

Kings School Salkantay Trail to Machu Picchu 2026

Trip Code: STLA

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the Incan Capital of Cusco
- Marvel at the cultural jewels of the Sacred Valley
- Trek the scenically stunning Salkantay Trail through the quiet Cordillera Vilcabamba

- Visit the iconic lost city of Machu Picchu

AT A GLANCE

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This 12 day Peruvian adventure begins with time to explore Cusco and the Sacred Valley, takes in a classic 5-day trek beneath the snow-capped peak of Salkantay (6270m), before visiting the iconic Inca Citadel of Machu Picchu. Taking a day in Cusco to acclimatize to the higher altitudes, we will explore all of the main sights of the city and the Inca fortress of Sacsayhuaman. We will then head across the altiplano to the Sacred Valley where we will visit the Ollantaytambo and the Maras Salt Pans before starting our trek. Our trail through the Cordillera Vilcabamba will take us on a scenic journey through some of Peru's most beautiful and diverse landscapes. As we traverse around Mount Salkantay (approaching Machu Picchu in the opposite direction to the Inca Trail), we will pass through small traditional Andean communities, cocoa and coffee plantations, high altitude jungles and forgotten Inca ruins along the way.

We cross the Salkantay Pass (4635m) beneath the impressive snowy face of Salkantay at 6271 metres before descending into the warmer climate of the Cloud Forest below. Our final day of trekking takes us on a steep climb over the pass to the Inca ruins at Llactapata and a sneaky preview of Machu Picchu across the valley. At the end of our trek we will take a short train transfer to Aguas Calientes, from where we spend a day at Machu Picchu to discovering all the secrets of this most magnificent of Inca ruins. Returning to Cusco we have a final day at leisure to soak up the atmosphere of this Incan Capital.

Is this holiday for you?

This is a classic adventure holiday offering an exciting mix of classic trekking and cultural discovery. During our 5 day trek most of the walking is on well-defined tracks, including sections of ancient Inca highways, which are paved with stone, rocky trails and agricultural paths. This holiday is perfect for fit and active adventurers who are comfortable with walking for 5 or 6 hours each day with the occasional longer day. You will encounter some reasonable amounts of ascents and descents on some days. This is a fully supported trek, and you will only be required to carry your day pack each day. Our friendly camp crew will take care of all the camp chores, so when in camp you can relax, rest and enjoy the views. To help you acclimatise and enjoy the trekking section of your holiday, we have allowed 3 nights at around 3000 metres, before we start walking. Not only does this help you acclimatise, it also allows the chance to enjoy exploring all the sites in Cusco and around the Sacred Valley!

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

A professional and qualified KE School Leader,

All accommodation as described,

All meals,

Cusco group airport transfer on arrival and departure,

All land transport required in the itinerary,

All sightseeing tours as highlighted in the itinerary,

When camping a full service including food and all equipment (excluding personal equipment),

Inflatable sleeping mat while camping,

What's not Included

Travel Insurance,

Machu Picchu entrance and guided tour,

All other entrance fees for sites visited on the trip,

Tips for local staff,

Miscellaneous personal expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

Cusco Airport transfers are provided for all clients arriving on the group days. At the end of the trip, a single-timed transfer will be provided from Cusco to the airport in the early morning. If you wish to stay longer in Cusco, later transfers can be booked at additional cost.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

On trek the food provided will be a mixture of local and worldwide favourites, with all ingredients purchased in Peru and cooked for us by highly trained staff cooks. The food our cooks are able to produce on trek will be a taste sensation! Breakfast includes fresh fruit, porridge, pancakes or omelette with plenty of toast and home-made jam. Lunch is usually a picnic - fresh fruit, salad and bread, cheeses, cold meats, avocado and plenty to drink. Dinner is served in the mess tent and is a delicious three-course meal and the menus will be flavoursome and varied. There will be no problem catering for vegetarians.

In Cusco, Ollantaytambo and Aguas Calientes there is a wide range of restaurants cafes and bars serving excellent and varied cuisine! Meals, apart from breakfast, are not included here so you are free to make your own choice of restaurant and menu. If you are looking to sample some traditional Peruvian fare we can recommend trying Ceviche, a dish of raw fished marinated in citrus juice (the acid in the citrus juice effectively 'cooks' the fish), which is the unofficial national dish of Peru! The name Ceviche actually comes from the Quechua word 'siwichi', meaning fresh fish. Guinea Pig or 'Cuy' is also a common delicacy in the Andes and has been eaten at special occasions since the time of the Incas! Usually served roasted or barbequed, Guinea Pig meat has a gamey taste. It is very high in protein and low in cholesterol.

When it comes to drinks, before and during your trek we can recommend drinking Mate de Coca. It takes a little time to acclimatise to Cusco's 3400m elevation and one of the things that is said to help acclimatisation is supping this mildly stimulating, greenish and unusual tasting 'tea' made by steeping fresh coca leaves in boiling water. Those looking to celebrate the end of their holiday with an alcoholic beverage (best saved till post trek when you are fully acclimatised!) should seek out a 'Pisco Sour'. This classic South American cocktail, made by mixing the Peruvian liquor Pisco with lime juice, egg white and bitters, is incredibly moreish!

Accommodation

During the holiday there are a total of 4 nights in a comfortable and well located 3* hotel in Cusco, which is a beautifully converted old colonial house and just a short walk from the Plaza de Armas. We will also spend 1 night in a comfortable and well located hotel in Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley, and 1 night in a comfortable and well located 3* hotel in Aguas Calientes (Machu Picchu Pueblo).

Whilst trekking there will be a total of 4 nights camping where you will receive a full service from our friendly camp crew. You will sleep in roomy 2 man dome tents, with a porch, and inflatable camping mattresses are provided. All the camp equipment and luggage will be transported between camps by mules, so you need only carry your day pack each day. Our camp crew will erect and dismantle the tents for you, cook, and take care of all the camp chores.

During walking days, having stayed behind to collapse camp, it is usual for the crew and the pack animals to overtake the group during the day and you will usually arrive into camp to find it already established and the kettle on!

In camp, as well as the tents used for sleeping, there will also be a mess tent, with chairs and tables, where the group will dine (and socialise into the evening) and a toilet tent. Hot water for washing will also be provided to you in the mornings and when you arrive at the camp each day.

All accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. It is possible to hire a single tent while on trek for an additional cost. This must be arranged ahead of departure and is subject to availability (please note that single tent hire does not include single rooms in hotels). Depending on availability, it may also be possible to pre-book single hotel rooms. For additional hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 3500 metres. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude on our website which can be viewed via the link below. You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude. www.keadventure.com/page/altitude.html

Park Fees & Permits

Machu Picchu and Inca Trail Trekking Permits

If you are booking on one of our trips or an extension that includes Machu Picchu and /or the Inca Trail please note the following.

It is important that you book as early as possible to secure a permit. Daily visitor numbers are limited and visitors must be accompanied by a guide on one of five designated 'circuits' that are walked in a one-way direction, with a maximum of 4 hours allowed within the site. A ticket, issued by the Peru Ministry of Culture, and included in your trip cost, needs to be purchased in advance of your visit. The ticket will stipulate an entry time and one of the 5 circuits. KE will aim to book the most comprehensive Machu Picchu tour available. Tickets are linked to your name and passport number and usually sell out 2-3 months in advance. **It is therefore important for you to supply us with your passport details at the time of booking to allow us to secure the required tickets.**

If you are completing the Inca Trail, a set Machu Picchu circuit is included with your Inca Trail Permit.

IMPORTANT: If you change passport between booking and travelling, you must bring your old passport with you, as your ticket will be linked to the passport details you booked with.

Spending Money

We estimate that \$350-400 (or equivalent in €/£) will be sufficient to cover your requirements including the non-included meals and incidental expenses such as tips for drivers, trek crew and local guides. There are a total of 5 lunches and 6 dinners which you will need to pay for directly and we recommend you budget \$10 - \$25 dollars per meal. There is no need to purchase local currency (Peruvian Soles) prior to travelling. It is possible to withdraw your money in local currency from ATMs in Cusco. If you are bringing your travel money with you we recommend you bring it in the form of US dollars in cash as this provides for the easiest exchange. Credit cards can be used to purchase goods and to pay for meals in Cusco, Ollantaytambo and Aguas Calientes.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is common in Peru, however you must remember that it is voluntary, and how much you give depends on how you feel about the service you have received. Airport baggage carriers are the only exception and tipping is compulsory. These people are unwaged and make a living by carrying your luggage. The general rule is 1 or 2 soles per bag. For hotel staff, tipping is not expected, but is welcome. For hotel porters 1 or 2 soles per bag is reasonable. Drivers of standard taxis do not usually expect a tip. As with most countries, it is usual to tip in restaurants and 10% is expected for good service. For the support crew on trek (guides, cooks, porters etc.), it is recommended that each client contributes around £50 to £60 to a group tipping pool.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag, and a day pack. Your bag on trek will be carried by porters or pack animals and should not weigh more than 15kg. It is possible to leave clothes and other items not required on trek at the group hotel in Cusco. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates (*see Health & Vaccinations below*), **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the [FCDO](#) for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Visa Peru

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. When passing through immigration you will need to request a copy of your TAM Migration form. You will need to retain this document and keep it safe, as you will be asked to produce it before you depart Peru. Please note that a paper copy of travel insurance is required for people travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH THE USA

If your flights pass through the USA, even if only in transit, you will require either a visa or an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation). Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can apply for an ESTA under certain conditions*. This must be done online via <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>, no later than 72 hours prior to travel and applies whether entering the country by sea or by air. You will need to have a biometric passport to apply for an ESTA. The fee is currently US\$40 (*as of 30/09/25*). Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding.

*If you have visited Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen since 2011 or have dual nationality with any of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA. You will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate instead. Additionally, if you have travelled to or have been in Cuba since the 12th of January 2021, you will not be eligible for an ESTA visa waiver and will need to apply for a US visa. You should consult the US State Department website to determine which you will need.

When completing the ESTA application form you will be asked to enter your 'Point of Contact' information. This is not required if you are only transiting through the USA.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH CANADA

UK citizens will require an ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any Canada-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is CAD\$7 and you should apply for it at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp>. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Entry requirements can change regularly so please ensure you have the most up to date information before travelling by checking visa entry requirements at the relevant embassy in your country of residence: (US Embassy in London: <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>)

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. In addition you should check whether any specific vaccinations are needed to the regions that you are travelling to. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Malaria

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

Dengue Fever

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Zika Virus

Zika virus has been confirmed as active in this country. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The mosquitoes that transmit ZIKV are unlikely to be found above 2,000m altitude. For more information, visit the website of the National Travel Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk>.

Severe Allergies

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking or climbing trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. Our treks can be physically demanding, but more as a result of altitude and terrain than distances walked. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime. Jogging, squash and swimming are good for developing aerobic fitness and better stamina. You should gradually increase your exercise leading up to departure, and in the month before setting off, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country.

Climate

The climate of Peru is very varied across different regions. For each region the determining factors are its latitude, its distance from the coast and most importantly, its altitude. The climate of the Andean valleys which corresponds to the region between 3000 and 4000 metres is characterised by hot wet summers and cool dry winters. The Southern Hemisphere winter season in the Andes runs roughly from April through to October and this is the optimum period for trekking in this part of Peru. At this time we can expect the days to be warm and generally sunny, with temperatures between 12 and 20°C (54 – 68°F). Above c. 3500m. / 11,000ft. during this season, the night-time temperatures will fall below freezing. At our highest camps we might experience night-time temperatures as low as -5°C / 23°F at any time and in mid-winter (July and August) temperatures may dip to -10°C / 14°F overnight. As with all mountain areas, short-lived storms can occur at any time of the year.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Trekking and Climbing in the Andes. (Globetrotter Adventure). Val Pitkethly and Kate Harper.
- The Conquest of the Incas. (MacMillan). J. Hemming.
- The South American Handbook.
- The Andes are Prickly. Martin Slessor.
- Exploring Cusco. Peter Frost (available in Cusco).
- Inca Cola. Matthew Parish.
- Latin America Spanish phrasebook. Lonely Planet.

Maps

Inca Trail - Machu Picchu. 1:50,000 Editorial Lima 2000

This topographic map from the Lima-based publisher Lima 2000 shows from Kilometre 88 to Machu Picchu. Peak altitudes and shading show relief and the contours interval is 100m. The map shows towns and villages, roads and footpaths, rivers, ruins, terraces etc. A small inset shows a street plan of Aguas Calientes, another shows the Machu Picchu ruins.

Private Groups Information

Make this KE Adventure holiday your own!

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Would you prefer to travel with just friends and/or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local walking, biking or mountaineering club?

It's really easy to make a trip your own. Simply select from our full range of adventure holidays and choose the dates that work for you and your group.

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities and clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

STL Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. The packed weight of your bag whilst trekking should be no more than 15 kgs.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts (2 short sleeve, 2 long sleeve)
- Casual shirts and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat including neck protection
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Lightweight thermal gloves
- Warmer gloves or mittens
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -5°C)
- Daypack 30 **
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)

- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep kit bag contents dry)
- Small padlock
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), Diamox, painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

The following items are optional:

- Trekking poles
- Trainers or similar for traveling and camp use
- Gaiters
- Sleeping bag liner
- Spare laces
- Thermal Baselayer - leggings
- Shorts
- Warm jacket (down)
- Travel clothes
- Nailbrush

- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit – (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

Camping mattress - An inflatable camping mattress is provided.

** Daypack - Perurail has a strict policy on hand baggage on the train to the Inca Trail and from Machu Picchu. The weight of your hand baggage on the train must not exceed 5kg and the sum of its dimensions (length + width + height) must not exceed 157 cm. If your daypack exceeds these dimensions it must be placed inside your trek bag for transportation on the train.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Cusco, Peru. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Cusco Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements and Transfers' for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London (Heathrow) to Cusco, with LATAM or Iberia. Outbound flights depart from the UK in the evening, arriving into Cusco on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights depart from Cusco Airport in the afternoon of the last day of the Land Only itinerary, arriving in the UK in the morning of the following day. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Please be aware that there are often only a limited number of seats available at the advertised price. To avoid paying flight supplements, we recommend that you book as early as possible, especially during peak times. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures, we will contact you with an alternative quote. Please note that you may be asked to pay for your flights in advance of your final holiday balance. Note that if you book a package including flights with KE you will benefit from full financial protection.

Why Choose KE

STL Why KE

KE's Salkantay Trail to Machu Picchu is an incredible alternative to the Inca Trail. A quieter and more remote trail, you will trek old Incan routes passing ruins, stunning mountain panoramas and unique flora and fauna. With time to explore Cusco and the Sacred Valley this provides an excellent mix of history and culture with a fantastic mountain journey, culminating in a visit to one of the most famous sites in the world, Macchu Picchu. With no permits required this alternative Incan Trail makes for a great choice of trek to Macchu Picchu.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 07/01/2026 and the trip is subject to change