

The hassle free way to see Peru & Bolivia

Incas & Llamas

Peru & Bolivia Highlights
20 days - Fully guided



- Machu Picchu – Lost City of the Incas
- Andean great train journey
- Flight over Nazca Lines
- Cusco heart of Inca Empire
- Arequipa – the white colonial city
- Sacred Valley of the Incas
- Colca Canyon – home of the condor
- Inca Trail 4 days/ 3 nights option
- Lake Titicaca & floating reed islands
- La Paz bustling & colourful

INCA TRAIL OPTION

Departs: 6 May, 16 Jun, 5 Aug, 2 Sep 2016

5 May, 9 Jun, 6 Aug, 1 Sep 2017

From NZ\$5990

(rates for 2017 subject to change)

Independent Departures: Friday Weekly



Latin Link Adventure

The South American Specialists

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Information Sheet

Incas & Llamas 20 days

Your Trip Dossier will give you some idea what to expect from this delightfully chaotic and unpredictable continent. You will stay in our tried and true friendly hotels, chosen for comfort, cleanliness and local flavour and travel using local transport as much as possible – local trains, local boats and sometimes minivans – giving you more chance to make contact with the local people as they go about their daily lives.

You will watch condors glide over deep canyons, fly over the mysterious Nazca Lines etched on the pampas of southern Peru; and glide across Lake Titicaca on a genuine reed boat.

Featuring the Colca Canyon, home of the condor, legendary Machu Picchu – Lost City of the Incas, red-tiled Cusco – heart of the Inca Empire; colourful markets of La Paz and the stark beauty of Lake Titicaca.

Inclusions – as per itinerary:

1. All transport & transfers as specified in the itinerary
2. All sightseeing and entrance fees as per itinerary (see below)
3. Services of local English speaking guides
4. Services of experienced Tour Manager
5. All accommodation twin or double share / private facilities /breakfast included.
6. Comprehensive Trip Notes and Contact List for hotels while travelling
7. Complimentary Latin American Spanish Phrase Book.
8. Comprehensive Pre-Departure Information Booklet

Not Included:

1. Meals(lunches/dinners) unless specified – You need to allow \$30-40 USD per day
2. Travel Insurance – it is mandatory to have adequate travel insurance – see enclosed policy
3. Items of personal nature, laundry, phone calls etc
4. Optional side trips not specified on the itinerary
5. Tips and gratuities to guides ,drivers and restaurants etc , allow US\$140
6. International airfares Auckland-Lima & La Paz –Santiago-Auckland

Sightseeing and Excursions:

1. Half day city tour of Lima
2. Paracas Nature Reserve , Ballestas Islands, Flight over Nazca Lines
3. 2 day/1 night Colca Canyon tour ex Arequipa
4. Santa Catalina Convent and Museo de Oro, Arequipa
5. 2 Full day Sacred Valley tours as per itinerary
6. Half Day walking tour of Cusco & tour of Sacsayhuaman, Qenko and Tambo Machay (near Cusco)
7. Option of walking the Inca Trail / or alternative program which includes 2 days/1 night to Machu Picchu, Pisac Ruins & Market, Maras Salt Pans – see shaded days for Inca Trail dates.
8. 1/2 day tour to Uros Floating Reed Islands Lake Titicaca
9. Half day boat tour to Island of the Sun
10. 1 /2 day city tour of colourful La Paz including Moon Valley

Notes:

- (a) No visas necessary for NZ passport holders
- (b) Yellow Fever and malaria not required unless adding a jungle extension
- (c) All prices given are for 2015 and are subject to change, currency adjustments and airline increases.

Costs

Cost is in NZ dollars per person / based on a minimum of 6 people travelling :

As per itinerary /20 days 2016 **NZ\$5990 –6 May, 5 Aug,2 Sep : NZ\$6290- 16June**

Single Supplement: \$995

**16 June departure starts on a Thursday and includes the Inti Raymi Festival in Cuzco*

Prices for 2017 departures will be confirmed in July 2016

Early Booking Discount: reserve your place on the tour by 31 Oct 2015 and receive a early booking discount of \$200.

Inca Trail Option: additional NZ\$495

Galapagos Islands Pre Extension* :

Depart to Quito on Thurs ,1 week earlier for 3 nights in Quito,Otavallo Tour, 4 night Galapagos Islands Cruise & 1 night in Guayaquil Additional Cost: NZ\$5495 twin/double share , includes additional airfares)

Amazon Pre Extension*:Arrive Lima on Sunday for 1nights , then 4nights in Tambopata Reserve

Additional cost :NZ\$2450(twin/double share, includes airfares & taxes from Lima)

Itineraries for Galapagos & Amazon Extensions available on request)

* NB These costs based on you flying internationally to/from South America with LAN Airlines. Should you travel on another airline a surcharge may apply

Bolivia's Colonial Past, Salt Flats & North West Argentina Post Tour Extension :NZ\$3695

Pantanal Wildlife & Iguassu Post Tour Extension : NZ\$3350 per person

NOTE ON FLIGHTS

****International flights on LAN Airlines Auckland –Lima & La Paz –Santiago –Auckland are in addition to costs stated above .**

All prices given are based on twin share and are subject to currency fluctuations and airline increases

Incass & Llamas 2016 – Fully Guided



Incas & Llamas – Itinerary

	Day	Programme	Overnight
1	Fri	<p><u>Lima</u> Arrive Lima, capital of Peru, City of Kings. Transfer to your hotel in the Miraflores district. Accommodation: Hotel Antigua Miraflores www.antiguamiraflores.com</p>	Lima
2	Sat	<p><u>Lima</u> Lima, city of Kings and capital of Peru. This was the principal city of Spanish South America from its founding in 1535 until the independence of the South American republics in early 19th century. It never rains in Lima and only for 2 months of the year are the skies blue – January and February. You have the whole day to explore Lima A city tour of the Greater Colonial Lima allows you to appreciate the wonderful colonial buildings in downtown Lima such as the Santo Domingo Convent and the Casa Aliaga, one of South America's oldest Spanish homes. Drive by the elegant tree-lined avenues of San Isidro and Miraflores. This afternoon an optional visit to the world famous Gold Museum where you can browse through the unique ceramics gold and weavings. There is also one of the world's largest collections of armoury and a very extensive display of Pre-Columbian textiles.</p>	Lima (B)
3	Sun	<p><u>Lima – Paracas</u> Continue south by bus along the Panamericano Highway through desert countryside alongside the Pacific Ocean to Paracas. This afternoon we have included an excursion into the Paracas Nature Reserve , a marine sanctuary located at the shore of the Pacific Ocean Accommodation Hotel Santa Maria www.santamariahostal.com</p>	Paracas (B)
4	Mon	<p><u>Paracas- Nasca</u> This morning visit Ballestas Islands, known as Peru's mini Galapagos. An opportunity to watch resident and migratory birds, including flamingos, red-legged cormorants, Inca terns, bobbies, as well as playful sea lions, amusing Humboldt penguins and, we are lucky, we might see marine otters. This afternoon travel by bus to Nasca. This small oasis town is famous for the mysterious lines etched in the desert pampas. Are they messages to travellers from outer space that landed here thousands of years ago or the works of an ancient culture depicting a planting calendar? Cut into the stony desert, like a giant sketching pad, these many lines include geometrical figures, giant animals and birds. Enjoy a flight over these amazing lines – the only way to appreciate this archaeological mystery. Come away with your own theories and questions. Accommodation: Hotel Alegria www.hotelalegria.net</p>	Nasca (B)

5	Tues	<p><u>Flight over Nasca Lines – then to Arequipa</u></p> <p>This morning it is your turn to become airborne and theorise on these mysterious lines etched in the desert. Wow - up you go to witness this gigantic sketching pad in the desert pampa. Who drew them? Why? Draw your own conclusions or come away with as many questions as answers!</p> <p>This afternoon depart on our super comfy bus for Arequipa, arriving there late evening and transfer to our hotel</p> <p>Accommodation: Majestad Hotel Historical Center, Arequipa www.majestadhotel.com</p>	Arequipa (B)
6	Wed	<p><u>Explore Arequipa</u></p> <p>The beautiful city of Arequipa sitting at 2300 metres above sea level and gateway to the Colca Canyon. Lying at 2880 metres above sea level at the foot of El Misti Volcano (5882m) is the 'Ciudad Blanca' – the white city, boasting a delightful climate, plenty of fascinating colonial buildings and gateway to the famous Colca Canyon, home of the condors, one of the world's deepest canyons.</p> <p>Must sees here are a visit to the peaceful Santa Catalina Convent, one of the most fascinating religious colonial buildings in Peru. The convent, opened to visitors in 1970, is surrounded by imposing walls and the 450 nuns who lived here led a completely secluded life. Also here is "Juanita" the mummy of a young girl found in 1995 by an American mountain climber on Mt Ambato. She is encased in a freezing chamber inside the Museum and open for viewing.</p>	Arequipa (B)
7	Thurs	<p><u>Arequipa - Colca Canyon</u></p> <p>Drive through the awesome Colca Canyon, one of the world's deepest canyons it is only accessible by a dirt road over the Altiplano before dropping to the village of Chivay at 3600 metres above sea level. The landscape is remarkable for its Inca and pre-Inca terracing which goes on for many kilometres and is the most extensive in Peru. Life here has changed very little through the centuries where the campesinos still farm the remarkable Inca terracing as their ancestors did before them. We continue deep into the Canyon to the Cruz de las Condors. This is a remarkable highlight – you can watch the impressive condors rising with the thermals – your chance to get great photos of these wonderful birds.</p> <p>Stay overnight in the small village of Chivay where you can relax in the hot thermal springs and delight in the haunting melodies of the panpipes.</p> <p>Accommodation: Colca Llatqa Inn www.colcallaqtahotel.com</p>	Chivay (B,D)
8	Fri	<p><u>Colca Canyon- Cusco</u></p> <p>We then continue our journey of discovery and exploration in the hinterland of the Andes travelling overland to Cusco arriving early evening</p> <p>Accommodation: Royal Inka 1 Hotel www.royalinkahotel.com/hcusco.html</p>	Cusco (B,L)

9	Sat	<p><u>Cusco</u> Cusco, heart of the Inca Empire, known by the local Quechua Indians as 'Navel of the Universe'. Cusco is an amazing experience. Lying in an exceptionally beautiful countryside 3300 metres above sea level, here you will encounter a fine blend of Spanish and Inca cultures, colourful Quechua Indian markets, Inca temples and massive stone walls which form the foundations of Colonial Cusco, originally part of the impressive monument of Sacsayhuaman, situated above the town. Morning at leisure. This morning enjoy a comprehensive walking tour of this delightful city, including the Cathedral, Plaza de Armas, Temple of the Sun. Visit Sacsayhuaman -this magnificent Inca fortress, which overlooks the city of Cusco. Sacsayhuaman can be variously translated as 'speckled falcon' or 'speckled head'. The last interpretation refers to the belief that the city of Cusco was set out in the form of a puma whose head was the hill of Sacsayhuaman. The origins are uncertain but the fortress is generally attributed to the period of Inca Pachacuti, the man who essentially founded the Inca empire. We also visit the ruins of Qenko, an area of well - preserved archaeological ruins and the Red Fortress of Puca Pucara.</p>	Cusco (B)
10	Sun	<p><u>Cusco -Sacred Valley</u> Drive through stunning scenery to Chinchero, the most colourful and authentic market in Peru. Continue on to Maras Salt Pans. Another fabulous walk today. Discover these amazing salt pans still mined as they were hundreds of years ago, Also visit Moray –these unusual Inca ruins consist of several enormous terraced circular depressions, the largest of which is about 30m. deep. Continue through the Sacred Valley to our hotel an old monastery (completely restored of course!). Accommodation: Hotel Recoleta Monasterio www.hotelessanagustin.com.pe/hotel_recoleta.htm</p>	Cuzco(B)
11	Mon	<p><u>Cusco – Sacred Valley Trekkers in group depart for Inca Trail Day 1</u> Continue through the beautiful Sacred valley of the Incas. A visit will be made to Latin Link's aid project run by Peru Challenge Next is Pisac where you will enjoy a panoramic walk along the original Inca pathways and terracing to the ancient town below. Visit the markets then continue through this lush valley where the towering fortress of Ollantaytambo dominates the surrounding area.</p>	Sacred Valley of the Incas (B)
12	Tues	<p><u>Train to Aguas Calientes or Day 2 - Inca Trail</u> After breakfast you have an early morning transfer to Ollantaytambo to catch the train to Aguas Calientes, a small railroad town with tons of character – enjoy a soak in the hot pools under the Andean sky or explore the town Accommodation: Santuario Hotel Av. Hermanos Ayar s/n.Agua Calientes Ph: 51 972-910-9599 www.santuariohotel.com</p>	Aguas Calientes(B)

13	Wed	<p><u>Bus to Machu Picchu- Cusco or Day 3 – Inca Trail</u></p> <p>It's an early start today. This is the best time to enjoy the peace and tranquillity not to mention the magic of Machu Picchu is before the trainload's of visitors arrive. Machu Picchu, known also as 'Lost City of the Incas'. It is undoubtedly the best known and most spectacular archaeological site on the continent and is considered a must for all visitors to Peru. You will travel by bus up the zig-zag, the Hiram Bingham highway, to the ruins where your first views will take your breath away. Enjoy a fully guided tour of the ruins, some time to explore on your own, before returning down the mountainside. Time for a snack and then board the train to Ollantaytambo and transfer to our hotel in Cusco.</p> <p>Accommodation: Royal Inka 1 Hotel www.royalinkahotel.com/hcusco.html</p>	Cusco(B)
14	Thurs	<p><u>Cusco or Day 4 Inca Trail</u></p> <p>Free day to explore this delightful city – everyone's favourite. The day is yours to enjoy, all the convents, churches, museums, alpaca and jewellery bargains.</p>	Cusco(B)
15	Fri	<p><u>Cusco - Puno</u></p> <p>Bus ride to Puno through the dramatic landscapes of the highland plateau, with occasional views of tiny Andean villages and herds of llamas and vicunas. We will stop at Andahuaylillas, where there is a beautiful baroque church built at the beginning of the XVIIth century. It is very well known thanks to its beautiful mural paintings. We will make a second stop at Raqchi, where there is an Inca temple built to worship Wiracocha, one of the most important Inca gods. Finally, we will stop at the archaeological museum of Pukara (200BC-AD300) then we will lunch at a restaurant en route.</p> <p>Arrive in Puno late afternoon. Accommodation: Qelqatani Hotel www.qelqatani.com</p>	Puno (B,L)
16	Sat	<p><u>Uros Islands-Copacabana</u></p> <p>What an experience! By boat visit the curious floating reed islands and the Uros Indians who live there. Everything is made of these reeds, houses, schools, boats, churches etc. Once you reach the reed islands, you can experience gliding across Lake Titicaca in an authentic reed boat - you can't beat it! Return to Puno.</p> <p>This afternoon continue through lovely scenery, which follows this mighty lake to the Bolivian border.</p> <p>After border formalities continue to the sleepy town of Copacabana. Accommodation: Hotel Rosario del Lago www.hotelrosario.com/lago</p>	Copacabana Lake Titicaca (B,L)

17	Sun	<p><u>Copacabana – La Paz</u></p> <p>Morning at leisure to explore around Copacabana . The opportunity for an optional boat trip out on the lake to tranquil Isla del Sol (Island of the Sun) where legend has it that the first Inca King rose out of the lake.</p> <p>On this legendary island, visit the Pilkokaina Inca Palace and enjoy a short walk to the Gardens, Sacred Stairs and Fountain of the Inca. As we ascend to Yumani village, we have a magnificent view of the lake set to the backdrop of Mount Illampu.</p> <p>Depart Copacabana and continue through even more stunning scenery, with snow-capped peaks and the blue lake, to La Paz, capital of Bolivia and highest capital in the world.</p> <p>Known as City of Contrasts, here ancient traditions meet the new millennium of chaotic traffic and towering buildings.</p> <p>Accommodation: Hotel Rosario www.hotelrosario.com/la-paz</p>	La Paz (B)
18	Mon	<p><u>City tour and shopping</u></p> <p>A morning tour takes you down to where the air is thicker and the elite live. Visit the witches markets, Calle Jaen with its museums, San Francisco Church, Plaza Murillo, National Congress, Cathedral, Presidential Palace, continuing to the very unusual eroded formations of the Moon Valley.</p> <p>The afternoon is free to enjoy the uniqueness of this colourful bustling city and shop for bargains and gifts.</p>	La Paz (B)
19	Tues	<p><u>Explore La Paz</u></p> <p>Optional tour to Tiwanaku (Pre-Columbian) ruins outside the city or a Mountain Bike down the world's most spectacular road or spend the day with a little more shopping and people watching. A great city to do that!</p>	La Paz(B)
20	Wed	<p><u>La Paz</u></p> <p>Time to say adios to the Andes. Transfer to the airport for your flight</p>	La Paz (B)

Itinerary

This itinerary, correct at time of printing, is a guide only and is subject to alteration on occurrence of any unpredictable conditions and circumstances which may arise in this delightfully chaotic continent. Please remember also that we are travelling in Third World countries where things do not always go as planned. The main thing is to be flexible and open to change. You will be kept up to date with any such changes

Inca Trail Description & Distances

Please note you will be given a duffel bag in Cusco to pack the items you need on the trail. Your main baggage will be stored for you while you are on the Trail. Sleeping bag, sleeping mat & sheet included

Day 1 (12km): You will be picked up from your hotel in Urubamba for the short trip to Km 82 where you will begin the trail.

Cross the Vilcanota River and follow the trail to the right as it climbs steeply up from the river. After passing through a small village, the ruins of the Inca hillfort of Huillca Raccay come into view high above the mouth of the river Cusichaca ('happy bridge'). It is a simple descent down to the Cusichaca river.

For a further 4.5-hour, 08- to 10-kilometre-walk the path follows the left bank of the river up to the village of Wayllabamba (3,000m). The name in Quechua means 'grassy plain'. You will spend the first night here – depending on everyone's fitness.

Day 2 (11km): Rising early (around 6am), today begins with a gradual climbing up from Wayllabamba for about 3 hours through steepening woods and increasingly spectacular terrain brings you to the treeline and a meadow known as Llulluchapampa (3,680m). It is another 1½ hours climb to the first and highest pass of the trail (Abra de Huarmihuañusca or 'Dead Woman's Pass') at 4,200m. During this part of the trail hikers are exposed to the Andean elements: first scorching sun and then, closer to the pass, freezing winds. Once at the top hikers can celebrate having completed the most difficult section of the trail.

The descent from the pass is steep although not difficult, following the trail on the left side of the valley to the valley floor and to the 2nd night's campsite at Pacaymayo (3,600m). There are toilet facilities here.

Day 3 (16km): From Pacaymayo it takes about an hour to climb up to the ruins of Runkuracay. These small circular ruins occupy a commanding position overlooking the Pacaymayo valley below. Another 45 minute hike will bring you to the top of the second pass: Abra de Runkuracay (4,000m). At last you'll feel that you are walking along the trail of the Incas with paving, for the most part, being original. The descent down the steps from the pass is steep so take care. This section of the trail, up till the 3rd pass, is particularly beautiful as the path crosses high stone embankments and skirts deep precipices. After about 1 hour from the 2nd pass you'll arrive at Sayacmarca by way of a superbly designed stone staircase. The name Sayacmarca means 'Inaccessible Town' and describes the position of the ruins perfectly, protected on three sides by sheer cliffs. No one knows the exact purpose of these ruins.

You have to backtrack a little to rejoin the trail as it passes Conchamarca, a small Inca dwelling situated in the shadows of Sayacmarca, which was probably a *tambo* for weary travellers on their way to Machu Picchu.

From then on the path descends into magnificent cloudforest full of orchids, hanging mosses, tree ferns and flowers, passing through an impressive Inca tunnel, carved into the rock, on the way.

The trail then climbs up to the 3rd pass (3,700m). The view from the pass offers excellent views of several snow-capped peaks including Salkantay (6,271m) and Veronica (5,750m). A few minutes after the pass is Phuyupatamarca (3,580 metres), the most impressive Inca ruin so far. The name means 'Town in the Clouds'. Access to the ruins is down a steep flight of stairs passing six 'Inca Baths' probably used for the ritual worship of water.

Leaving the site via an impressive Inca staircase leading from the west side of the ruins (the far end from the baths) you descend a thousand or so steps. Be careful with your knees which will feel the strain by the end of the day. After about an hour of walking through cloudforest you may just be able to see the archaeological site of Wiñay Wayna (2,650 metres),

The campsite at Winay Wayna is a welcome sight and your efforts can be rewarded with a deserved cold beer, as well as hot showers (\$1.5) and toilets. Trekkers on the Classic 4-day trek will camp here.

A short trail leaves from the southern end of the ruins of Wiñay Wayna. The name in Quechua means 'forever young' and is named after a variety of pink orchid which grows here. The ruins comprise magnificent agricultural terraces set in an impressive location. There are also many buildings of good quality stonework and a sequence of 10 baths, suggesting that the site was probably a religious centre associated with the worship of water. Ritual cleansing may have taken place here for pilgrims on the final leg of the trail to Machu Picchu.

Day 4 (6km): On the last morning we rise before dawn (4am) to begin the final section of the trail, after a light breakfast you will say goodbye to our porters as they pack up the camping equipment and head back to Cusco. Most people attempt to wake up early so that they can leave Wiñay Wayna to get to Machu Picchu before sunrise. The sky starts getting light by 6am and the first rays of the sun reach Machu Picchu at about 7am. The trail contours a mountainside and drops into cloudforest before coming to an almost vertical flight of 50 steps leading up

**Suddenly the whole of Machu Picchu is spread out before you in all its glory -
a fantastic sight for all – pure magic.**

Around 7am, our guide will take you on a full guided tour. You will then have plenty of free time to explore this mystical Inca city, later in the afternoon descend by bus down to Aguas Calientes, you may decide to have lunch in one of the many restaurants (not included) then catch the train to Poroy and transfer by bus to our hotel in Cusco to rejoin the group

Option:

Bolivia's Colonial Past, Salt Flats & North West Argentina

Day 20 Wed La Paz – Sucre (B)

Transfer to the airport for an afternoon flight to Sucre . On arrival transfer to your hotel

Accommodation: Hotel de Su Merced

The Hotel de Su Merced is set in the old site of the city, two blocks from the 25 de Mayo central square.

Day 21 Thurs Sucre (B)

Sucre has some of the finest colonial architecture in the world.

See the Constitutional Capital of Bolivia and the seat of the Supreme Court on our morning tour.

Sucre is called the white city. It's a city of towers, beautiful churches where the architecture reflects the life of the colonial Spanish aristocracy.

Sucre was the birth place of the independence movements of the Americas. In fact, Sucre was the first to rebel against Spanish rule on 25th May 1809. Its colonial past is visible in many religious and civil buildings distributed in the center of the city. Narrow streets, churches, fastidious residences, white facades, red roofs allow us to discover a past of art and religion. In 1991 Sucre was declared Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the UNESCO in light of its Historical and Cultural value.

It is neat to just walk around this safe city and take in the different colonial buildings and wonder what life was like years ago.

Day 22 Fri Sucre –Potosi (B)

This morning travel by bus into the highlands to the UNESCO World Heritage city of Potosi with its rich history and Spanish architecture. Potosi is known as the Imperial City and is situated at the foot of Cerro

Rico (Rich Mountain) famed for its mineral wealth. The Spanish created one of the most important and populous cities on the continent, after the discovery of the silver-rich mountain in 1545. Situated at an altitude of more than 13,123ft (4,000m), it is also the highest city in the world although not quite the thriving metropolis that it once was.

Potosi was founded in 1546. It soon produced enormous wealth, becoming one of the largest cities in the world with a population of more than 200.000 people. In Spanish there is a saying 'vale un Potosí!' ('it's worth a Potosí'), which means being worth a fortune. It is from Potosí that most of the Spanish silver came. According to official records, 45.000 tons of pure silver were mined from Cerro Rico from 1556 to 1783. Of this total, 7.000 tons went to the Spanish monarchy. The tradition tells that the Spanish conquerors found incredible amounts of silver, enough to build a bridge completely made out of silver from Potosí to Europe. During the early 19th century, struggles for independence caused many churches to be looted. Then the city's wealth was removed to Europe or to other parts of the Spanish realm. By then the population dropped to less than 10.000. By the time of independence in 1825, the mines of the Cerro Rico were almost exhausted.

The opportunity to visit the mines this afternoon

Day 23 Sat Potosi (B)

Visit to Casa de la Moneda, Convento de Santa Teresa and San Francisco. Tour through the old colonial center with its old narrow streets and mine neighbourhoods

Day 24 Sun Potosi – Uyuni (B)

This afternoon we continue across the altiplano to Uyuni then transfer to your hotel on the edge of the salt flats. This hotel is one of the most extraordinary in the world, constructed out of blocks of salt.

Day 25 Mon Uyuni – Salt Flats (B,L)

The Uyuni Salt lakes area area of impressive beauty

10am Full day visit to the Uyuni Salt Lake. Start your day visiting the huge Uyuni Salt Lake, the cold water springs, the Colchani Salt Factory and Isla Pescado famous for its giant cactus. After lunch continue to Coquesa Mummies and then back to Uyuni.

Day 26 Tues Uyuni-Villazon (B)

Transfer to the railway station

Depart Uyuni on the Expreso del Sur Train – executive class, overnight train

Day 27 Wed Villazon-Purmamarca

Arrive Villazon early this morning. You will be met and transferred to the border immigration control where you will cross into Argentina and transfer you the short distance to the bus station. Continue by bus to Tilcara then transfer to the beautiful village of Purmamarca

Day 28 Thurs Purmamarca- Humahuaca-Salta (B)

Visit the Seven Colours Mountain, Uquia Church then to Tilcara with its archaeological museum and Indian Fortress (entrance fee to be paid direct) Then to Leon, Tumbaya, and the town of Humahuaca. Travel past La Cienaga Dam, Campo Alegre Dam and La Caldera. Travel through Jujuy on the way to Salta. Located in the northwest of the Argentine Republic, the province of Salta amazes the tourist with its geographical and cultural heterogeneity. Surrounded by three countries (Chile, Bolivia and Paraguay) and six provinces (Jujuy, Formosa, Chaco, Santiago del Estero, Tucumán and Catamarca), its vast territory covers all kinds of landscapes, from the arid desert of La Puna, to the lush green forest. This region is also the centre of the fruit production, lemons, olives, tobacco for Argentina and has a very pleasant climate at this time of year

Day 28 Fri Salta (B)

Salta is known not only for its inhabitant's warmth but also for its cultural heritage. It inherited the diaguita-calchaquí nation of the Inca Empire, a result of the Spanish colonial past and the native spirit that fought for national independence.

Morning tour of Salta.

Day 29 Sat Salta –Train to the Clouds (B)

It leaves from the train station at the city of Salta and ends its route at La Polvorilla Viaduct.

The railways reach a height of 4,200 meters above sea level, turning this train into one of the highest in the world.

The train offers meals onboard, translator services, and medical assistant for any passenger that may be affected by the lack of oxygen caused by the height. The trip lasts approximately sixteen hours, from

seven am until midnight or later. The train runs 217 km. and passes through 29 bridges, 21 tunnels, 13 viaducts, 2 spirals, and 2 zigzags.

There are two stops throughout the trip: one at San Antonio de los Cobres station, and the other one at La Polvorilla viaduct.

It leaves from the city of Salta, the lowest point, and from there it begins the upward route until it reaches the final point at La Polvorilla Viaduct, the highest in the trip. As you reach the different stations, local villagers at picturesque stands sell craftwork, clothes, and regional products as interesting souvenirs of the trip. The train services include dining car, medical practice, audio, video, and bilingual guides.

Day 30 Sun Salta – Cafayate (B)

Leaving from the City of Salta, tour around one of the most impressive circuits in the Republic of Argentina as you visit the legendary Calchaquí Valley.

In order to visit the Calchaquí Valleys and appreciate their beautiful sceneries and the quaint villages from the early XVIII century nestled in their geography, travel a total distance of 520 kilometers through three main roads, namely Provincial Route 33 and National Routes 40 and 68.

From the very beginning, fascination takes hold of travelers as they enter the San Fernando de Escoipe Ravine. Surrounded by mountains and bordered by Provincial Route 33, it sets the start of adventure. The local vegetation is typical of the mountain rain forest, with the presence of hydrophile and xerophile plants. Ancient laurels, willows, walnuts, peachtrees, poplars and some conifers are always present in the area. At the end of the Escoipe Ravine, the winding "Cuesta del Obispo" (Bishop's Slope) begins. It got its name from Monsignor Cortázar, the maximum ecclesiastical authority in Salta, who was traveling from Salta to Cachi back in 1622 and spent the night at this spot lying at 3,400 m.

At the top of the slope, known as "Piedra del Molino" (Millstone), lies a chapel raised to honor the Archangel Raphael, "Patron Saint of Travelers". This spot features an unforgettable view of the endless slope, which gets mingled with the granite formation of feldspar, mica and quartz contained in the area.

Driving on, there appears a place which faithfully honors its name: the "Enchanted Valley", a dreamed-of place with red soil and green grass where the huge rocks and the uneven terrain astonish the most daring visitors, who are used to being delighted by natural wonders.

Continue on to Los Cardones National Park. The road leads to Cachi Pampa – "salt pampa" in the Cacán tongue. After a few kilometers, the Tin Tin Straight is entered. Fully paved, this 12-kilometer-long stretch displays the impressive snow-capped Curacatao summits in the distance. The tour always features the characteristics of the scenery, totally worth beholding. A little further, the town of Cachi opens its gates to show its simple beauty. It is a good moment to make a stop, rest for a while and tour around the purely colonial district.

Cachi means "salt" in the Quechua or Cacán tongue, and it was given such a name by the local natives, who had mistaken the summit of Nevado for a big salt deposit. When touring around the village, visitors can appreciate the politeness of the people, who appear to be in tune with the architectural surroundings. Continue through Molinos to the wine growing region of Cafayate

Day 31 Mon Cafayate – Buenos Aires (B)

Cafayate, dunes and vineyards in a fertile valley surrounded by colourful mountains are the best setting to taste delicious wines from an ancient cellar

Return through the "Quebrada de las Conchas" (Shells Ravine) where traces of prehistoric times still remain in the many aeolic formations such as The Theatre, The Devil's Throat, The Toad and some others. As we get closer to Salta, the vegetation becomes more lush as we descend down towards the city.

Transfer to the airport for your evening flight to Buenos Aires

Day 32 Tues Buenos Aires (B)

Morning tour visiting the most outstanding sites. Departing from the Hotel to get to 9 de Julio Ave. the widest in the world, past the famous Colon Opera house, the Obelisk commemorating the first founding of the city in 1536 to get to Plaza de Mayo (May Square), and the buildings surrounding it: Government House, Metropolitan Cathedral with the Mausoleum of General San Martin, Argentina's greatest national hero and the Cabildo, the colonia town hall built in 1751. Then on to La Boca, typically Italian district, where first Italian immigrants settled and 'Caminito' street. The tour continues to Buenos Aires port area, past San Martín Square towards Palermo Chico residential district and Palermo Park with its jacaranda and palo borracho trees which flower in the spring and late summer. The ride continues to Recoleta elegant district to visit Recoleta Cemetery where the famous are laid to rest (including Eva Peron). Return to the hotel along the stylish Alvear Ave.

Day 33 Sun Depart Buenos Aires (B)

Day at leisure . Transfer to the airport

Option

Pantanal Wildlife & Iguassu

Day 20 Wed La Paz – Corumba (B)

Transfer to the airport for your flight via Santa Cruz to Puerto Suarez on the Bolivia – Brazil border . Cross into Brazil where our driver will be waiting to take you the short distance to your hotel in the town of Corumba situated on the banks of the Paraguay River

Day 22 Thurs Corumba – Pantanal (B,L,D)

This morning commence the drive through the heart of the Pantanal to your lodge

"Pousada do Xaraés" is situated in one of the most beautiful geographic regions of the Pantanal, the Abobral Pantanal, washed by the river Abobral. The lodge is part of a commercial cattle ranch carrying about 1.500 head in a total area of 4.200 Has. It was previously called "hotel fazenda Xaraés" (farm hotel), open to tourists from 1991 to 2000 and was owned by local businessmen. In 2001 it was purchased by Portuguese businessmen and the name was changed to "Pousada do Xaraés" (the Xaraés lodge), and the previous infrastructure was totally remodelled giving it excellent comfort and quality. The lodge's 17 apartments are distributed among three buildings, all of which are but a few meters from the Abobral river. From these trees you can hear the marvellous songs of the Pantanal birds or the thrilling roar of the monkeys, which, in the early morning, come to the trees on the banks of the river. All the apartments have private bathrooms, air conditioning, fridge bar and telephone, with rustic decoration and a welcoming atmosphere. In each set of rooms, there is a verandah with fans and hammocks providing an alternative resting area. The restaurant dining room, which overlooks the gardens from whose trees the nesting birds can be heard all day, is equipped with fans and air conditioning and decorated in the rustic style that is characteristic of the whole guest-house. Delicious food, typical of the Pantanal, is served in a buffet system while being kept hot on a wood fired stove. The sitting room, in the same rustic style as the rest of the lodge, is surrounded by the garden, and has various areas for chatting, reading, table games, snooker, television and bar, where you can sample delicious drinks and nibbles served there. On the bar's verandah, a few meters from the river, there is a beautiful view of the Pantanal, with its characteristic sounds and scents, and also the ecological swimming pool in which no chemicals are used.

You can also participate in the following activities: horse riding, trips by boat canoe or horse cart, photographic safaris in a 4X4 pick-up, ecological trailing and, after dark, spot lighting of nocturnal fauna, always accompanied by bilingual guides and local guides.

Afternoon excursion.

Day 23 Fri Pantanal (B,L,D)

Participate in the excursions at the lodge

Day 24 Sat Pantanal – Iguassu (B)

Morning activities at the lodge. You will be transferred to Campo Grande, a distance of 340km. Connect by air to Iguassu. Transfer to your hotel.

Day 25 Sun Iguassu

Morning tour to visit the Brazilian side of the falls

Day 26 Mon Iguassu-Buenos Aires (B)

This morning visit the Argentine side of the falls including the mighty Devils Nose Cataract . Later this afternoon transfer to the airport for your flight to Buenos Aires

Day 27 Tues Buenos Aires (B,)

Morning tour visiting the most outstanding sites. Departing from the Hotel to get to 9 de Julio Ave. the widest in the world, past the famous Colon Opera house, the Obelisk commemorating the first founding of the city in 1536 to get to Plaza de Mayo (May Square), and the buildings surrounding it: Government House, Metropolitan Cathedral with the Mausoleum of General San Martin, Argentina's greatest national hero and the Cabildo, the colonia town hall built in 1751. Then on to La Boca, typically Italian district, where first Italian immigrants settled and 'Caminito' street. The tour continues to Buenos Aires port area, past San Martín Square towards Palermo Chico residential district and Palermo Park with its jacaranda and palo borracho trees which flower in the spring and late summer. The ride continues to Recoleta elegant district to visit Recoleta Cemetery where the famous are laid to rest (including Eva Peron). Return to the hotel along the stylish Alvear Ave.

Day 28 Wed Buenos Aires (B)

Day at leisure. Transfer to the airport