JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



CLASSIC GROUP TOURS

ANDEAN FLAMINGO: ANDES LAID BARE

17 days from **£5,861pp**

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 / UYUNI SALT FLATS / CHILE / ATACAMA DESERT / SANTIAGO AND THE VINEYARDS



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

A group tour to Peru, Bolivia and Chile which provides comfort as well as remote adventure. Includes Cusco, Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca. Continue to La Paz in Bolivia and drive across the dazzling Uyuni salt flats to the Atacama Desert in Chile.

DAY 1	**Arrive into Lima. Overnight in the capital.**
DAY 2	**Fly to Cusco, afternoon at leisure.**
DAY 3	**Excursion to the Sacred Valley of the Incas; overnight.**
DAY 4	**By train to Machu Picchu, guided tour of the ruins.**
DAY 5	**Optional re-entry to the site; return to Cusco by train.**
DAY 6	**Guided tour of Cusco and Sacsayhuamán.**
DAY 7	**Scenic road journey to Lake Titicaca.**
DAY 8	**By road to Copacabana. Boat excursion on Lake Titicaca**
DAY 9	**Continue to La Paz.**
DAYS 10-11	**Walking tour of the city.**
DAY 12	**Fly to Uyuni and begin your exploration of the Uyuni salt flats.**
DAY 13	**Continue exploring the Salar**
DAY 14	**Cross the border into Northern Chile**
DAY 15	**Explore San Pedro de Atacama.**
DAY 16	**Fly to Santiago: time permitting, optional excursion to a vineyard.**
DAY 17	**Depart on international flight or extension.**

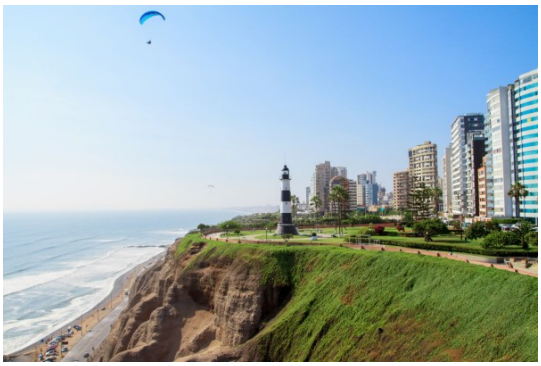
ITINERARY

This adventurous yet comfortable journey through the Andean heartland explores a variety of mountain landscapes. After exploring the misty cloud forests surrounding Machu Picchu, and crossing sapphire-hued Lake Titicaca, traverse the sparkling salt flats of Uyuni before descending to the arid rocks of Atacama - the driest desert in the world.

Throughout, a rich indigenous culture is manifest in intricate and brightly coloured costumes and markets bursting with produce and crafts. The imposing ancient ruins bear testament to the region's complex and tumultuous history. The desolate high-altitude desert of south-western Bolivia is beautiful and utterly remote, with rough roads and basic infrastructure (even the hotels are constructed from salt!). An adventurous spirit is necessary to get the most from this memorable trip.

DAY 1

Arrive into Lima. Overnight in the capital.



Those passengers arriving on an international flight will be met at the airport by the Journey Latin America tour leader or a local representative. The drive to the hotel encapsulates the invigorating chaos of a modern Latin American capital city.

Lima, the City of Kings, was once the capital of Spanish America, and the vestiges of its glorious past can still be seen in the faded grandeur of the colonial churches and 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 dynamic and chaotic low-rise city of over 10 million people. In crowded streets, throngs of traffic race out towards Miraflores, a modern middle-class suburb on the coast, where your hotel is located.

DAY 2

Fly to Cusco, afternoon at leisure.



Fly to Cusco (1 hour). The name Cusco derives from the Quechua word for navel, indicating its location at the centre of the Inca Empire; one that reached its peak as Columbus prepared to sail across the Atlantic. 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 squares fill with people flocking to the many restaurants (both upmarket and sophisticated cuisine and local delicacies are on offer), bars and clubs.

DAY 3

Excursion to the Sacred Valley of the Incas; overnight.



Today, head out from Cusco over the high plains and descend to explore the fertile Sacred Valley of the Incas. Once the bread-basket of the Inca Empire, it was heavily populated in imperial times and scores of archaeological sites remain, where well-preserved ruins bear witness to the highly developed society that the Incas created. The drive passes through or close to several of the villages and temple fortresses that pepper the valley.

The Pisac complex, set high above and visible from the eponymous colonial village you will visit, is built on terraces carved into the steep hillsides. The engineering and preservation are unrivalled. From the flat valley floor this intricate hillside rises up like a green staircase to the heavens.

Continue along this picturesque, patchwork valley to the temple of Ollantaytambo. The snow-frosted Andean cordillera forms a stunning backdrop. Ollantaytambo, sitting strategically at the gateway to the Amazon basin, was never captured by the Spanish conquistadors, but the inhabitants decided that the settlement was too vulnerable and would eventually fail, and so they abandoned it. The fortress, the colonial grid plan and the Inca foundations are still intact and there are wonderful views down over the sloping hillsides and into the fertile valley. You spend the night in the tranquil valley.

DAY 4

By train to Machu Picchu, guided tour of the ruins.



Set off by rail to Machu Picchu (2½ hours). As the Urubamba river 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. Arrive in the small, sub-tropical spa village of Machu Picchu, where you leave your bags at the hotel and board a bus for a precipitous journey up a sinuous road to the Inca site of Machu Picchu and take a guided tour.

The American explorer Hiram Bingham discovered the site in 1911, by which time it was completely buried beneath tropical cloud forest. It soon became clear to excavators that the conquistadors had never found the city, and for many years it was mistaken for the legendary last refuge of the Incas, Vilcabamba.

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 5

Optional re-entry to the site; return to Cusco by train.



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. There's also the option of the slightly easier climb of Machu Picchu Mountain. If you think you'd like to re-visit the site or do one of the climbs 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 late afternoon.

DAY 6

Guided tour of Cusco and Sacsayhuamán.



A guided 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/temple; the first conquistadors to see it were overawed, and centuries later it is still an extraordinary and imposing sight.

DAY 7

Scenic road journey to Lake Titicaca.



The memorable drive from Cusco to Puno (7 hours – with comfort breaks at places of interest and photo opportunities) follows the narrow Huatanay Valley south through an intensively farmed arable landscape. Ancient villages, small farmsteads and market towns line the river banks as the road climbs steadily to the high pass at La Raya (4,300 metres), after which point the scenery changes dramatically as you cross the altiplano, a vast, windswept plain, punctuated by occasional market towns, where bowler-hatted women tend herds of llamas and alpacas.

Puno is situated on the shores of Lake Titicaca and the town has a huge market and one of the largest universities in Peru. Exquisite Lake Titicaca sits high in the Andes (at 3,805 metres, the highest navigable lake in the world) on the Peruvian-Bolivian border, and is the focal point for subsistence farmers in the region who fish its dazzling sapphire waters and plant crops along the fertile shores.

DAY 8

By road to Copacabana. Boat excursion on Lake Titicaca



We start the day with a a short visit to the Uros Islands which offers a glimpse into the unique reed-built communities of Lake Titicaca. Meet the local people and learn about their traditional way of life on these remarkable floating islands.

We then set off along the lakeshore towards the Bolivian border. The still waters almost lap the road, and wader birds may be seen negotiating the reeds. Copacabana is a pretty little town impressively located between two grand hills on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Its beach gave the name to the better known one in Rio. Excursion by boat to the nearby Sun Island (Isla del Sol). Sun Island was an important pilgrimage destination even before the arrival of the Incas; originally called Titicaca, it gave the lake its name. Terraced slopes provide sustenance for its small farming communities. From one of the walking trails here you can squint across the sparkling lake to the ice-jacketed peaks of the Cordillera Real beyond. Return to Copacabana for the night.

DAY 9

Continue to La Paz.



Travel by road across the bleak altiplano with views over the snow-tipped, spidery peaks of the Cordillera Real before it makes a spectacular descent into La Paz. At over 3,500m this is the highest capital city in the world. You arrive through the highland suburb of El Alto, which has grown so rapidly with an influx of rural migrants in search of work, that it is now a huge city in its own right. Soon after, you find yourself on the rim of a vast canyon and the city of La Paz spreads out before you, a glittering mosaic of tin, slate and tile roofs, interspersed with a line of skyscrapers that march down the valley. And beyond, keeping an eye on it all, is the colossal bulk of Mount Illimani.

DAYS 10-11

Walking tour of the city.



This busy city has a 60% indigenous population; women dress in voluminous multicoloured skirts and bowler hats and have centre partings, as decreed by the Spanish monarch 3 centuries ago. Your 2 full days in the city give you plenty of opportunity to explore the colonial centre around Plaza Murillo, to stroll through the steep narrow streets, and around the many open and covered markets; it's the street life here, the sounds and smells, that make it so fascinating. You are orientated in the compact city centre by a walking tour.

There is an optional excursion to the ruins of Tiwanaku, about which little is known. Travel 2 hours from of La Paz across the bleak, tawny earth of the altiplano, past glimmering lakes and herds of haughty alpacas. These pre-Columbian ruins are considered among the most important on the continent, and the massive gateways and imposing walls are redolent of bygone glory. It is believed that the inhabitants here were more advanced than the Incas in pottery, mathematics, art and astronomy. Explore a new museum on the site which houses more than 100 artefacts and provides a fascinating insight into the history of the ruins.

DAY 12

Fly to Uyuni and begin your exploration of the Uyuni salt flats.



Early start to fly south from La Paz to Uyuni (45 minutes), a small and unremarkable settlement which cowers on a wind ravaged and remote plateau; gateway to a starkly intense area of outstanding natural beauty. After a visit to the 'train cemetery' on the outskirts of town it is straight onto the salt flats for the next 3 days of your journey. The salar is a dizzying sight. The surface is utterly featureless, smooth, and composed of nothing but pure, dazzling white salt. After rain a thin layer of water covers the surface, turning the salt flats into a huge mirror reflecting an inverted sky. In the centre lies the Isla del Pescado, a small island covered in giant cacti, where you stop to stretch your legs and soak up the view.

The next 2 days are spent travelling by 4WD on this extraordinary, other-worldly journey.

DAY 13

Continue exploring the Salar

Continue to travel over vast Salar until arriving onto the slowly emerging high altitude desert overlooked by imposing volcanoes. You'll explore the stunning rock formations, vast plains and remote lagoons populated by wild Vicunas and flamingos. Spend the night next to one of the lagoons in the midst of the remote desert. Make sure you take time to take in the nights sky uninterrupted by light pollution.



DAY 14

Cross the border into Northern Chile

The drive continues on unpaved tracks across a lofty and bitterly cold plateau. The pale ochre beauty of the ashen hills and moonlike rock formations is suddenly broken by the opalescent colours of remote lagunas Verde and Colorado. As you swoop down into the Atacama Desert you see a distant patch of green, the oasis of San Pedro.

DAY 15

Explore San Pedro de Atacama.



San Pedro is a timeless adobe town with a laid back atmosphere. Its dusty streets are lined with bars, cafés and tour operators offering various kinds of excursions into the surrounding desert.

Should you choose to take the morning optional excursion to El Tatio Geysers, be prepared for a very early start. But it's well worth it. You arrive on the pitted, craggy geyser field just before dawn, and as the sun rises and warms the earth, hot steam projects dramatically out of the crater into the freezing morning air, creating a wall of mist through which you can make out dark silhouettes and the penetrating sunlight. Note that a rapid ascent to an altitude of 4,500m makes this excursion unsuitable for some.

Alternatively you may want to walk to Pukará de Quitor (3 km). This old Inca fortress has superb views of the mountains and volcanoes bordering Bolivia and Argentina.

On the included excursion to the Moon Valley you arrive late afternoon to explore shady gorges and dramatic canyons formed over centuries by the erosion of salt mountains. Just before dusk, climb to the ridge of a vast golden sand dune to see the landscape lit up in different shades of pink, crimson and mandarin cast by the setting sun.

DAY 16

Fly to Santiago: time permitting, optional excursion to a vineyard.



A transfer takes you to nearby Calama (90 minutes) for the 2 hour flight to Santiago. Set in a broad valley between the high Andes and a smaller coastal range, Chile's capital has a distinctly Mediterranean feel.

In the afternoon your guided city tour takes you to all the major sites of this fascinating city concentrating on Santiago's bustling historic centre, which in recent years has taken on a new lease of life. Awakening from years of neglect, the traditional residential neighbourhood of Lastarria is a delight to explore, replete with shops, arty cafés and characterful hotels. Nearby, leafy Parque Forestal was inaugurated in the early twentieth century to celebrate the first 100 years of the republic. It is just a few blocks from the beating heart of old Santiago, the Plaza de Armas, the capital's main square which is graced by elegant Chilean wine palms with their characteristic bottle-shaped trunks. Grouped around the plaza are Santiago's Cathedral, the main post office, the National Historic Museum and the Municipalidad de Santiago (city hall). From here, if time, visit San Cristóbal Hill by riding the cable car to the top. On clear days there are spectacular panoramic views across the city towards the Andes.

The museum and house of Chilean poet laureate Pablo Neruda is close by, and its unusual interior with an eclectic collection of paintings and bric-a-brac is well worth a visit. Time permitting, you may wish to visit one of the vineyards close to Santiago, to sample some famous Chilean wine.

DAY 17

Depart on international flight or extension.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Cusco: city tour with Sacsayhuamán
- Sacred Valley: tour of the valley
- Machu Picchu: guided tour of the ruins
- Puno: Uros Islands
- Lake Titicaca: Sun Island and Moon Island
- La Paz: walking tour and cable cars
- Uyuni salt flats: 2 night exploration
- San Pedro de Atacama: Valley of the moon
- Santiago: walking tour

ESSENTIALS

ABOUT OUR GROUP TOURS

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

TOUR LEADER

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

17 days, 16 nights: Lima 1; Cusco 1; Sacred Valley 1; Machu Picchu 1; Cusco 2; Puno 1; Copacabana 1; La Paz 3; Uyuni area 2; San Pedro 2; Santiago 1.

ACCOMMODATION

The Andean Flamingo Tour is one of our Premium Tours.

This means you return each evening to well-appointed hotels chosen for their comfort and setting. Rooms are spacious and properly equipped, with all the mod cons you'd expect, and facilities to include a restaurant, a bar or lounge, and often a pool or spa to unwind in. It's an easy, comfortable style of travel, with somewhere relaxed to look forward to each day.

- Lima: Antigua Miraflores
- Cusco: Casa Andina Premium
- Sacred Valley: Tierra Viva Ollantaytambo
- Machu Picchu: El Mapi
- Puno: Casa Andina Premium
- Copacabana: Rosario del Lago
- La Paz: La Casona
- Uyuni area: Luna Salada
- Uyuni area: Flamencos
- San Pedro de Atacama: Cumbres San Pedro
- Santiago: Cumbres Santiago

On extremely rare occasions these hotels can change due to unforseen circumstances, 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 (longest 2 hrs), 2 train journeys (3.5hrs), 4 scenic road journeys (longest 8 hrs with stops) all done using private vehicles.

MEALS

Breakfast daily, 2 days of full board, 2 lunches and 1 dinner.

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.

TRAVELLING ALONE

There is no extra cost for single travellers who are willing to share a room. You will be accommodated with a same-sex member of the group who is usually also travelling solo. For single travellers who wish to be sure of having 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 early mornings and long days spent travelling (albeit with frequent stops and fantastic scenery). The Uyuni crossing involves long days of travel across often bumpy terrain. All walks are optional and you should consult your tour leader to make sure you undertake optional excursions that are best suited for you. Please note that if you have requested a double matrimonial room at booking stage this cannot be guaranteed on some parts of the tour such as on the Uyuni Salt Flats crossing due to most of the rooms have twin beds.

CLIMATE

This trip operates from April through to October to avoid the wet season in the Andes. Temperatures elsewhere will be pleasant but during the San Pedro to Uyuni crossing, temperatures at night can drop well below freezing. 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

Many of the excursions are at high altitude. 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 AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

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 also essential and you should bring insect repellent, sun block and sunglasses. A torch can also be useful during your time on the salt flats.

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.

If you would like to show your appreciation to your Journey Latin America tour leader, who you may feel has exceeded your expectations, a discretionary gratuity would be gratefully received. As a guideline we recommend an amount of between $5 USD and $7USD per person, per day. You are obviously free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality.

HEALTH, ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND INSURANCE

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

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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