



3 DAYS & 2 NIGHTS

THE SALKANTAY TREK CHALLENGE

SALKANTAY TREK | Difficulty





DESCRIPTION

THE SALKANTAY TREK CHALLENGE

The Ultimate Challenge to the Sacred Mountain isn't on time but seeking an unforgettable adventure in Peru's Andes? The 3-Day Salkantay Challenge is the ultimate test of endurance and spirit. In just 10 days, trek 52.50 km (32.62 miles) across rugged Andean trails and lush jungle, passing towering snow-capped peaks, cascading waterfalls, and the enchanting cloud forest. This isn't just a trek—it's a transformative journey to push your limits, reconnect with your inner self, and immerse yourself in the unparalleled beauty of Peru. The grand reward? Machu Picchu, the legendary UNESCO World Heritage Site. Few experiences rival the thrill of standing before this iconic citadel, surrounded by breathtaking views and a deep sense of accomplishment. Ready to rise to the challenge? Peru's most exhilarating adventure is waiting for you! Experience Highlights Experience one of the world's top 25 treks, as recognized by National Geographic, on the renowned Salkantay Trek—the ultimate alternative to the Inca Trail, completed in just three unforgettable days. Push your limits and embrace a transformative journey that reconnects you with nature and your inner self. Marvel at the majestic Apu Salkantay glacier and snow-capped peaks in some of the most breathtaking landscapes on Earth. Descend through the enchanting cloud forest, a mystical ecosystem teem...

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DURATION
3 Days & 2 Nights

DIFFICULTY
Difficulty

DISTANCE
32.6 mi / 52.5 km

GROUP
Up to 12

FROM
US\$ 550

ROUTE MAP



EXPLORE THE ROUTE

FULL ITINERARY

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Take on the toughest part of the trek, at about 4,600 m, with views of Apu Salkantay.
- Stop at a bright turquoise glacial lake below the snowy peaks.
- Go from icy high mountains to warm cloud forest and jungle valleys.
- Camp and walk through remote Andean trails, away from the crowds.
- Reach the Inca citadel with a guided visit and the feeling of a real achievement.

DAY 01

Cusco | Soraypampa - Salkantay Pass - Wayracmachay - Chaullay - Collpapampa (Mountain Sky View)

Your adventure begins bright and early at 2:00 a.m. We'll pick you up from your accommodation in Cusco for a scenic three-and-a-half-hour drive through Anta, Mollepata, and Challacancha. Along the way, you'll take in breathtaking views of rolling hills, deep valleys, and abundant wildlife. As we approach Soraypampa (3,900 m / 12,795 ft), the starting point of your trek, the majestic snow-capped peaks of Salkantay and Humantay—sacred Apus, or mountain spirits, in Andean culture—will come into view. At Soraypampa, you'll enjoy a hearty breakfast and meet the trekking team, who will prepare the equipment and organize the mules. From here, the adventure intensifies as you tackle the most challenging section of the trek: the ascent to the Salkantay Pass (4,630 m / 15,190 ft).

This steep 7 km (4.35 miles) climb takes about four hours and includes the famous “Path of the 7 Snakes,” named for its serpentine curves. Reaching the summit is a triumph, rewarded by panoramic views of the Salkantay Glacier (6,271 m / 20,574 ft) and neighboring peaks, including Humantay, Tucarhuay, and Pumasillo. After conquering the pass, you'll begin a 7 km (4.35 miles) descent to Wayracmachay, where our chefs will serve a delicious, well-earned lunch. Along the way, take a moment at a scenic viewpoint to admire the stunning valley below.

Once you've recharged, the journey continues into the lush upper Amazon rainforest. This stretch of the trek spans 9.5 km (5.9 miles) over approximately three and a half hours. As you descend, you'll notice a dramatic environmental transformation—from the crisp, rocky Andes to the warm, humid jungle. Along the trail, you'll encounter vibrant hills, exotic wildlife, and unique native plants that bring the scenery to life. As the afternoon fades, you'll arrive at our exclusive Mountain Sky View campsite in Collpapampa (2,950 m / 9,978 ft). After a satisfying dinner, you can unwind and listen to the soothing sounds of nature. Let the tranquil jungle ambiance lull you into a restful sleep, preparing you for the next day's adventures.

- PICK-UP TIME FROM YOUR HOTEL: 2:30 a.m.
- MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

- ACCOMMODATION: Mountain Sky View
- DIFFICULTY: Challenging
- WALKING DISTANCE: 23.5 km /14.6 mi
- WALKING TIME: 10 - 11 hours
- STARTING ELEVATION: 3,900 m / 12,795 ft
- MINIMUM ELEVATION: 2,900 m / 9,514 ft
- HIGHEST ELEVATION: 4,630 m / 15,190 ft
- CAMPSITE ELEVATION: 2,950 m / 9,678ft

DAY 02

Collpapampa | La Playa - Hidroelectrica - Aguas Calientes

Enter Cusco's Tropical Paradise Today begins at a more relaxed pace—we'll depart shortly after 6:00 a.m. In the morning, we'll set out on a scenic hike through the Santa Teresa Valley, following a gently descending trail surrounded by rivers, waterfalls, orchids, and plantations of bananas, coffee, and avocados. Keep your eyes open—with a bit of luck, you may spot the Andean cock-of-the-rock, Peru's national bird. Upon reaching the Granadilla sector, a private vehicle will be waiting to take us to La Playa, allowing us to conserve energy and fully enjoy an authentic coffee experience. We'll visit the fields, take part in the harvesting process, and learn each step—from roasting to brewing our own cup. Afterward, we'll enjoy a delicious lunch.

We'll then continue by transport to Hidroeléctrica, where we'll begin a hike of approximately two hours to the town of Machu Picchu (Aguas Calientes). The trail follows the railway tracks alongside the Urubamba River, passing through a lush tropical environment rich in flora and fauna, as well as local plantations. This route also holds historical significance, as it was traveled by the explorer Hiram Bingham on his way to Machu Picchu. If you prefer, you can take the train for this section (additional cost).

Upon arrival in Aguas Calientes, we'll check you into your hotel, where you can relax in a private room with hot shower and WiFi. In the afternoon, you'll have free time to explore the town, and in the evening we'll meet for dinner, where your guide will brief you on the plan for the next day. Be sure to rest well—tomorrow will be one of the most unforgettable moments of your journey.

- MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner
- ACCOMMODATION: Hotel
- DIFFICULTY: Challenging
- WALKING DISTANCE: 19.5 km / 12.12 mi
- WALKING TIME: 6 hours
- STARTING ELEVATION: 2,950 m / 9,678 ft

- MINIMUM ELEVATION: 1,800 m / 5,906 ft
- HIGHEST ELEVATION: 2,950 m / 9,678 ft
- ACCOMMODATION ELEVATION: 2,040 m / 6,693 ft

DAY 03

Aguas Calientes | Machu Picchu - Ollantaytambo - Cusco

Explore the Magical and Mystical Machu Picchu

The big day is finally here! After all the anticipation, it's time to explore the iconic Machu Picchu. Your adventure begins early, with a 4:00 a.m. wake-up call and a light breakfast to prepare for the day ahead. By setting out early, you'll beat the crowds and enjoy the morning's tranquility. We'll head to the bus stop in Aguas Calientes and take a short ride to the entrance of Machu Picchu, surrounded by the serene beauty of the lush cloud forest. Stepping into Machu Picchu is an experience like no other. Seeing the ancient citadel emerging from the mist will leave you awestruck. Your guide will lead a two-hour tour, revealing the history and mysteries of this Incan masterpiece. From the terraced slopes and sacred temples to the intricate plazas, every corner tells a story of ingenuity and spirituality.

After soaking in the magic of Machu Picchu, return to Aguas Calientes for a well-deserved lunch. Then, board the train to Ollantaytambo, where our private transport will be waiting to take you back to Cusco. As you reflect on the day, the unforgettable sights and emotions of Machu Picchu and the Andean mountains will stay with you, a cherished memory of an extraordinary journey.

- MEALS: Breakfast
- DIFFICULTY: Easy
- ACTIVITY DURATION: 2-3 hours exploring Machu Picchu
- MACHU PICCHU CITADEL ELEVATION: 2,430 m / 7,972 ft
- ARRIVAL TIME AT YOUR HOTEL: Approx. 7:30 p.m.

SERVICES FOR YOUR JOURNEY

INCLUSIONS

WHAT IS INCLUDED

Inclusions

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

Permits & Entrance Tickets

Day 1: Entry Ticket to the Salkantay Trek

Day 3: Entry Ticket to Machu Picchu Archaeological Site

Machu Picchu Circuit 2 offers the most complete and popular route through the citadel, making it the most requested. Although included in this experience, availability is limited, so we strongly recommend booking at least three months in advance. If Circuit 2 is unavailable, we will arrange Circuit 3-B, which explores the lower area of the citadel, including the urban sector and key ceremonial sites. If this is also sold out, Circuit 1-B will be arranged, covering mainly the upper panoramic area with the iconic postcard viewpoint.

High Quality Service & Safety

Pre-departure Briefing: You'll meet with your guide for an orientation the evening before the trek. The meeting will take place at 5:00 p.m. at our main office in Cusco.

Experienced Tour Guide: Our official tour guides speak English and Spanish and are professionally trained and certified in safety and quality service. Chosen for their experience, responsibility, and passion for exploration, they take pride in sharing our culture and history. With their guidance, you'll stay informed, safe, and comfortable, ensuring a worry-free adventure and an unforgettable experience of a lifetime.

One Duffle Bag: For the trek, you'll receive a duffel bag to pack your personal belongings, with a maximum weight limit of 5 kg (11 lb), which will be carried by our staff.

Sleeping Bag: Our sleeping bags are durable and designed to keep you warm in temperatures as low as -18°C (0°F). They feature a mummy shape and include a sleeping liner for added warmth. Each bag is thoroughly cleaned and carefully maintained after every use.

Trekking Poles: Trekking poles enhance stability on hard terrain while minimizing impact on joints.

Medical Kit or First AID Kit: All Salkantay Trekking guides have specialized first aid training and attend mandatory training sessions every February. Your guide will always carry a first aid kit and oxygen to handle basic emergencies (altitude sickness, diarrhea, cuts, scrapes, etc.). If needed, we will evacuate you from the trail as quickly as possible and ensure you arrive at a clinic for treatment.

Backpack Cover: Our attention to detail sets us apart. You'll receive a cover to protect your backpack along the way.

Professional long-range walkie-talkies: Walkie-talkies optimize communication, ensuring quick response and coordination in key situations and locations.

Accommodation

Day 1: Accommodation in our Exclusive Mountain Sky View Campsite: Perched on a mountainside with breathtaking views of Cusco's valleys and mystical cloud forests, our Mountain Sky View Campsite offers a deep connection with nature's splendor. From the comfort of your bed, enjoy a front-row seat to a majestic landscape that transforms with the light of day and the glow of the stars at night. It's more than a place to rest—it's an invitation to reconnect with the world around you.

Campsite Facilities: Our Mountain Sky View Campsite is designed for your comfort and convenience, offering private bathrooms and hot water showers. It also features a spacious dining room and a fully equipped kitchen, ensuring you enjoy your meals comfortably and worry-free. Our horses transport all fresh cooking supplies.

Day 2: Hotel in Aguas Calientes: Enjoy your final night in a cozy hotel with a double, matrimonial, or triple room, private bathroom, hot shower, WiFi, breakfast, and luggage storage while you explore Machu Picchu.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

Inclusions

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

Meals

3 Breakfasts, 2 Lunches, and 2 Dinners: Our chef prepares the best dishes in the middle of the mountain. Our passengers love our food! We respect all diets (vegetarian, vegan, or special menus are available at no extra cost), so let us know if you have any particular allergies or restrictions on your reservation form and remind your guide during the briefing. You'll enjoy breakfast, lunch, and dinner, in addition to hot drinks and snacks.

Water on the trail: We'll provide boiled, warm water after each meal on the trail. Make sure to bring an empty water bottle or camel bag for refilling—we recommend a 2-liter capacity.

Wake up tea: On the second day, you'll wake up to a hot cup of coca tea, delivered straight to your bed—perfect for warming up before you start the day.

Tea Time or Happy Hour: The first afternoon before dinner, the cooks will provide you with popcorn, cookies, coffee, hot chocolate, tea, hot water, etc. After a long day of hiking, you won't have to wait until dinner to relax, warm up, and enjoy a bite!

Daily snacks on the trail: Before starting your trekking, your tour guide will provide you a cloth bag with local fruits, cookies, chocolate, caramels, etc. Every morning, we'll refill it so that you can enjoy your snacks during the walk.

One cloth snack bag per person: We'll provide you with a cloth bag for your snacks—perfect for storing wrappers and keeping the environment clean. Feel free to use it throughout your trek!

Transportation

Transportation for the Salkantay Trek: Door-to-Door, Hassle-Free Service

- Day 1: You'll be picked up from your hotel in the morning and travel by private transportation to Soraypampa, the trek's starting point.
- Day 2: Private transport from Granadilla to Hidroelectrica.

- Day 3: Private transport from Ollantaytambo train station to your hotel in Cusco.
- Day 3: One Way Consettur Bus Ticket from Aguas Calientes to Machu Picchu

Day 3: Train Ticket from Aguas Calientes to Ollantaytambo: Expedition Machu Picchu by PeruRail or The Voyager to Machu Picchu by Inca Rail (train options and schedules subject to availability).

Personal Belongings Transportation

- On Day 1, cargo mules will carry all camping equipment and your baggage allowance (5 kg / 11 lb). The muleteers will take care of your duffle bag and personal items.
- On Day 2, your duffle bag will be transported by van and then by train.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

Exclusions

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED?

Huayna Picchu Mountain

Up for a challenge? Climb Huayna Picchu, the iconic mountain behind Machu Picchu. This 45-minute uphill trek rewards you with breathtaking views and a profound sense of achievement. It's not for the faint-hearted, but if you're afraid of heights, push through—the reward is truly worth it!

- Booking: Reserve 2–3 months in advance due to high demand.

Machu Picchu Mountain

Machu Picchu Mountain is one of the breathtaking peaks that surround the archaeological site. Its trails are less steep, wider, and less intimidating than those of Huayna Picchu, making it an excellent option for those seeking a more relaxed climb. Reaching the summit takes approximately 1.5 hours and offers unforgettable panoramic views. This hike requires an entrance ticket, which we can secure for you in advance upon request.

Huchuy Picchu Mountain

Huchuy Picchu is a small mountain just above the Machu Picchu citadel, offering a short, scenic, and less crowded alternative to the more demanding Huayna Picchu. Its gentle, well-maintained trail is perfect for travelers seeking a light yet rewarding hike, with sweeping views of the citadel and the surrounding Andes. While Huayna Picchu involves a steep and strenuous climb, Huchuy Picchu delivers a more relaxed and accessible experience—without giving up the stunning scenery.

- Availability: High season, from May to September.

Return bus ticket Consettur from Machu Picchu to Aguas Calientes (Day 3)

Lunch in Aguas Calientes and Dinner in Cusco (Day 3)

Train from Hidroelectrica to Aguas Calientes (Day 2)

If you feel exhausted or unwell after the hike from Collpapampa to La Playa, you have the option to take the train from Hidroelectrica to Aguas Calientes.

- US\$ 41.00 per person.

Personal Hiking Clothes and Gear

Travel Insurance

Tips for our staff

While our team receives fair salaries, any additional gesture is always appreciated in recognition of their hard work and dedication. Participants often choose to pool their tips and present them directly to the hiking team or through their guide.

Additional costs or delays beyond our control

Landslides, bad weather conditions, itinerary modifications due to a safety concern, illness, pandemic, government policy changes, political instability, strikes, acts of God, etc.

Before You Go

We want to make your trip to Peru as memorable and carefree as possible. In this section, you'll find the answers to all your questions about traveling with Salkantay Trekking. Please read the following information carefully – it will also help you with any questions about our services.

Is it for me?

The Salkantay Trek to Machu Picchu is an excellent alternative to the Inca Trail trek and better suited for more adventurous trekkers who can handle higher altitudes and longer distances. Ascending to reach the famous Salkantay Pass (4,630 m / 15,190 ft) isn't too strenuous nor very steep since it's at the beginning of the trek. Still, it does require stamina and a little time in Cusco to acclimatize to the altitude before beginning the trek.

How many days do I need to acclimate in Cusco before the Trek?

It's very important to be well acclimated to the altitude before exerting yourself on a trek. We recommend that you arrive in Cusco at least 2 or 3 days before the trek starts to help you adjust and avoid possible problems with altitude sickness while on the trek. You might have already been in another area of Peru at a high altitude before arriving in Cusco. In that case, we still recommend you have a whole day in Cusco to rest, recover from your travel, and enjoy the sights and sounds of Cusco before departing for the trek. Here some suggestions for activities to do in the Cusco vicinity before starting your adventure trek.

Briefing or Informative Meeting

All briefing meetings are held at 5:00 p.m. in our main office in Cusco (or your hotel) the day before the tour. The meeting lasts between 30 to 45 minutes. If you're unable to attend, you'll need to arrange a different time by email, phone, or by visiting the Salkantay Trekking office.

Tour Balance Payment

The tour has to be paid in full at most 2 days before your departure. Otherwise, your reservation will not be confirmed. It would be greatly appreciated if you pay the tour balance (US dollars or Peruvian soles) at our office in Cusco. You can withdraw money from several ATMs located in the historical center. We also accept payments by CARD or PAYPAL online, but please note this is subject to a 5% fee (charged by Niubiz and PayPal). We do not accept bank checks or traveler's checks as payment methods.

Duffel Bag or Canvas Case

The evening before the trek, we'll provide you with a duffel bag to pack your clothes and personal gear needed for the trip. Our horsemen will carry it on the route and hand it to you once you get to each camp. Please note that you will not have access to your items in the bag until the end of each day. The maximum weight allowed is 7 kg / 15.4 lb, including the weight of your sleeping bag, clothes, and other personal items. They measure 60 x 24 x 22 cm (23.6 x 9.4 x 8.7 in).

Can I store my luggage at your office?

Of course! During the trip, you can store your main luggage for free at our office (arrange it with us on the briefing day or by email). You can also safely keep any equipment you won't need for the tour in your hotel. Almost every hotel offers this service. Please do not leave valuable items in your bags; put them in the hotel safe and ask for an itemized receipt (in the unlikely case of theft, many insurance companies require that you have a copy of the receipt). For extra peace of mind, place items like credit cards inside a sealed and signed envelope.

Pick up of guests

Please note:

- All pickups are within Cusco City, but we recommend booking a hotel in the historic center for its convenient location.
- Our guide or staff will confirm the pickup time the day before the tour.
- Due to traffic conditions, the pickup time may vary between 30 and 45 minutes.

Before You Go

- Cusco is an old city and has many narrow cobbled streets. Some hotels and Airbnbs are located on streets without car access or on long, steep slopes, making it difficult to transport luggage. For such reasons, we strongly advise you to book accommodation with good access.

Return to Cusco

Returning from Machu Picchu requires quite a bit of logistics, but don't worry. Everything is included in your tour!

- In Machu Picchu, you'll board a bus that'll take you for 25 minutes to the small city of Aguas Calientes. The buses are boarded according to arrival.
- In Aguas Calientes, you'll board a train to Ollantaytambo. Your guide will give you the train tickets where the boarding time will be shown. Make sure you're on the platform 30 minutes early. The train from Aguas Calientes to Ollantaytambo takes 1:45 hours.
- Once you arrive at the station, our representative, identified with the Salkantay Trekking clothing, will be waiting to transfer you to Cusco or directly to your hotel. The trip from Ollantaytambo to Cusco takes 1:30 hours.
- In Cusco, depending on your hotel's location, we'll take you to a smaller car from our company (Hyundai H1) to transfer you faster to your hotel.

Note: Your tour includes a One-Way Consettur Bus Ticket Aguas Calientes - Machu Picchu, so you can choose to use it from Aguas Calientes to Machu Picchu or from Machu Picchu to Aguas Calientes. If you want a round-trip bus ticket, you'll need to pay an extra of US\$ 12.00.

Group Tours

Group tours are made up of different people with varying physical conditions and ages. By agreeing to be part of a group tour, you acknowledge that some people may be faster or slower than you. Therefore, each person can go at their own pace on the route. In some cases, a group may want to modify the tour; however, the guide will be the one who decides, after consulting with all participants, whether such changes are possible.

Strikes and demonstrations

Strikes and demonstrations are usually common in Peru, which may interrupt some of our tours. Roads and train tracks can be blocked or taken over. However, we will try to keep your trip as originally planned, even if it means leaving the night before the scheduled date. In case of changes or cancellations, our operations department will coordinate everything with you. Your safety is our highest priority, and we will make our decisions to protect it.

Lost objects

Please pay attention to where you leave your belongings and remember to take everything once you leave a place or a transport. You're the only one responsible for your objects during the tour.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BRING?

- Valid Passport
- Extra money (recommended soles)
- Personal medication
- Water bottle or CamelBak - (optional water purifying pills)
- Sunblock: factor 70 or more
- Insect repellent
- Personal Care Products
- Hiking boots or shoes (preferably waterproof)
- Light footwear or sandals
- Trekking pants ()
- Trekking socks
- Pair of thermal pants
- Shorts
- Waterproof gaiter
- Long sleeve t-shirts
- Warm jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Raincoat or rain poncho
- Waterproof or wool gloves
- Sun hat to protect neck and face



Packing List - Continued

- Wool hat for the cold
- Neck gaiter or buff
- Sunglasses with UV protection
- Sleeping bag (-15°C)
- Trekking poles
- Medium trekking backpack (15 - 25 liter)
- Camera and charger
- Power bank
- Snacks: Energy bars, chocolate, candies, dried fruits, etc.
- Bathing suit
- Towel
- Flashlight



Plan your next adventure with Inja Expeditions

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