Cusco is not so much a blend of architectures as a defiant mix.

Today its many impressive original Inca walls display extraordinary craftsmanship, while the bustling squares are dotted with ornate baroque colonial churches. It's a vivacious city, where shoeshine boys and postcard sellers jostle for your attention in cobbled streets lined with handicraft shops and cafés. In the evening, the town centre fills with people flocking to the many restaurants, bars and cafés.



DAY 3

Walking tour of the city and surrounding Inca ruins.



Today you'll have a guided walking tour of the city, the centre of which is compact and easy to get around on foot. Beyond the city, its squares, museums, churches and markets, you'll visit some impressive ruins on the outskirts at Tambomachay, Puca-Pucara and the monumental Sacsayhuamán, with its foreboding cyclopean fortress.

While the edges of Cusco are dominated by Inca dwellings, temples and fortresses, the historic heart (with the Plaza de Armas flanked by the cathedral and the church of La Compañia) reveal the indelible mark of the Spanish conquistadores.

DAY 4

Walking tour of highland Chinchero and Maras villages and Moray Inca site.



Drive through stunning countryside, against a backdrop of the snow-capped Andes to the high plains of Chinchero. On market days the neat colonial plaza of the eponymous village is awash with colour and noise.

The nearby ruins – the country estate of one of the last emperors, Tupac Inca – overlook the Royal Inca Road which stretches as far as Chile in the south and Ecuador in the north.

Visit the agricultural terraces of Moray, an Inca site used as an experimental agricultural centre to develop complex farming techniques in order to increase their crop yields. It comprises numerous terraces carved into a large, natural amphitheatre, each one with a different microclimate from those above and below.

Continue to the Maras saltpans, a series of terraces where a natural source of saline water is evaporated by the strong Andean sun. In use since Inca times, the saltpans continue to be worked by the local community and present a unique sight, with their flat, white surfaces contrasting with the tawny and green landscape surrounding them.

DAY 5

Begin the Ausangate Trek, overnight basic lodge.



Start out on the high-altitude Ausangate Trek. (This is a shared service: there may be a few other trekkers travelling with you).

To the southwest of Cusco, the Vilcanota range is the last barrier between the old Inca Empire and the Amazon basin. Snow-clad Mount Ausangate, at 6,384m, is the undoubted king of this region.

This trek offers a wide array of attractions en route – glaciers, lakes, herds of llamas and alpacas, even vicuñas, picturesque villages and their traditionally dressed inhabitants. The trip takes you around Ausangate Mountain (not to its peak) and over three high passes.

At such high altitudes you may well be glad you are not camping. Instead you will stay at remote, simple but cosy mountain lodges, all of which have a large dining room, kitchen, and lounge by an open fire. Accommodation is in double/twin rooms and hot water bottles are placed in the bed. There's a warm welcome from the staff and hot, nourishing meals appropriate for trekkers are provided.

Departing Cusco by bus, head south-east following the Vilcanota Valley, stopping to visit the beautiful colonial church of Checacupe, before continuing the ascent of the Japura Valley that leads to the communities of Osefina and Chillca (4,370m) where you we will be met by the local community. It's an easy day to start off, with only a couple of hours' walking (3.3km).

DAY 6

Hiking the Ausangate Trek, overnight basic lodge.



After breakfast the trekking begins in earnest as you start the Apu Ausangate Trail. It's a gentle hike for 3 hours along the glacier valley of Phinaya passing potato fields and herds of alpacas and llamas.

Head towards the glaciers of Santa Catalina, ascend along the trail passing the Pjachaj waterfalls.

After lunch there is the option of a challenging walk or an easier one. The latter involves just 2 hours' walking at a slow-ish pace. Alternatively, there's a 3-hour trek past moraine walls, glaciers and lagoons to a warm welcome at Machuracay Tambo (4,600m), right at the foot of the vast, ice-jacketed Mariposa mountain.

DAY 7

Hiking the Ausangate Trek, overnight basic lodge.



Today you cross the first mountain pass at 5,100m. You can climb to a viewpoint a lung-busting 100m higher up, affording other-worldly panoramic views of the surrounding region. Descend through scree alongside the glaciers, arriving at Ausangate Cocha lake for lunch.

In the afternoon, pass through a tapestry of red sandstone sediment formations where vicuñas and sometimes condors can be seen. You get so close to the imperious snow-stifled bulk of Ausangate you feel you can reach out and touch it. After another incredible day of hiking, arrive at your lodge, Anantapata Tambo (4,750m) for the night.

DAY 8

Hiking the Ausangate Trek, overnight basic lodge.



After breakfast, take the trail over another pass before dropping down to hike along the shores of Lake Kayrawiri, surrounded by rugged mountain peaks and a vast valley below.

Pass by kaleidoscopic striations of colours varying from bright red to psychedelic green and turquoise imbedded in the hillsides before reaching Cerro Laya Grande via the massive Glaciar del Inca, and the striking colours of the sediments of Yauricuna, a unique setting to enjoy lunch.

Continuing after lunch you will see hundreds of Andean geese nesting in the cliffs of Anta, and the flatiron formations of Apu Labrayani, before arriving at Huampococha Tambo (4,800m) for the night.

DAY 9

Return to Cusco.

Waking up to great views of the mountains, you begin your final ascent over the pass, and from here you descend passing capricious limestone formations to finish the trail at Trapiche in time for lunch.

Return to Cusco by bus, journey time approximately 3 hours.

DAY 10

Day at leisure, optional excursion to Machu Picchu.



You have a day at leisure after your trek. You may choose just to relax, but if you have not been to Cusco before, you will probably want to visit Machu Picchu, Peru's most famous and celebrated cultural icon. We will book all the services for you in advance, and the extra cost will be added to your holiday price.
Travelling by road and train, you travel to the ruins of the Lost City. As the River Urubamba enters its narrow gorge between thickly forested granite hills, there is room only for a single track, which hugs the right bank and passes through hamlets that are no more than a collection of shacks beside the railway. Close to the foot of the mountain on a saddle upon which the citadel was built is the bustling village of Machu Picchu, dedicated to serving the many visitors with artisan markets, bars and restaurants.

The majestic ruined city, reclaimed from tropical cloud forest, is reached by minibus up a sinuous road, or on foot up a near vertical rocky path. The American explorer Hiram Bingham discovered it in 1911, by which time it was completely buried beneath jungle vegetation. It is perhaps the ruins' location, on a ridge spur amid forested peaks and above a roaring river canyon, that most ignites the imagination. You will have a guided tour of the ruins.

DAY 11

Fly to Lima to connect with international flight home.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Cusco: Guided walking tour of the city and nearby Inca sites
- Cusco: Guided excursion to upland villages and Inca site
- 5-day Ausangate Trek

ESSENTIALS

2 flights (approx 1 hour); 2 scenic road journeys.

On this tour we use good value budget hotels, they are small, friendly establishments, colonial or modern in style with well-equipped rooms, private bathroom and heating. You spend 4 nights in a series of remote basic mountain lodges where there is no electricity but the double/twin rooms have private bathroom. There's a warm open fire and hot food is served.

Breakfast daily, lunch days 3 & 4, full board days 5-8.

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by the latter on their return.

11 days, 10 nights: Lima 1; Cusco 3; Ausangate Trek 4, Cusco 2.

The unit of currency in Peru is the sol.

Cash machines are available in all major cities and towns including Lima and Cusco, and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds.

We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency. Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

When you are on the treks you will not be spending money but you might carry a reasonable amount of cash for tips, ad hoc or local purchases.

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US$35 per day should cover the cost of the few meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants and you will pay considerably more.

TIPPING

Tips are expected and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential. Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

AIRPORT TAXES

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax and taxes on internal flights are usually included in the ticket.

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This holiday is suitable for all able-bodied, fit visitors with hiking or hill-walking experience. The trekking is at high altitude (reaching over 5,000m) which will affect breathing and pace. You should be able to walk over undulating rocky terrain for

several hours. The last couple of days particularly are definitely challenging and may justifiably be classified as "severe". A detailed trek document will be sent to you upon confirmation of your booking.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

The rainy season in the Andes runs between November and April. The dry season is in June, July and August when the sun is strong during the day, but at night the temperature drops dramatically. May, September and October are less predictable, with both rainy and sunny spells.

Lima is covered in a dull grey mist for much of the year. It almost never rains in Lima, and temperatures are moderate.

Your treks are at high altitude (up to over 5,000m). Because you have a couple of days in the Cusco area (3,600m approx) before starting the trek you should be only mildly affected. Drink plenty of water and allow your body to acclimatise (don't exert yourself or drink alcohol for the first couple of days at altitude). Symptoms vary: most common are mild headaches, slight nausea and breathlessness. If you don't recover in a day or two speak to our representatives; in very rare instances it is necessary to descend to lower altitudes.

Please refer to our **Briefing Dossier** for further information.

For day-to-day wear in town or on day trips 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 waterproof/breathable outer shell makes a good combination. Trousers, shorts or even a skirt made from light, quick-drying synthetic materials work well.

For the trekking you should have a small back pack to carry the personal effects you will need while walking. Bring comfortable and adequate clothing to protect you from cold (and possibly wet) weather. We recommend you layer with synthetic fabric clothing as theses are the most effective barriers against the cold. We discourage the use of cotton garments in cold or wet mountain conditions. The innermost layer should be long underwear. The middle layer can be a synthetic turtleneck or woollen shirt, and shorts or trousers. The outermost layer should be a synthetic or down jacket, and/or a good quality Gore-Tex wind/rain parka and over-trousers. You will also need a bag in which to store the gear you aren't taking on the trek. Strong, comfortable hiking boots are essential, as is a hat to protect you from the strong sun and sunglasses. Bring sun block and insect repellant.

Trekking poles are an excellent aid, again you can hire them locally but they may not be very high tech.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts. Good equipment is very important and hard to come by in South America.

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following: typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. You should consult your GP for specific requirements.

You can also find helpful information on the **Masta Travel Health** 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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