

Cordillera Real Traverse, Bolivia

The classic Bolivian trek, renowned for its spectacular beauty and astonishing tranquillity



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Camping
Grade	Strenuous
Duration	22 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 13 days Walks on: 2 days
Min/Max group size	5 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 5
Trip Leader	Local Leader Bolivia
Land only	Joining in La Paz, Bolivia
Max altitude	5,396m/17,698ft, Pico Austria (optional), day 18 Or 5,329m/17,481ft, Day 12

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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Departures

Group departures

2021 Dates:

Sat 08 May - Sat 29 May
Sat 04 Sep - Sat 25 Sep

2022 Dates:

Sat 07 May - Sat 28 May
Sat 03 Sep - Sat 24 Sep

2023 Dates:

Sat 06 May - Sat 27 May
Sat 02 Sep - Sat 23 Sept

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 5 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday.

If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



Your trek leader will normally be either Jose Camarlinghi or Javier Thellaeche (pictured), our colleagues in Bolivia. Alternatively, it will be another experienced guide appointed by them.

Javier Thellaeche: Trained by the German Alpine Club (DAV), Javier was certified as a mountain guide's instructor in 1984 and has been working as a professional mountain guide since then. He has lead groups around the Andes (Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Argentina) and in the Himalayas. In 2005 Javier achieved the highest worldwide certification: the International Mountain Guides Association (IMGA, UIAGM, IVBV) credential. He speaks Spanish, English and Italian. Javier worked for many years as IT specialist. Besides guiding he is the main expert constructor and consultant of "Bolivian Adventure Consultants"; among other projects he designed and built

www.ziplinebolivia.com,

www.urbanrushbolivia.com, www.ziplinecanopy.amawebs.com

Jose Camarlinghi: Jose's love of nature and mountains started with his first visit to the Andes when he was 14 years old. Since then the 'Call of the Hills' has not diluted and he has dedicated his life to work as a mountain guide. Proper training for Joe started in 1984 with the aid of the German government and the German Alpine Club (DAV). Then a group of Bolivians were certified as mountain guide's instructors. After many years of negotiation, Bolivia succeeded in becoming a member of the International Mountain Guides Association (IMGA, UIAGM, IVBV) in 2005. Jose then achieved his international Certification. He has studied film making and holds a Masters degree on script writing and has worked on some documentary projects with the BBC. He has led trekking and climbing groups in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina and Chile and speaks Spanish, English and French.

Your trip highlights

- 13 night Cordillera Real trek in some of the most remote, wild and spectacular scenery in South America
- Excellent programme of acclimatisation walks
- Includes visits to Tiwanco, Copacabana and the Isla del Sol on Lake Titicaca
- Full-service camping on trek and comfortable hotels elsewhere

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Fly To La Paz. Transfer to Hotel.
Days 3-4	Drive to Copacabana for acclimatisation and sightseeing with visit to Tiwanco en route.
Days 5-6	Drive to Sampaya. Walks on the Isla Del Sol. Visit Isla De La Luna. Drive to Huatajata.
Day 7	Drive to Sorata Valley. Begin trek and walk to camp above Llojena.
Days 8-10	Trek to Lake San Francisco, Ajoyani and Jistaña Lagoon.
Days 11-12	Trek to Kelluani Valley and on to Chachacomani River.
Day 13	Rest day and local exploration.
Days 14-15	Trek to Jaillawaya River and Koatia across two high passes.
Days 16-17	Trek to Laguna Alka Quota then cross two further passes to reach Laguna Jurikhota.
Day 18	Trek to Laguna Chiar Khota and Condoriri Base Camp. Optional ascent to Pico Austria 5,396m/17,698ft.
Days 19-20	End trek at Condoriri Valley. Drive to La Paz. Day at leisure.
Days 21-22	Transfer to airport. Fly back to London.

Trip summary

Bolivia is a land of extraordinary contrasts and extremes in terms of geography, topography, climate, history and culture. The size of France and Spain combined, this huge landlocked country is home to some of the highest and least visited Andean mountain ranges, 'cordilleras', including many stunning glaciated peaks over 6,000m/19,685ft. Bolivia is the least densely populated country in Latin America with only 8.5 million people, most of whom live in the Andean Highlands. The paucity of population and vast geographical size has hindered economic development and today Bolivia is one of the poorest nations in the region. Culturally, however, it is one of the richest; with the majority of the population belonging to indigenous racial and linguistic groups it is the most 'Andean' country on the continent. Quechua and Aymara speaking Campesinos (peasantry) continue to farm and live traditional lives in adjoining mountain ranges.

The Cordillera Real - the 'Royal Range' - is the longest mountain range in the country and forms the backbone of the Bolivian highlands. It was so named by the Spanish conquistadors because of its majestic appearance when seen from the Altiplano, the high plateau that runs south from Peru. The Cordillera Real extends for 160 km/100 miles from north to south from Illampu to Illimani, the latter peak dominating the skyline of La Paz. It is home to the Aymara speaking people who are descendants of the Tiahuanaco Empire, the longest running Andean civilisation, which provided the inspiration for the better known, but less extensive and short-lived Inca Empire. The Cordillera Real trek offers the opportunity to make a challenging trek in a spectacularly beautiful part of the world.

Your trip begins with a carefully crafted acclimatisation programme. You will spend time relaxing and walking around Lake Titicaca and on the Island of the Sun (Isla del Sol) - home to the Andean creation legends. This will provide a wonderful opportunity to appreciate the simple farming and fishing life of the Aymara communities who live here, a lifestyle that has remained largely unchanged for hundreds of years. You will also enjoy the splendid views of the Cordillera Real across the lake.

Your trek starts near the small colonial town of Sorata and this new route traverses along the western side of Cordillera Real following a different route than the classic 'Transcordillera' on the eastern side. The reason why we do not follow the old route any more is because the trail has been destroyed in several sections to build mining roads. Only for the last five days of the trek do we re-join the classic route, but even in this section we do not strictly follow the standard route. Perhaps with the exception of the campsite at Condoriri base camp, the rest of the route remains infrequently travelled and remarkably deserted. Since the Bolivian Andes are some of the most untouched and under-trekking mountains on earth, you will not find any trekking lodges or tourism infrastructure.

Most trekking days include a steep pass, on many days crossing two over 5,000m, and each day brings fresh views of new mountain groups and different views of the highlands and Lake Titicaca. In the valleys you pass by small traditional farmsteads where potatoes are cultivated and llamas herded.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to La Paz.

You depart London today by overnight flight to La Paz.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive El Alto Airport, La Paz, 4,100m/13,452ft. Group transfer to hotel in La Paz city, 3,600m/9,870ft.

From El Alto airport (the highest international airport in the world at 4,100m/13,450ft), you will be transferred directly to La Paz, approximately 30 - 40 minutes, which lies in a canyon below, at a mere 3,600m/9,870ft. There are tremendous views of the city dominated by Mount Illimani as you descend. You will go directly to your hotel.

The rest of the day is at leisure, but we recommend that you rest and acclimatise. Drink copious amounts of water, or coca tea, the traditional preventative for 'soroche' (altitude sickness). Careful acclimatisation is important when visiting Bolivia given the high altitude reached immediately on arrival. Any initial discomfort should pass swiftly if care is taken. Do not worry however, the first few days of the itinerary have been carefully planned to allow for good acclimatisation before you begin trekking. Lunch and dinner are not included today, but your guide can make recommendations on where eat.



Overnight: Hotel Casa Fusion or Similar, La Paz (Meals: B)

Day 3: Drive to Copacabana, 3,850m/12,631ft - 4-5 hours. With visit to Tiwanku en route.

In the morning you will drive to Copacabana which takes around 4 hours. On the way you will visit Tiwanku, a Pre-Columbian archaeological site. This is a huge complex with ruins of monumental structures and megalithic blocks covering 4 square kilometres.

Later, you will continue to Copacabana, a town overlooking the west, Peruvian, shores of Titicaca. Copacabana. There is the belief that the name is derived from the Aymara words "kota kahuana", meaning "view of the lake." Nevertheless, the social scientist Mario Montaña Aragón, found in the "archives of Indias" in Sevilla, Spain, a completely different history: "Kotakawana" is the god of fertility in ancient Andean mythology, the equivalent to the classical Greek goddess Aphrodite or the Roman Venus. This god is androgynous and lives in the lake, and his court consists of creatures (male and female) that are represented in colonial sculptures and in Catholic churches.

Overnight: Hotel Gloria or Similar, Casablanca (Meals: B L)

Day 4: Day to acclimatise in Copacabana. Visit cathedral and stations of the cross.

Copacabana is primarily a pilgrimage center, with its main plaza dominated by the Moorish-style Cathedral. Originally built between 1610 and 1620, now much restored, it houses the Virgen de Candelaria, Bolivia's Patron saint. Every Sunday people bring their cars and trucks to be blessed in front of the cathedral as an extra form of spiritual insurance. It is a colourful event with the vehicles decked with flowers, ribbons and balloons. Depending on the owner's preference, holy water, or alcohol and firecrackers are used for blessings (in Bolivia, Catholicism and ancient Andean beliefs are often intertwined).

Copacabana has a beach, so in addition to it being a pilgrimage centre, it could potentially class itself as a 'resort'. The name Copacabana was taken to Brazil by a priest who took with him a reproduction of the Madonna from this town. Unlike its counterpart in Brazil however you will not find beach volleyball a popular activity; but the sight of pedalos for hire at over 3,810m/12,500 feet is certainly different. Today you will explore the town and may walk up Cerro Calvario pausing at the Stations of the Cross. This hill sits on a headland, which overlooks the town and the port.

Overnight: Hotel Gloria or Similar, Casablanca (Meals: B L)

Day 5: Drive to Sampaya - 1½ hours. Walk to Yampupata - 3-4 hours. Motor boat to Isla del Sol. Walk to lodge - 6km, 1 hour.

In the morning you will drive to Sampaya (1½ hours), your journey taking you over a 4,000m/13,120ft ridge. After a brief stop in the village you will trek to Yampupata (3-4 hours) - this walk takes you along a peninsula and the views of the lake and mountains beyond are tremendous.

In Yampupata, you will meet your boatman who will take you, by motor-boat, across to the Island of the Sun, a short journey of about 30 minutes. It is difficult to believe that these cobalt-blue waters are 3,810m/12,500ft above sea level. To the east the snowcapped peaks of the Cordillera Real appear to rise out of the lake. Because of the clear sky and thin air they appear much closer than they actually are. In the evening the snow peaks glow with the sun's setting rays.

The original name for the Island of the Sun was 'Titi Karka' or 'Titi Kachi' meaning 'The rock of the Puma'; the Spanish adopted this and used it to refer to the whole lake. You will land by the Inca ruins of Pilcocaina Palace, supposedly the 'Summer Palace' of the Emperor and then walk to your destination for the night. On the way you will pass by the Fuente del Inca - a pure spring with stone Inca steps leading up to it.

Overnight: Palla Khasa Lodge or Similar, Isla Del Sol (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Walk on Isla Del Sol - 3-4 hours. Motorboat to Isla de la Luna - 1½ hours. Visit Temple of the Virgins. Drive To Huatajata - 3 hours.

Your objective is to reach the northwest end of the island where you can visit a sacred rock, which was worshipped as the birthplace of the first Incas: Manco Kapac and Mama Oclo, son and daughter of Viracocha. You will also have time to visit the ruins of Chincana.

The walk to the northern end of the island takes approximately 3-4 hours (all walk times include provision for breaks). Although more frequently visited these days, the island is a quiet and beautiful place. It is a great location in which to continue your acclimatisation. (Highest point on trek: 4,065m/13,337ft).

After lunch you will make a short boat crossing of less than an hour to visit the Isla de la Luna (Moon Island - whose original name is Koati). Here you will visit the ruins of the Temple of the Nustas, where once Inca virgins spent their lives adoring the Sun God Inti. Although they may have been occasionally sacrificed, they probably spent most of their lives involved in less sacred tasks like chewing corn to make chicha (an alcoholic drink still made in the Andes using the same technique), weaving cloth and acting as concubines for Inca royalty. Unfortunately, the main temple was converted into an open prison in the 1940s by one of Bolivia's many military regimes and many of the stones were pillaged to build houses for the guards. Nevertheless, it is still a good place to admire the precision of Inca stone cutting.

Returning by boat to the mainland you will pick up your transport and drive to Huatajata, another Indian village on the shores of Titicaca. After dinner you may enjoy a short folk music show at the hotel's restaurant.

Overnight: Hotel Inka Utama, or Similar (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Drive to Sorata Valley - 2-3 hours. Start trek, 3,947m/13,038ft - 10.3km, 5 hours. Camp above Llojena, 4,050m/13,287ft.

You will pick up your transport for the 2-3 hour drive to Sorata Valley. Your drive takes you along the shores of Lake Titicaca through small fishing and farming communities before joining the paved road to the town of Achacachi, which is well-known for its political militancy. You will stop for lunch as you follow the north-eastern shore of the lake and thereafter head into Sorata

From Lake Titicaca the Cordillera Real appears to lie just across the Altiplano, however there is a set of deep hidden valleys between the two and you will drive down into these. Sorata valley runs around the Cordillera Real and takes the waters to the Amazon basin. The valley is warmer and the vegetation lush by comparison. Sorata valley was a trading centre for coca, quinine and rubber - commodities brought up and over the Andes from the cloud forests and jungles to the east. Before getting too low inside the valley you will start hiking at 3974 m. The first part follows a wide ridge in front of the gigantic Illampu and Jankohuma massif. The views are wide open and show how great the Andean mountains are.



The trail will pass by ancient terraces that are still cultivated. A long traverse will take you at the village of Llojena. Camp will be set up at 4,050m on the hills above the village.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Trek to San Francisco Lake - approximately 12km, 7-8 hours.

Today's route will also follow an easy terrain ascending gradually along the valley of Sorata river towards the pass, 4,921m/16,140ft. On the way you will follow on and off llama paths traversing large areas of low grass where, if you look closely, you can spot the paths of ancient aqueducts, almost disappeared. During today's walk you will enjoy great views of the mountains: Jankouma, Wakana, 6,200m/20,336ft, Kasiri, 5,857m/19,211ft and Janko Piti, 5,725m/18,778ft, actually each one of them part of very complex groups of mountains; each one with its own valleys, glaciers and several peaks (some of them still unclimbed). To the west the views of the immensely open high lands of the 'Altiplano' with Lake Titicaca in the background are overwhelming. You can clearly recognize the town of Achacachi in the plains (main settlement in the area) and the Islands of the Sun and the Moon in Lake Titicaca. The Indigenous people of this land belong to an ancient ethnic group named 'Omasuyus'.

Your campsite, 4,639m/15,216ft, will be located in a grassy spot in a valley leading towards the southern slopes of Jankouma Mountain, the same valley that in 1900, Sir Martin Conway trekked through during the first attempt to climb Ancouma Mountain.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Trek to Chojna Kota, 4,685m/15,367ft, via High Point, 5,174m/16,975ft - 6-7 hours.

There is normally so much water in this valley that the swampy grassland basically covers the whole valley from side to side, which makes crossing the short distance to the other side a real challenge. The contrast of the yellow valley and the colourful slopes of the mountain with the white of the glaciers deserves a picture stop. Once on the other side, you start the ascent to a magnificent view point at 5,174m/16,975ft, on a rocky ridge on the south-eastern flank of Kasiri Mountain. From this point you will have a superb view of the huge Jankouma massif and the mountains of Cordillera Real. On a clear day you can see Sajama volcano, 6,549m/21,480ft - this extinct volcano is Bolivia's highest mountain, 6,549m/21,486ft - almost 250km to the south. The topography of the ridges and valleys on the western slopes of Cordillera Real is quite complex, which means that although every day we will mention one or two mountain passes to cross, in fact you will cross several side valleys and therefore ascend to several high points on the way.

Camp will be set near the shores of Chojña Kota (Green Lagoon), 4,685m/15,367ft. This valley leads towards Calzada pass, the only mountain pass in the Cordillera Real in the region.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Trek to Jistaña Lagoon - approximately 6.5km, 4-5 hours.

A shorter day today, after the three previous exhausting days. Your walk towards the campsite, located in a grassy flat area near Jistaña lagoon, 4,629m/15,183ft, will not follow the easy way but will take a little more interesting one ascending the spectacular view point of Jisca Lluspini, 5,062m/16,603ft. The reason to have a short day is to allow you to have some rest, do some laundry, read a book and enjoy the campsite but, if you are still full of energy this valley is so beautiful that it deserves a short hike to explore the campsite surroundings with great views of new mountains: Calzada, 5,650m/18,532ft, Chearoco, 6,127m/20,101ft, and Chachacomani, 6,074m/19,922ft, two of the six 6,000 metre peaks in Cordillera Real.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Trek across a high pass, 5,063m/16,611ft to the Kelluani Valley - approximately 7.5km, 5-6 hours.

Most of the valleys on this side of Cordillera Real are intensively used by shepherds who take their llama herds up and down the valleys to graze. You will start the day ascending and traversing on a steep slope following narrow llama paths towards the first pass of the day, 5,063m/16,611ft. Further ahead going down to the next valley you will make a stop at one of the most extraordinary viewpoints of Chachacomani Mountain.

At the bottom of the grassy valley near Kelluani river (the river of the sea gulls), you will follow the river as far as a plateau in front of the glaciers. You will be very deep inside the Cordillera Real, surrounded by elegant mountains, rock and ice faces.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Trek to Chachacomani River, 4,426m/14,517ft via a high point of 5,329m/17,481ft - approximately 9.5km, 7-8 hours.

You will take the opposite side of the valley to follow a faint trail that leads to the next mountain pass. A hidden valley will lead high toward a former glacial cirque. After lunch you will arrive at the highest point on the entire trek, 5,329m/17,481ft. The descent on the other side is not an easy one but after a couple of hundred meters of steep terrain on sand and loose rocks you will cross boggy plateaus and later traverse the next ridge slope towards your campsite located at the banks of Chachacomani River, 4,426m/14,517ft; Approximately 9.5 km walk.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Rest day / local exploration.

Today will be a well-deserved rest day and a good opportunity to relax before the rigours of the passes ahead. This is a great spot to enjoy the views and write up diaries. For those who do not wish to rest there is ample opportunity to make a really interesting excursion to explore the upper reaches of the valley.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Trek to Jaillawaya River via pass at 5,047m/15,559ft - approximately 12km, 7-8 hours.

Today you have a long day, not because of the distance, but because of the difficult terrain. The slope to climb is steep, the trails are faint and the terrain is a bit loose, composed of pebbles and sand. The pass, 5,047m/15,559ft, rewards you with another great view of the huge six 'thousanders'. The descent is even more complicated as it has to follow a steep moraine without trails.

Camp will be set at the banks of Jaillawaya River, 4,475m/14,678ft, near the junction with Minasa River. Approximately a 12 km walk.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Trek to Koatia over two passes - 7-8 hours.

Another challenging, but rewarding day! Today you will take a direct ascending route towards an immense rocky cirque formed by the western slopes of Wara Warani Mountain which host a beautiful glacial lake, 4,920m/16,137ft. You will contour the lake and ascend to the first pass of the day, 5,047m/16,554ft, from where you will discover new mountains: Willa Lloje, 5,596m/18,354ft and Pako Keuta, 5,589m/18,332ft. After crossing the second pass of 5,010m/16,432ft, you will have a steep but fun descent to Janko Kota valley where you will set camp at 4,439m/14,560ft in a beautiful spot between the colorful Koatia and Kara Kota lagoons. On the way you will spot for the first time the Condoriri group and Huayna Potosi Mountain.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: Trek to Laguna Alka Quota, 4,531m/14,866ft - 6-7 hours.

The route for the next four days is part of the classic 'Transcordillera' trek and the trails will mostly be wide and, after so many days walking off-trail, unusually well-trodden. Your day begins from Koatia, gradually ascending towards the highest point of a ridge at 4,750m/15,580ft and then descending to the next valley and covering a long distance to the campsite at the shores of Alka Quota Lagoon, 4,531m/14,866ft. To your east lies the Condoriri group - a major milestone in your journey.



Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 17: Trek to Laguna Jurikhota - 6-7 hours.

A really sustained high altitude day as you weave your way around the western side the Condoriri group. You cross two passes in quick succession - Paso Sistana, 5,097m/16,718ft, and Paso Jurikhota, 4,936/16,190ft. From the second pass you can get a really good view of Condoriri, arguably Bolivia's most beautiful mountain before descending to the camp by the shore of Laguna Jurikhota, a beautiful spot at 4,695m/15,400ft.

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 18: Trek to Laguna Chiar Khota/Condoriri Base Camp, 4,650m/15,257ft - 4-5 hours. Optional peak ascent, 5,396m/17,698ft.

The climb up to today's pass takes you between the rocky peaks of Cerro Ventanani and Janchallani (both 5,400m/17,712ft). From the col you gain good views of the glaciers and snowfields of Ala Izquierda, 5,532m/18,149ft and Cabeza de Condor, 5,658m/18,530ft. These two along with Ala Derecha, 5,482m/17,985ft, form the famous view of the Condoriri group - from which it takes its name - best seen once you have descended from the pass to your camp beside Chiar Khota. From here the mountains resemble a condor's head flanked by outstretched wings.

Depending on time and conditions, it may be possible to deviate from the pass at the col and ascend Pico Austria, 5,396m/17,698ft. An easy path zigzags its way up this rocky mountain to its summit, from which the views north encompass most of the mountains you have passed on your journey to date. The path is distinct because it is often used by climbers who are looking to acclimatise before tackling the popular climbing peaks in the Condoriri group. This would entail an extra 2-3 hours of trekking.

This evening you will camp by Laguna Chiar Khota, 4,650m/15,257ft, and will probably share your campsite with others for the first and only time on this trip, for this is the base camp area for the climbing community (although their approach route is different).

Overnight: Camp (Meals: BLD)

Day 19: Trek to Condoriri Valley - 2 hours. Transfer to La Paz, 3,500m/11,500ft - 2-3 hours.

After breakfast, you will depart for the final section of your trek which takes you down to the entrance of the Condoriri Valley, a walk of around 2 hours.

Your vehicles will be waiting for you by the entrance of the Condoriri Valley. Having said your goodbyes to your muleteers, or llama drivers, you will drive back to La Paz. Very quickly you will feel that you are leaving the wild mountains behind, although you can see the West face of Huayna Potosi, the most popular 6,000m+ mountain in Bolivia.

It takes about three hours to drive back to central La Paz via El Alto, where you will be suddenly transported into a world of hot water, bustling traffic and noisy commerce.

Overnight: Hotel Casa Fusion or Similar, La Paz (Meals: B L)

Day 20: Free day in La Paz.

Today is a free day to explore La Paz and there is plenty to do and see. You may wish to stroll down the main thoroughfare, El Prado, which forms the backbone of the city, feed the pigeons in Plaza Murillo, home to the National Assembly and official Presidential Residence, or visit the splendid colonial church of San Francisco and the myriad markets in the streets above it.

In addition, there are a variety of museums to visit including the Museo Nacional del Arte which is housed in one of the finest examples of what little colonial architecture is left in La Paz - the old Palacio de los Condes de Arena (dating from 1775).

La Paz is a great city for market enthusiasts. In fact, the whole city is almost one big street-market. From the Mercado de Hechiceria (the Witches Market where various potions and 'mesas', amulets and even dried llama foetuses are dispensed) to the vibrant food market, you will encounter 'chola' ladies manning the stalls. These are formidable commercial women, whose dress is highly distinctive, a voluminous skirt (pollera), fringed shawl (manta) topped off with an undersized bowler hat balanced aloft with great dexterity

Overnight: Hotel Casa Fusion Or Similar, La Paz (Meals: B)

Day 21: Group transfer to El Alto airport for flight to London.

You will be transferred to the airport in plenty of time for your flight.

Do not be unnerved by the amount of time it takes your plane to get airborne. At this altitude you need to rumble down the runway for ages (you will not run out of runway - it is 7km long). Long distance flights out of the country have to route via Santa Cruz in the Bolivian lowlands, an hour away, to refuel since it is not possible for some aircraft to get airborne with a full complement of fuel and passengers.

Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 22: Arrive London.

Our grading system

Cordillera Real Traverse is graded as a Strenuous trekking holiday, as described below.

Strenuous

Our strenuous trekking holidays can involve anything from 10 to 30 days on trek and are often in remote areas, far from 'civilisation'. Rest days are interspersed but there may be up to 7 consecutive days of hard walking. Most treks reach altitudes of at least 4,900m/16,000ft and there will be a great deal of ascent and descent. The majority of our strenuous treks utilise camping, tea house or mountain lodge accommodation. These holidays are suitable for fit individuals who have regular experience of mountain walking.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ A Local English-speaking leader
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK to La Paz & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation (4 star) in La Paz, twin share, bed and breakfast basis
- ✓ Best available hotels in outlying towns on full board
- ✓ All camping facilities and all meals on trek
- ✓ Camp staff to carry out all camp work
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ Costs of all portage and staff insurance
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project for clients taking our flight inclusive option
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag
- ✓ The opportunity to join one of our pre-trip meets in the Cotswolds

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees where applicable
- ✗ Overseas airport departure taxes where applicable
- ✗ Lunches and dinners in La Paz and dinners in Copacabana
- ✗ Tips

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Hotel Casa Fusion or Similar, La Paz

The Hotel Casa Fusion is a boutique hotel well located in the traditional neighbourhood of Sopacachi, with a range of cafes, restaurants and bars nearby. Rooms are spacious and cosy with plentiful hot water. Wifi is available free of charge.



Hotel Gloria or Similar, Casablanca

The Hotel Gloria is a pleasant hotel in a beautiful location right on the shores of Lake Titicaca, not far from the Copacabana town and the church of Our Lady of Copacabana. Many rooms have views of the lake. The rooms are clean and centrally heated with private bathrooms and plenty of hot water.



Palla Khasa Lodge or Similar, Isla Del Sol

The Palla Khasa Lodge is a comfortable, cosy and friendly lodge set in a peaceful location on the Isla del Sol. Located at nearly 4,000m/13,000ft it offers panoramic views of Lake Titicaca. Rooms are comfortable with ample hot water provided by solar panels. The lodge also prides itself on its good food including fresh trout from the lake.



Hotel Inka Utama or similar

The hotel Inka Utama has 67 rooms each with a panoramic view of Lake Titicaca, It also has spa for ultimate relaxation.



Camp

On our camping treks, the following are provided: sleeping tents, a dining tent, a toilet tent exclusively for your group to use, and a kitchen tent. There are camp chairs or stools, a lamp for reading in the dining tent at night, a dining table, crockery and tableware. The staff put up and take down the tents, make the tea, cook the food, wash the dishes, and load the porters or pack animals. Your kit bag is carried for you either by porters or pack animals and you trek with just a light day sack.

Meal arrangements

B&B in La Paz, breakfast and lunches in Copacabana, all meals elsewhere (20 x breakfasts, 17 x lunches, 14 x dinners).

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

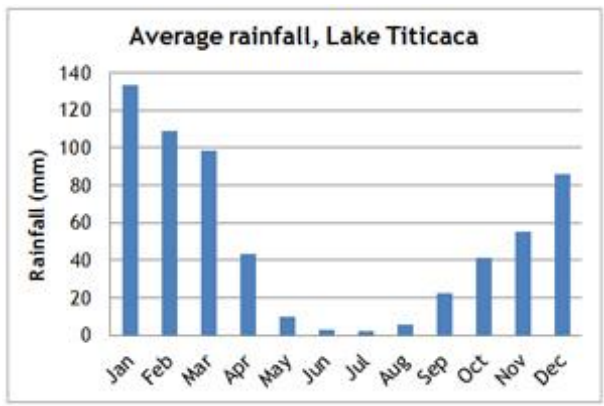
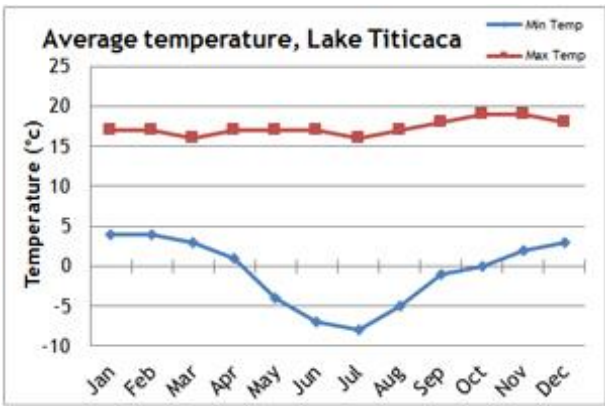
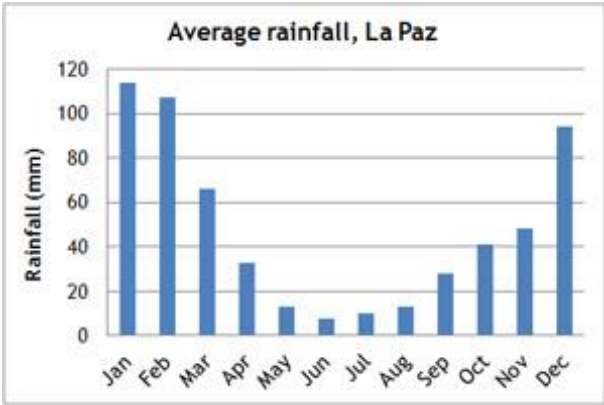
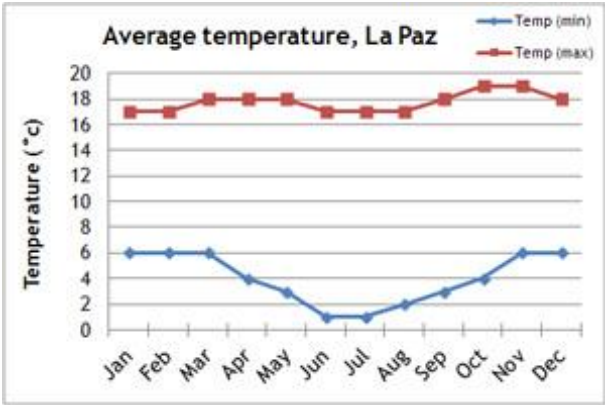
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.



There are many ways you can extend your holiday to Bolivia with Mountain Kingdoms. We can book you extra nights in La Paz if you wish to arrive earlier or leave later than the group or we can suggest upgrades in La Paz.



If you wanted to see something of Bolivia's colonial past we could arrange a visit to Potosi, famous for its Spanish colonial silver mines and its Casa de Moneda, formerly the royal mint, or to Sucre, an important Spanish colonial city with many fine historical buildings. Alternatively you might like to visit one of Bolivia's most famous geographical features, the Salar de Uyuni, 4,000 square miles of spectacular salt flats.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- We offer the best possible route in the Cordillera Real - challenging, spectacular and remote.
- We offer an excellent acclimatisation programme which includes time to explore La Paz and around the shores of Lake Titicaca before you set off on trek.
- We use good quality hotels in La Paz and elsewhere when not camping.
- Our Bolivian agents give an excellent high quality camping experience and provide first rate English-speaking leaders.
- We have a wealth of experience within the company and staff members who are enthusiastic about the Andes. This experience combined with the knowledge, contacts and attention to details of our local partners means you are assured of a high quality trip.
- We have a maximum group size of 12 for this particular trek to ensure all the benefits of a genuine small group experience without any of the potential negative impact of larger trekking groups.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades, sightseeing and other activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



We have just completed the Cordillera Real Traverse, the classic Bolivian 120-km long trek in some of the most spectacular scenery in South America. We truly were wandering through the fields of wonder...miles of undulating hills, pristine valleys still owned by their original residents, glaciers-capped mountains, turquoise lakes - landscape so raw and untouched that it commands silence as not to taint its mystery by language. The trek offers what many seasoned trekkers dream of - solitude, wilderness, remoteness and the natural beauty that can restore the sense of balance, mental clarity and equanimity...This trek would rank as one of my favourite, best ever experiences. I cannot recommend this trip with the Mountain Kingdoms more highly.

-Ms L K, Canada



The trip was well organised, we had a small group and personal service. The food during the trek was the best ever! The cook deserves a medal.

-Ms D, Scotland

The trek cook was brilliant; the holiday was a really good trip with good quality hotels and accommodation.

-Ms D, Wales



Spectacular mountains, which are virtually deserted. Be prepared for days with no tracks, but superb views. A must are four season bag, good puffa jacket.... when sun goes down the temperature plummets. Very knowledgeable guide and excellent cook. If you love the mountains and deserted walking it's a must.

-Wendy, UK

This trek was one of the most interesting, varied and challenging that I have experienced. A trek worth doing in a country worth visiting - before the glaciers recede even further.

-Mr E, Witney

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

