



THE SACRED VALLEY RIDE

TRIP OVERVIEW

Our signature and most popular ride starts from our riding operation in the heart of the Sacred Valley at about 8,500 feet (2,800m). The Sacred Valley Ride follows a route across the Urubamba River, up through mountain pasture where smiling Quechua children herd sheep and cattle, to highland terraces and small mountain villages, where the horse's hooves echo on ancient cobblestone roads. Oxen pull wooden ploughs through the fields, travel is by foot, and the native people speak Quechua, the language of the Incas. The trip includes visiting the legendary Inca citadel of Machu Picchu and one overnight in the ancient Inca capital of Cusco. Set departure dates run from April until mid-October.

Horseback riding in Peru through the Sacred Valley of the Incas high in the mighty Andes is an incredible experience you will not soon forget. This valley was the heart of the highly developed Incan civilisation that once controlled a vast area stretching from Ecuador well down the coast of Chile. The monolithic remains of this great empire are everywhere to be seen. The surrounding landscape, with the towering peaks of the Andes, is breathtaking. This area within the Peruvian Andes offers some of the most spectacular scenery in the world, with endless riding trails along ancient Inca roads.

The Peruvian horses are much-loved, reliable and fun to ride and, with the help of your knowledgeable guides, allow you to explore remote parts of the Sacred Valley not seen by most tourists. On this journey, you will appreciate how well-suited these horses are to the terrain and how comfortable they are to ride for many hours. Accommodations are in charming hotels in the Sacred Valley. The cuisine is a happy blend of Peruvian and Spanish Colonial, offering an impressive variety of delicious fresh local produce.

Riding in Peru is at a high altitude with low oxygen levels in the atmosphere. The well-tailored itineraries include some time to acclimatise - gentle first days allow you to rest and adjust. On the rides, you will notice how difficult it is to exert yourself and run somewhere. Because of this reason, together with the terrain, the riding does not include lots of galloping. The horses are incredibly fit and well adapted to the altitude but require oxygen when put to work. The rides are spectacular, and the fantastic 'Paso Llano' - a smooth 4-beat lateral gait - is a delight. Short canters and gallops may be possible, but these are, by definition, not fast rides.

ACCOMMODATION & FOOD

Hotels can vary depending on availability. We will confirm the exact hotels near your time of departure, but they may include the following hotels:

Hotel Sonesta Posada del Inca in Yucay. This hotel is only 5 miles from the stables and has comfortable heated rooms with private bathrooms and plenty of local colours. The hotel is a former 18th-century colonial-style monastery surrounded by beautiful gardens - it has the feel of a small village, with plazas, Gardens and even a chapel. The 69 rooms have tiled floors, wood ceilings, hand-carved headboards and balconies overlooking the gardens or terraced hillsides.

Hotel Costa del Sol in Cusco was once an old mansion of the Spanish nobleman Marquis of Picoaga, now transformed into a comfortable hotel. The intimate and public areas are beautifully decorated in colonial style, framed by stone archways on two levels, stone columns and a Spanish patio.

Breakfasts are always at your hotels. Lunches are usually a delicious picnic out on the trail. The backup team, using the support vehicle, set out lunch before you arrive. Dinners are either in local restaurants or at the ranch.

Meals represent the tasty regional cuisine of the area and include fresh vegetables, dairy products, and good meats. Vegetarian and other special diets can be accommodated with advance notice.

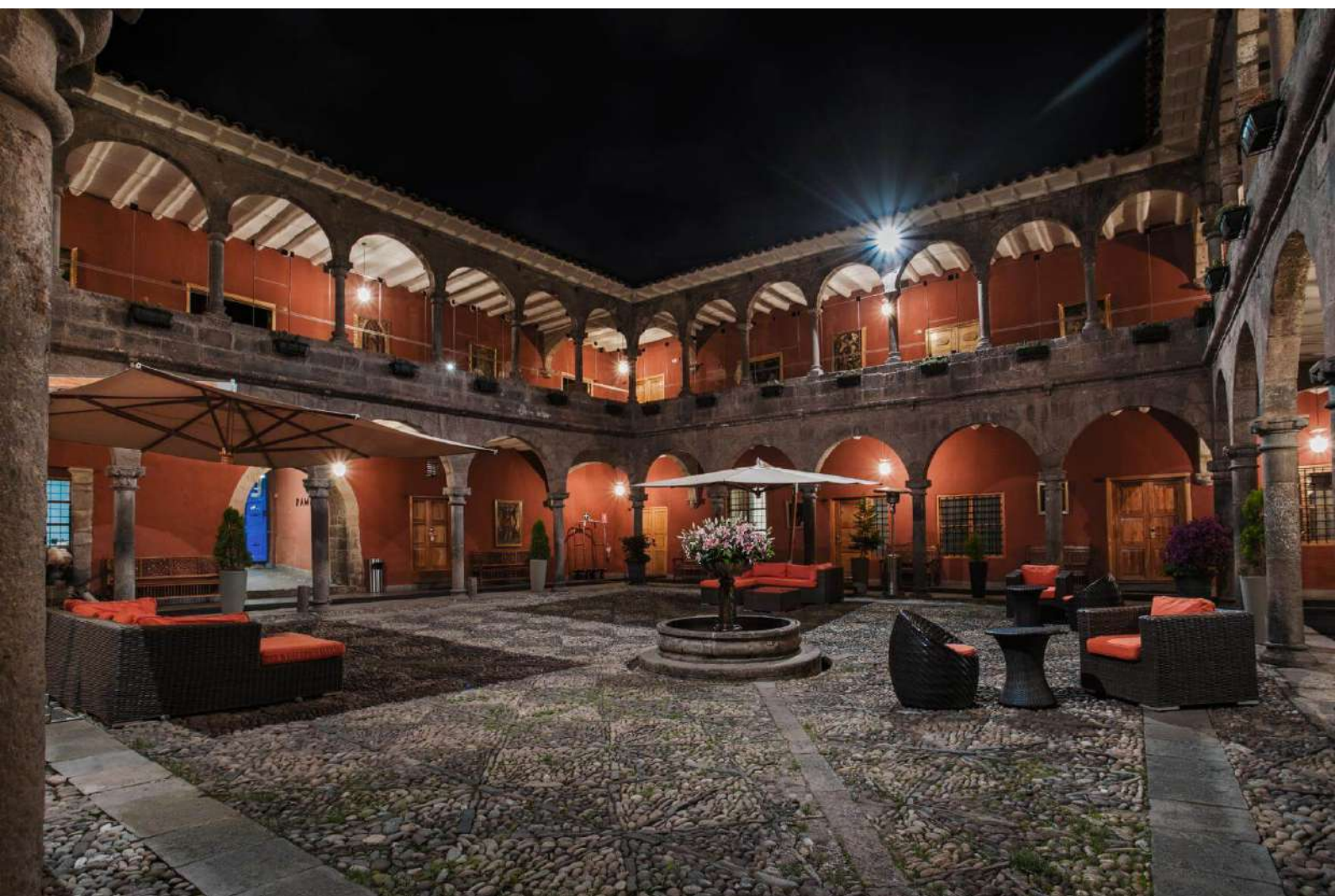
GETTING THERE

The collection point for the ride is Cusco, Perú.

There are no direct international flights to/from Cusco, so you will likely have to travel via Lima. Airport transfers are included on the first and last days of the Sacred Valley Ride itinerary. If you arrive in Cusco one or more days before the start day of the ride, then you will need to make your own way from the airport to your hotel. On the first day of the ride, the earliest possible collection time from Cusco airport is 09:00am (any earlier than this and you will need to take a taxi to your hotel at your own expense). Check-in at your hotel is from 12:00, so we recommend a flight arriving mid-morning. If you arrive earlier than this, you will be able to make use of the hotel's main facilities until your room is ready.

On departure day, check-out is after breakfast and then you are transferred to Cusco airport, (a journey of c. 1.5 hours). Flights should ideally leave Cusco between 11:00 and 14:00. If your route is via Lima, then we recommend that you do not book a flight to Lima departing any later than 14:00. Your onward flight should then depart from Lima after 17:00.





ITINERARY (10 DAYS/9 NIGHTS)

Day 1.

Upon arrival at the Cusco airport, our representative will welcome you to Cusco. He (or she) will have a sign with your name on it and ensure a safe and easy transfer to your comfortable hotel near the centre of this historical and beautiful city.

We strongly recommend that you relax, rest and get acclimatised to a higher altitude before starting your exciting riding expedition high in the Andes. We made reservations for you at the beautiful Hotel Costa del Sol, a 4-star establishment with a hotel room in the colonial constructed area of the hotel, and only two blocks from the famous Plaza de Armas. The earliest check-in at the hotel is 11.30 AM. If you arrive in Cusco early in the morning, a dayroom may be necessary (an out-of-pocket expense).

Please, be sure you rest well because tomorrow, you will meet and ride the Peruvian Paso horses and learn all about the classic Peruvian riding style. Lunch and dinner are on your own tonight.

Day 2.

After a delicious breakfast, you'll be picked up by our driver at 9:00 AM outside your hotel for a scenic 1.5-hour drive to your accommodation in the Sacred Valley.

For the next eight nights, you'll stay in comfortable rooms at the Hotel Sonesta Posadas del Inca, located in the heart of the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Once you've had time to unpack and refresh, your host will meet you for a detailed briefing on the upcoming rides, along with an introduction to the Peruvian Paso horse, its unique riding style, and traditional Peruvian riding tack.

Before the riding demonstration and evaluation, you'll enjoy a delicious barbecue lunch in a relaxed private setting, paired with fine wine and our famous Pisco Sours.

After lunch, your introduction continues with a demonstration of classic Peruvian equitation, followed by personalised riding instruction and an evaluation of your riding abilities. Based on this, we will carefully match you with the ideal mount for the journey ahead.

In the afternoon, you'll embark on a gentle 2-hour ride through the surrounding countryside, offering a glimpse into the daily life of local villagers and the diverse natural beauty of the Sacred Valley. You can observe the rich flora of the Peruvian Andes, such as the Molle Tree (a.k.a. the Pepper Tree), which the Incas used to embalm mummies with; the Sauco tree, which produces a small but tasty purplish-black fruit; the Capuli fruit tree (its fruit is almost the size of a cherry and its colour when ripe), the Quena tree (the trunk has a twisted form, and the reddish bark flakes and peels like paper), the Tamarilla tree (tree tomato), Cantuta (the sacred flower of the Inca), Aguaymanto (Cape gooseberry), Muna (a mint like Peruvian herb with medicinal qualities) and many other botanical specimens native to the area.

After the short ride, a light dinner will be served in a private setting. This gentle introduction to local cuisine is designed to avoid upsetting the stomach, as your body is still adjusting to the high altitude. Eating lighter meals during the first day helps ease the acclimatisation process and ensures a more comfortable start to your journey.

Riding time: approx. 2 hours, not including riding time during instructions after lunch .
Altitude 2,800 m/ 9,190 ft.

Day 3.

After a hearty breakfast at your hotel, you will be transported to the Andean altiplano at an altitude of 3,550 meters (over 11,400 feet), where your horses will be waiting and the ride will begin. You'll be captivated by the stunning scenery and the snow-capped peaks of Chicon, Veronica, and Pitusiray.

From the starting point, you'll ride to Maras, a traditional Andean village known for its beautiful 400-year-old colonial church. Built shortly after the Spanish Conquest, the church in Maras is one of the ten oldest churches in South America. The village itself was founded by the Spanish conquistador Pedro Ortiz de Orué in 1556.

From Maras, the ride continues toward Moray, where a picnic lunch will be prepared for you nearby. After lunch, you'll visit the agricultural terraces of Moray by car. These remarkable circular terraces were used by the Incas as an agricultural laboratory to experiment with different crops and growing conditions, taking advantage of the microclimates created at each level.

In the afternoon, the ride continues to the ruins of Cheqoq. Here, the Incas built ingenious cold-storage systems—pre-Hispanic refrigerators—to preserve agricultural products. These storage areas utilised wind tunnels to channel cold air from nearby glaciers and a network of water channels carrying icy spring water to maintain low temperatures.

You'll continue riding until approximately 4:30 p.m. The horses will remain with the grooms at a campsite near Maras, and you will return to your hotel by private car.

After some rest and a hot shower, we'll take you to a local restaurant, or we'll enjoy a home cooked dinner in a private setting, offering a warm and authentic local experience.

Overnight at the Hotel Sonesta Posada del Inca, located in the Sacred Valley.

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Riding time: 4 to 4.5 hours

Altitude: 2,800 – 3,550 m (9,190 – 11,650 ft)

Day 4.

After a sound and restful night's sleep, you will be picked up at 09:15 for your transfer back to the point where we left the horses.

Today's ride follows ancient trails across the Andean altiplano, offering breathtaking views and a profound connection to the region's natural beauty and cultural traditions. As you ride, you'll be surrounded by stunning scenery—snow-capped peaks, colourful wildflowers, and peaceful high-altitude lakes.

Along the way, you may encounter smiling Quechua children tending flocks of sheep or cattle, and campesinos ploughing their fields with wooden ploughs pulled by oxen.

Before reaching Chinchero, our support team will greet you with a delicious picnic lunch along the trail. On clear days, the views here are exceptional—the vast altiplano stretches west and northwest, framed by the snow-covered peaks of the Cordilleras Vilcabamba.

After lunch, we ride onward to Lake Piuray, a calm, mirror-like lake nestled in a beautiful mountain setting. In a small village en route, a local family will warmly welcome you. The horses will remain here with the grooms at a campsite for the next two nights.

If time permits, we'll make a short stop by car to visit the Chinchero ruins. Believed to have been a royal estate of Inca Tupac Yupanqui, the site includes finely crafted stone terraces, ceremonial baths, and remnants of grand Inca architecture, all constructed using traditional polygonal stonework. One of the site's highlights is the colonial church built on the foundations of an Inca palace, with beautifully preserved 17th-century frescoes and baroque-style altars inside—a striking example of Andean and European cultural fusion.



After a full day of riding and a late arrival, dinner tonight is at your own leisure and at your own expense. A selection of light or quick meals is available at your hotel's restaurants for your convenience.

Riding time: Approximately 5 hours

Altitude: 3,550 – 3,800 m (11,650 – 12,470 ft)

Day 5.

Today is a rest day for the horses and a day for you to relax and explore the Sacred Valley at your own pace and convenience. Strolling through the local market is a fabulous experience of colour, smell and sound. Visit the legendary town of Ollantaytambo, a masterpiece of Inca architecture, with its amazing Inca fortress. There are plenty of options to enjoy and spend a wonderful and unforgettable day in the Sacred Valley. Our driver is at your disposition and will take care of all your needs, safety and transfers. All meals, except breakfast, are to your own account today. Enjoy!

Day 6.

After breakfast, your riding expedition continues.

Pick-up is at 9:15 AM from your hotel in the Sacred Valley, and you'll be transferred to the point where the horses were left on Day 5.

Today's ride takes you through some of the most breathtaking and remote landscapes of the journey—and to the highest elevation of the expedition. Dress warmly, as the weather at these heights can be cold and changeable.

We ascend along a stunning mountain trail to a pass at 4,150 meters (13,600 feet). From here, you'll enjoy sweeping views of Lake Q'oricocha and several other high-altitude lakes. The landscape is vast and windswept, dotted with herds of llamas and alpacas grazing among terraced hills and open farmland.

This is the heart of Peru's traditional potato-growing region. At these altitudes, the land is still cultivated entirely by hand, using a traditional foot plough called the '*chakitaklla*'—a tool used since Inca times. Farmers work in teams, using body weight and rhythm to dig rows in the earth, often in communal groups that share both labor and harvest.

Peru is the birthplace of the potato, and over 4,000 native varieties are grown across the country. Here in the high Andes, many of these unique types—with their vibrant colours and rich flavours—are still cultivated using ancient, sustainable techniques passed down through generations.

After taking time to explore the area, we ride eastward to the peaceful Lake Quellacocha, where our backup team will be waiting with a delicious lunch.

In the afternoon, we continue northeast toward the Sacred Valley, descending from the altiplano into the valley of Umasbamba along a zigzagging trail for about two hours.

Near the village of Umasbamba, we leave the horses in the care of the grooms. From here, you'll be transferred back to your hotel in the Sacred Valley.

Dinner will be at a local restaurant or enjoyed in a private setting.

Riding time: 5 to 6 hours

Altitude: 3,800 – 4,290 m (12,470 – 14,000 ft)

Day 7.

Today is another stunningly scenic day and you will have plenty of breaks and photo-stops. From the village of Umaspampa ride to the villages of Cuper Alto and Cuper Bajo, arriving in the early afternoon at a beautiful abandoned church near the village of Chinchero where you have lunch. Much of the riding today is along trails that are part of the great Incan Empire's road system, the Capac Ñan. The Incan road network was one the greatest engineering feats ever undertaken in the New World, rivalling the Roman road system in the Old World. The 25,000 km network linked Cusco, the Inca capital, to the empire's far-flung domains. The road system reached almost all of the Andean territories, including Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina and Chile and was formed by four clearly recognisable main roads, and many secondary roads. After lunch ride to a family farm near the village of Racchi where the horses will stay with the grooms for the night. Transfer to your hotel in the Sacred Valley before dining at a local restaurant or enjoyed in a private setting. Overnight at the comfortable Hotel Posada del Inca. (B L D)

Riding time: approx. 5 to 6 hours. Altitude: 3,800 – 3,600 m/12,470 – 11,850 ft.

Day 8

After breakfast, get ready for your final day on horseback. We'll meet the horses near the village of Racchi, where they spent the night, and begin the ride along an old Inca trail that



runs high above the Sacred Valley. This scenic route offers sweeping views of the Urquillos Valley and passes through farmland and rural communities, giving you a glimpse into daily Andean life.

We continue to the small village of Santana, where we'll enjoy a delicious picnic lunch near the historic church of Tiobamba, a peaceful and picturesque setting.

After lunch, we ride once more into the village of Maras, where we begin a steady descent toward the famous Salinas de Maras (Maras Salt Pans).

Along the descent, you'll witness a spectacular view of the salt pans—an ancient marvel of Inca engineering. These salt pans have been in continuous use since pre-Columbian times and are still maintained by local families. The site consists of over 3,000 individual shallow pools built into the mountainside. Salty water from a natural mountain spring is directed through an intricate network of channels into these terraced pans. As the water evaporates under the sun, it leaves behind crystallised salt, which is then harvested by hand using traditional methods passed down through generations. The white salt pools against the dramatic red earth and green valley make this one of the most visually striking sites in the Sacred Valley.

From the salt pans, we continue our descent into the Sacred Valley, arriving at our final destination on horseback at approximately 4:30-5:00 p.m.

Riding time: Approximately 4,5 hours

Altitude: 3,600 – 2,850 m (11,850 – 9,350 ft)

Dinner will be at a local restaurant or enjoyed as a home cooked meal in a private setting, offering an intimate and authentic end to your riding adventure.

Day 9.

Today you visit Machu Picchu by train. Pick up from your hotel around 6-6.30 am. Since its discovery by Hiram Bingham in 1911, Machu Picchu has captivated the hearts and minds of the modern world. The experience of visiting Machu Picchu is not limited to the ruins themselves; the train journey is one of the most spectacular in the world. Before it was declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1983, the existence of the Inca citadel was almost unknown to the world. Since the 80s, visits to Machu Picchu have increased so much that it is now one of the favourite destinations for travellers. As of July 2017, the Peruvian government has established new regulations to preserve the facilities of this Wonder of the World. There are different entrance times: morning from 6 am to 12 am and afternoon from 12 pm to 5 am. The capacity of the Citadel is limited to 2,500 visitors per day, distributed in the two shifts mentioned. Because of the increase in tourism in Peru, your ticket to Machu Picchu must be booked and reserved in advance. Tickets are booked for the afternoon shift and with the most convenient train schedule. Depending on availability at the time of booking, you will be travelling with the luxurious Vistadome train service leaving from the train station in Ollantaytambo in the morning (a 30-minute drive from your hotel) and returning to the same station around 7 or 8 pm where you will be picked up again by our driver. You will stop for our last dinner on the way to the hotel. Lunch is an out-of-pocket expense today.

Day 10.

Early morning transfer to the airport in Cusco for your onward travel. The driving time is 1.5 hr; if continuing to Lima for international flights, book flights departing Lima 5pm or after.

Itinerary Addendum

This itinerary is flexible and may be modified at the guide's discretion due to unforeseen circumstances.



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Minimum group size: 2

Maximum group size: 7

Ability description: You need to be at least an intermediate rider who is comfortable, secure and in control over varied terrain in open countryside. The pace of the ride is not fast due to the altitude and difficult terrain. There are some technical sections where good balance is vital, You will experience the fabulous Paso Llano pace where the terrain allows.

Pricing:

2 or more persons: US\$ 5.890 per person - sharing

Single supplement (if applicable): US\$ 795

Price includes

- Price includes meals as reflected in the itinerary, professional English speaking trail guide, support team including grooms, 4x4 back up vehicle, all land transfers, train, bus and entrance fee to Machu Picchu and all accommodation (9 overnights in comfortable hotels).
- All drinks (including alcoholic beverage) during the ride. Alcoholic drinks served during meals at restaurants are not included.
- Full Tourist Ticket (Boleto Turístico Integral).

Price does not include

- Alcoholic beverages during meals at restaurants, gratuities, optional activities, personal expenditures and travel insurance.
- Single supplement. The price for each ride is based on shared occupancy. If you are traveling solo and wish to share accommodation, we will make every effort to find a roommate (always of the same gender). If you are willing to share and no roommate materialises, then the customary single supplement will apply. A single supplement is always applicable for participants who specifically request single accommodation.

TRIP DETAILS

Meeting Point

Meeting point for this ride is Cusco.

Riders Requirements

To take part in these rides you need to be a reasonably experienced rider, intermediate or above. You should be comfortable, secure and in control on a well schooled horse at all paces and used to riding in open country and over varied terrain. You should have a reasonably good level of general and riding fitness.

- Beginner:

A rider who has limited experience, is unable to apply basic aids and does not have a firm and balanced seat

- Novice:

A rider who is capable of mounting and dismounting unassisted, capable of applying basic aids, comfortable and in control at the walk.

- Intermediate:

A rider who has a firm and balanced seat, who is capable of mounting and dismounting unassisted, comfortable and in control at all paces but does not ride regularly.

- Strong Intermediate:

An intermediate rider who is currently riding regularly and is comfortable in the saddle for at least 6 hours per day.

- Advanced:

All of the above, plus an independent seat, soft hands, and capable of handling a spirited horse in open country.

Age Limit: 16 or older.

Weight limit:

There is a strict rider weight limit of 85 kgs / 13.5 stone / 190 lbs (dressed for riding). There are scales at the stables and riders may be required to step on the scales. Anyone exceeding the weight limit may be excluded from the riding and no refund will be made.

Horses and Tack

The horses are locally bred Peruvian Pasos. This breed dates back to the colonial era of Peru and originates from the Spanish Andalusians. Peruvian Paso horses are bred for their grace, spirit, and intelligence and are a symbol of their historic and noble past. These horses like to amble, moving fore and hind limbs on the same side at the same time, unlike other equine races that typically move diagonal limbs at the same time. During the ride you will experience traveling on horseback at the smooth Paso Llano gait (4-beat lateral gait, between 8 to 10 Km. per hour). The horses are well cared for, strong, and even-tempered. The tack utilised is very traditional and demonstrates refined Peruvian craftsmanship. The hardwood hex stirrup and the '*guarnicion*', or tailpiece, are unique elements of the Peruvian tack. The saddle is a box saddle and has a deep seat.

Pace of the ride

Due to the very high altitude and rough, rocky terrain, this is not a fast-paced ride. The horses are asked to work at altitudes of between 2,800m and 4,350m, and we should remember that with the altitude and reduced oxygen this high up makes their job of carrying us much more difficult!!

The decreased oxygen reduces not only the maximal oxygen consumption but also the absolute workload. High altitude has an effect on the horse's cardiovascular, haematological, respiratory and metabolic functions.

From experience we learned that our well-trained horses need approximately two days to get acclimatised to higher altitudes. During the first days of the ride we don't ask too much from our horses and keep the pace relatively slow. As the ride develops you will experience a more exciting pace, such as the fabulous and smooth 'paso llano' gait, some canters and even some gallops, but please bear in mind this is not a fast paced ride by definition.

Meals

While on the Sacred Valley of the Incas Ride, guests are treated to wonderful meals representing tasty regional cuisine. Dishes are made from fresh vegetables, dairy products, and fresh trout. Vegetarian or other dietary requirements will be accommodated with advanced notice.

Responsibilities of ride participants

All care will be taken, but we assume no responsibility for injury, loss or damage in any way. Guests are responsible for having an adequate, valid insurance policy including coverage for all the sporting activities that they are likely to participate in. Appropriate medical insurance is obligatory.

It is understood by Perol Chico that guests are in a suitable condition to partake in a riding tour, are not riding against any medical advice, and that guests know of no reason why they should not be participating in such a tour. Guests will be required to sign a waiver of liability at the start of the tour.

Ride participants have a certain responsibility to Perol Chico and to the other members of the ride. Participants are responsible for understanding the requirements of the ride, and for selecting a ride appropriate to their ability. Participants with medical problems or special dietary needs are responsible for informing Perol Chico of these issues well in advance. For the protection of all participants, the ride leader reserves the right to prevent anyone from riding who displays insufficient ability, or whose behaviour endangers the safety of other riders, themselves, or the horses. No refund will be made to a participant who is rejected for any such reason, or who is unwilling or unable to complete a tour. Participants are responsible for arranging travel to and from the ride's meeting point, for carrying valid travel documents, and for obtaining immunisations appropriate to the destination. Participants are responsible for understanding what is and is not included in the price as outlined in the detailed ride itineraries.

Anyone who does not want pictures of themselves to be used in promotional materials should notify Perol Chico accordingly.

Suggested Packing List

Since you will be riding at elevations between 2.800 and 4.290 meters (9,185 and 14,000 ft), lightweight, warm clothing worn in layers is highly recommended.

- Comfortable riding trousers (two pairs)
- T- shirts
- Long sleeved cotton shirts. These are without doubt the best things to ride in. Sleeves can be rolled up or down for protection from the sun and the collar helps to protect your neck too.
- Thick socks
- Wind-bloc Fleece or warm jacket for cold evenings especially at these high altitudes.
- Waterproofs. Ideally a Gore-Tex or similar wind and rain proof jacket. Waterproof leggings are also a good idea. You will be provided with warm wool/alpaca ponchos, but it is often useful to have another waterproof jacket underneath your poncho for added protection. It may not rain, but better to be prepared.
- Riding boots with rubber sole, also suitable for walking (around Inca ruins etc). Polo boots with front zip are wonderful as they are easy to put on and off.
- Protection for the lower leg, preferably half-chaps.
- Hat. We recommend a hard hat for riding and something with a wide brim is advisable as protection against the sun (baseball caps work well). Your hard hat must be secure on your head.
- Riding gloves
- Light pair of shoes for après-riding (espadrilles are great)





- Good sunglasses with a neck cord. Your eyes will become bloodshot if you do not wear sunglasses.
 - Sunscreen and Lip Balm are essential because of the altitude and dry air. We suggest at least Factor 30, if not total block.
 - Insect repellent (Machu Picchu and the surrounding area can be prone to mosquitos).
 - Casual clothes - for when you are not riding.
 - Small medical kit with antiseptic cream, good supply of ibuprofen, aspirin and plasters, antihistamine tablets, any medication you regularly take.
 - Scarf/bandana, useful for protection against the sun.
 - Additional passport photos
 - Copy of passport/visa and debit cards
 - Wash bag. A supply of baby wipes will be invaluable. We also recommend biodegradable personal washing products. Hair-dryers are available at all hotels on the trail.
 - Ziplock bags/supply of plastic carrier bags - always useful for wet/dry kit.
- Recommendation: when riding wear clothes in neutral/earthy colours that blend in well with the natural landscape. It looks better on photos.

Leather saddlebags are provided for you. Each person has a set of saddlebags and carries what they need for the day. Jackets can be tied behind the saddle so it is easy to put them on and take them off. To keep your saddlebag contents clean, a good idea is to put all your things in a plastic carrier bag/Ziplock bag first and then into the saddlebags.

'Top Ten Horseback Rides in the World'.



