

ANDEAN LODGES

EXPLORER'S GUIDE



TROPIC COLLECTION

Welcome to the
Tropic Collection!

At Tropic, we are all about doing tourism right. Keeping people at the heart of everything we do, we strive to provide thoughtfully curated experiences for our travelers while staying true to responsible tourism values. We take great pride in our commitment to empowering local people and offering inclusive and sustainable experiences, something to which our Preferred by Nature™ certification is a testament.

What started from a deep connection to the Huaorani community in Ecuador's Amazon evolved into years of cultivating meaningful bonds with special people and special places around different South American destinations. This profound insight and expertise allow us to guarantee genuine, inspiring and worry-free experiences - and our signature lodge-to-lodge treks are no exception!

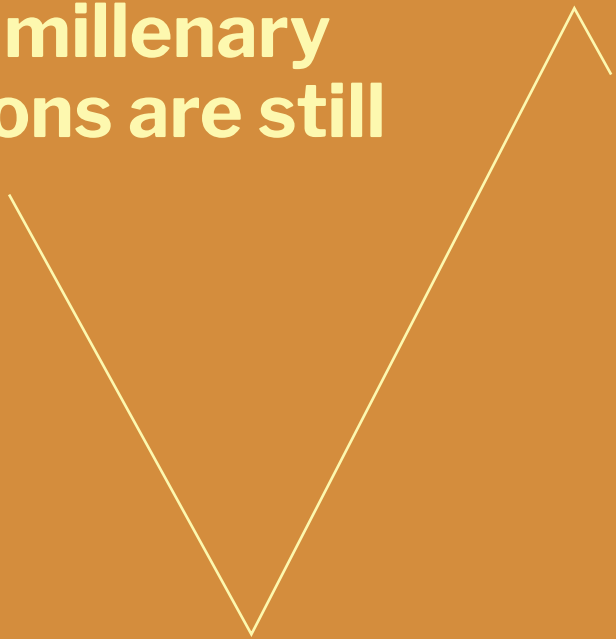
So sit back and enjoy the ride while we seamlessly make your travel dreams come true.



THE ANDEAN LODGES STORY



There are few places in the world where millenary traditions are still alive.



Amid one of the most pristine and remote mountain ecosystems in Peru, where agriculture is virtually nonexistent, Andean communities specialized in herding llamas and alpacas for transporting of goods across mountains; a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation for centuries. Unfortunately, the number of *llamichus* and *pacoberos* (llama and alpaca breeders) has dwindled in time as alternative transportation methods developed, posing a threat to this legendary custom. These same communities are also heir to a fascinating textile custom using ancient Andean techniques, but their isolated location and difficult access to markets has resulted in an art form almost lost.

Seeing their rich heritage wane in time, these communities became determined to seek out a way to improve their livelihoods without sacrificing their culture and traditional way of life. They expressed a desire to get involved in tourism and trekking experiences - an initiative that sparked off the unique concept for the Andean Lodges endeavor.

During the times of the Incas - where camelids would carry goods along the empire's trail network - basic constructions known as *tambos* were built along the routes, serving as an overnight refuge for the herders and their animals. This inspired the idea of developing a novel trekking route set up with *tambo*-like lodges, where llamas and alpacas bred in nearby communities would serve as "porters." The ambitious project thus began and, after four years of arduous construction facing the hardships of the location, the lodges became a reality and locals were eager to put their comprehensive training into action.



The Andean Lodges story is one of resilience fueled by a determination to safeguard an ancestral heritage. As a rural community tourism venture, it is fundamentally sustainability-driven: it strives to generate a lasting positive impact both environmentally and socially. The operation provides opportunities

for locals to work equitably in their areas of traditional expertise while improving their livelihoods and allowing future generations to continue to take pride in their culture. And now, Tropic is taking the lead as the ideal ally for promoting and sharing this once-in-a-lifetime experience with the world.



APU AUSANGATE



Imposing and breathtakingly beautiful, the snow-capped Ausangate stands 6,372 m / 20,905 ft high - it's Peru's fifth-highest peak, and the highest within the Vilcanota mountain range. To the Andean people, however, this majestic peak is much more:

a sacred Apu and tutelary divinity of the Cusco region.





In Andean cosmivision, Apus are powerful mountain deities and spiritual leaders, and Ausangate is considered the most important one: it is the “creator of water.” This Apu is said to give life to the Vilcanota River which, on its path through the Pachamama (Mother Earth), renders the lands fertile as it continues to flow towards the vast Amazon Basin. Andeans believe these waters return every night converted into stars and replenish the lakes and sacred ice of the mountain.

Apart from its spiritual importance, the region where Apu Ausangate lies is of incredible biological value, housing glaciers and supporting an array of ecosystem services. Established as a Regional Conservation Area in 2019, it is home to several endemic species of flora and spectacular wildlife, with over 110 species of birds - including Andean geese, the majestic Andean condors, giant hummingbirds and migratory wetland birds - as well as beautiful vicuñas, viscachas, foxes and the elusive Andean cat, an endangered species.

It comes as no surprise, then, that preserving Apu Ausangate and the pristine area that surrounds it is of utmost important to the nearby communities - and to us, too!



MAY WE INTRODUCE YOU TO: CHILLCA AND OSEFINA COMMUNITIES



Since times immemorial, the sparse Andean communities that dwell around Apu Ausangate have lived a pastoral lifestyle. Located southeast of the glacier, **Chillca** and **Osefina** are two of the last living llama and alpaca herding communities in the region. They are also known for their colorful textiles: using ancient weaving techniques, yarn spun from their alpaca wool is carefully hand-dyed with natural pigments and woven on a back-strap loom, featuring unique motifs from everyday life and spiritual beliefs.

Community members turn to tourism as a tool for preserving their heritage while improving their livelihoods. All the locals involved in the **Andean Lodges** project have received comprehensive training in different aspects of hospitality, covering everything from organizational skills to waste management, recycling, cooking and housekeeping. These skills, coupled with their immeasurable care, dedication and enthusiasm to share their knowledge have made them the ideal hosts for this adventure. You'll find two community members in each lodge in charge of looking after the property and ensuring your stay is as warm and happy as possible.

Nowadays, besides actively working in the lodges and on the trails, **Chillca** and **Osefina** own close to 20% of the stock of the business venture, something that has allowed for improvements in education and infrastructure in the communities.





Your guides

The Andean Lodges guides are incredibly knowledgeable, experienced and rigorously trained - they are all certified first responders, so you know you'll be in safe hands at all times.

Your group will travel with two expert guides, horses for when our guests want to take the trek easily, as well as a team of talented cooks, porters and housekeeping staff - and the friendly llamas and alpacas, of course!



OUR LODGES



Despite their proximity to tourist meccas like Machu Picchu and Cusco, our trekking circuit and lodges lie in a pristine and remote mountain region - the lodges are actually some of the highest of their kind in the world! Sitting between 4,350 and 4,850 meters above sea level (14,270 - 15,910 ft), all four are within a day's walking distance from each other and reachable in, generally, six hours. And, of course, they all face impressive snow-capped peaks, glaciers and the mighty **Apu Ausangate** itself.



Built mainly from local stone and eucalyptus wood, the eco-friendly lodges blend in seamlessly into the natural surroundings. With a capacity for **16 guests**, the lodges house eight **double rooms** featuring simple yet functional mahogany furnishings, comfy beds with warm feather duvets and alpaca wool blankets, and **private bathrooms** with standing showers. The common areas are warm and intimate, with

fireplaces beckoning guests to gather and exchange travel stories. The remote location doesn't allow for electricity, but propane gas is used for hot showers and cooking, while candles and solar lanterns add to the cozy atmosphere. The food, which showcases local products, is delicious - you won't believe you're dining at a remote mountainside lodge 4,300+ m / 14,100 ft above sea level.





And the best part: no matter where you are in the lodge, you'll get spectacular panoramic views of the imposing Vilcanota mountain range.



Trekking at high altitudes can be quite demanding, but worry not - our *tambos* and welcoming hosts provide the perfect rest to replenish all the energy needed for the next day's adventure!



CHILLCA TAMBO

The starting point of the Apu Ausangate Trail, Chillca Tambo sits at an altitude of 4,350 m / 14,270 ft in the large glacier valley of Quencomayo. With beautiful views of Hatun Jampa, it's a great spot for acclimatizing as well as appreciating some of the highest potato fields in the world.



ANANTAPATA TAMBO

Anantapata Tambo is the only one that differs in structure from the other lodges, although all facilities are the same. Sitting at an altitude of 4,730 m / 15,510 ft, its prefabricated wooden structure is erected upon a solid stone base. This one-floor lodge was built by Chillca community members with the financial support of a government grant.



MACHURACAY TAMBO

Located at an altitude of 4,850 m / 15,910 ft, Machuracay Tambo is one of the highest lodging installations in the world. It sits right at the foot of sacred Ausangate, so it can also be used as a base-lodge to climb up to the summit of this majestic, snow-capped mountain.



HUAMPOCOCHA TAMBO

The last of our four lodges is Huampococha Tambo, located within the territory of the Osefina community at an altitude of 4,820 m / 15,810 ft. Osefina locals are expert traditional weavers, so you'll get to see some of their magnificent textile creations during your stay here.



OUR ITINERARIES



Our lodge-to-lodge treks offer awe-inspiring, off-the-beaten-path experiences, and are ideal to connect with locals while exploring remote areas. Our exclusive circuit is located roughly 100 km south-east of Cusco, and is accessed from the small town of Checacupe, in the Vilcanota Valley.



APU AUSANGATE TRAIL



The core Andean Lodges itinerary is the Apu Ausangate and Rainbow Mountain trail, a breathtaking 5D/4N adventure along the Cordillera Vilcanota. We'll trek in close proximity to the highest sacred mountain in the Cusco region and get amazing views of the Rainbow Mountain - minus the flocks of tourists!

DAY 1: CUSCO - CHILLCA

A comfortable van will take us along the Vilcanota River, stopping for a visit to the temple of Checacupe and then the upper valley of Pitumarca. From there, a short and easy hike will take us to our first lodge - Chillca Tambo - where we'll be greeted by locals with lively music and hot coca leaf tea.

DAY 2: CHILLCA - MACHURACAY

We start the day's trek along the glacier valley of Phinaya. We'll climb Pajcha

falls and stop for a picnic lunch before continuing the 5-hour trek to Machuracay Tambo, all the while surrounded by moraine walls, glaciers and stunning lagoons. A warm bed, caring hosts and a replenishing dinner awaits!

DAY 3: MACHURACAY - ANANTAPATA

Today we take in our first and highest mountain pass at 5,100+ m / 16,567 ft, where we'll be rewarded with spectacular panoramic views. We'll

descend alongside glaciers towards Ausangate Cocha Lake for lunch, after which we'll see a dramatic shift in the landscape as red sandstone formations come into the picture. After a great day of trekking, Anantapata Tambo awaits for some well-deserved rest.

DAY 4: ANANTAPATA - HUAMPOCOCHA

Our trek starts off tackling another mountain pass at an altitude of 4,985 m / 16,355 ft, followed by a

trek down to beautiful Lake Kayrawiwi, surrounded by dramatic peaks and views of the great valley below. We'll then go to Cerro Laya Grande via the massive glacier del Inca, as the striking colors of Vinicunca - the famous "Rainbow Mountain" - reveal themselves. We'll get to have lunch while enjoying this mind-blowing landscape away from all the tourist crowds - an unmatched experience. On our way to Huampococha Tambo, where we'll spend our last night, we can see

Andean geese nesting in the cliffs of Ants as well as the flatiron formations of Apu Labrayani.

DAY 5: HUAMPOCOCHA - CUSCO

Our final day starts with a trek up to our final pass enjoying gorgeous mountain views. Then, it's all downhill! Passing some impressive limestone formations we'll hike until the end of the trail in Congomire, where we'll have lunch before returning to Cusco city.





Zone enlarged

- By car
- Trekking (50 km)
- Tambos
- Snowy
- Hill
- Lagoon



The following table provides an overview of the distances, trekking times and changes in altitude for each of the 5 days:

Day	Route	By car	Hike	Distance	Difficulty	Min. Alt.	Max. Alt.
1	Cusco - Pitumarca	2.5 hrs.		104 km.		3384 m	3590 m
	Pitumarca - Molino Viejo	1 hr.		104 km.		3590 m	4292 m
	Molino Viejo - Chillca Tambo		1.5 hrs.	104 km.	Low	4290 m	4350 m
2	Chillca - Huchuy Phinaya		4 hrs.	104 km.	Medium	4350 m	4530 m
	Huchuy Phinaya - Machuracay		2 hrs.	104 km.	High	4530 m	4850 m
3	Machuracay - Palomani Pass		1 hr.	104 km.	High	4815 m	5150 m
	Palomani - Ausangatecocha		1 hr.	104 km.	Medium +	4650 m	5150 m
	Ausangatecocha - Anantapata		3 hrs.	104 km.	Medium	4650 m	4730 m
4	Anantapata - Warmisaya Pass		1 hr.	104 km.	High	4730 m	4985 m
	Warmisaya - Surinicocha		1 hr.	104 km.	Medium	4792 m	4985 m
	Surinicocha - Vinicunca		1.5 hrs.	104 km.	Medium +	4792 m	4985 m
	Vinicunca - Huampococha		2.5 hrs.	104 km.	Medium	4900 m	4985 m
5	Huampococha - Huampoccasa		1 hr.	104 km.	High	4820 m	4960 m
	Huampoccasa - Congomire		3.5 hrs.	104 km.	Medium +	3965 m	4960 m
	Congomire - Cusco	3 hrs.		104 km.		3384 m	3965 m

ALTERNATIVE ITINERARIES AND FIXED DEPARTURES

Based off the core 5D/4N itinerary we offer shorter trekking adventures: the 3D/2N for example focuses on Apu Ausangate and ends after conquering the Palomani high pass, while the 2D/1N itinerary has the “Rainbow Mountain” as the main highlight. You also have the chance to extend the adventure and stay an extra day at some of the lodges! In addition, a few of our itineraries offer both private and fixed departures:

Itinerary		Fixed Departures
2 days / 1 night: Vinicunca - The Rainbow Mountain [link]	PVT	X
3 days / 2 nights: Palomani High Pass [link]	PVT/SIB	Friday
3 days / 2 nights: Pururaucas guardians of Ausangate [link]	PVT	X
4 days / 3 nights: Three Tambos [link]	PVT	X
5 days / 4 nights: Apu Ausangate Trail and Rainbow Mountain [link]	PVT/SIB	Friday
6 days / 5 nights: Hatun Hampa Mountain [link]	PVT/SIB	Thursday
7 days / 6 nights: The trail of the herders [link]	PVT	X

BEFORE YOUR TRIP

Although we go above and beyond to ensure your Ausangate trekking experience runs smoothly, there are certain things you should keep in mind in terms of preparation.





PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Although the trekking distances might not be too physically demanding, being in good health and physical condition will certainly help you best enjoy this adventure due to the high altitudes. We recommend you start training a few weeks before the trip looking to gradually increase your cardiovascular fitness level up to the time of your departure. Exercises such as biking, stair climbing and running will all contribute to preparing your body for the trek. We also have horses available in case our guests want to take things slower.



ACCLIMATIZATION

Regardless of age or physical condition altitude can affect people differently, which is why acclimatization is essential and should never be overlooked. Allow for at least a 3 to 4-day acclimatization period at higher altitudes - Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu are all ideal for this purpose. It's important to get plenty of rest upon arrival and not exert your body too much: walk slowly, have light meals, and drink plenty of water and coca leaf tea to help reduce initial disturbances. Even there's a variety of altitude sickness medicines, we recommend to use these only if they are prescribed by your medic.



WEATHER

There are only two seasons at this altitude: a dry one and a wet one. The latter comes with plenty of rain and snow and lasts from around the end of November to the beginning of March. Although average daytime temperatures don't vary too much throughout the year, there can be considerable changes between day and nighttime temperatures. It's usually warm and pleasant during the day but especially during winter nights (June to September) they can fall below 0 °C. But worry not - our lodges are perfect for a warm and repairing rest each night before the next day's adventure.



WHEN TO COME

Our trekking programs operate only between April and October to avoid the wet season. Be advised, however, that occasional rain showers can surprise you at any time of the year.



WHAT TO BRING

Our friendly llamas will carry your personal belongings from one lodge to the next. Bear in mind, however, that there is a weight limit, so you should try to pack only what's strictly needed. Additionally, you should bring a small daypack (~20 L) for essentials you'll use during the treks, such as water, snacks, camera and extra clothing layers. You'll carry this one yourself, so try to keep it under 5 kg!

Here's a suggested packing list to help you out with your travel prep:

- Thermal underwear
- Wicking base layer and leggings/ long johns
- Fast-drying long-sleeve trekking t-shirts (one per day)
- Thermal fleece hooded jacket
- Quick-dry zip-off hiking pants
- Down jacket
- Gore-tex / waterproof hooded parka
- Waterproof over trousers
- UV-protected hat/cap
- Beanie or headband
- Bandana, balaclava or neckband
- Fleece gloves
- Waterproof outer gloves
- Trekking socks and liner socks
- Waterproof ankle-high hiking boots (make sure they are well broken-in but not with worn out soles)
- Spare pair of shoes and sandals for showers
- Thermal clothing and wool hat for sleeping
- 1-liter water bottle or camelback
- Wash bag and toiletries (no need to bring soap or shampoo - we'll provide organic ones at every lodge)
- Trekking poles (these can be easily rented in Cusco city)
- Sun block and lip balm (SPF 50 or above)
- Moisturizing cream
- Wrap-around sunglasses with UV protection
- Headlamp with spare batteries
- Camera (with extra batteries) and memory cards
- Light binoculars
- Portable solar charger (the cold can considerably shorten the battery life of your gadgets)
- Basic medical kit (acetazolamide, antacid, stomach and diarrhea meds, painkillers, throat lozenges and personal medication)
- Money belt with personal spending money in Soles (S./10 and S./ 20 bills preferred)

**And of course,
don't forget
to always carry
your passport,
Andean Migration
Card and Travel
Insurance
Certificate with
you.**

WHY BOOK THIS TRIP



When we say this will be a life changing experience, we mean it!

Our Andean Lodges adventure is a genuine immersion into Andean cosmovision and culture: you'll get to explore a region where ancient tradition endures, and where locals are eager to share their profound relationship with the lands and majestic mountains that surround them. You'll get to tread remote grounds where constantly changing landscapes offer nonstop, overwhelming beauty, always under the protective gaze of the Andes' most sacred mountain: **Apu Ausangate**.



Although walking at these high altitudes can be challenging, you'll arrive to find a comfy bed, warm shower, replenishing food and smiling hosts at each of our lodges.

It's not every day that you get to share a trekking experience with some of the last living llama and alpaca herders in the world. And the best part is that, by doing so, you are actively contributing to preserving the ancient traditions of the communities of **Chillca** and **Osefina** and having a positive impact on their development.

The Andean Lodges venture is deeply committed to sustainable and socially responsible tourism, and the project has thus far created 24 full-time jobs and over 70 casual jobs for community members. Moreover, it has created a market for their alpaca meat and fleece products as well as for the gorgeous traditional woven textiles, "hand woven" by expert women weavers of these communities.





This enthralling journey will nurture your soul: you'll experience an authentic connection with other cultures, with nature and with yourself. When the trip comes to an end, you'll leave with a powerful sense of accomplishment and a full heart.



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EMOTIONS
Travel Community

PURE
LIFE EXPERIENCES

REMOTE
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