

SAT1 Salkantay Trek to Machu Picchu

Safety Briefing

In order to maximize any adventure in the mountains, it is important to keep safety as a top priority. Even the simplest mishaps, like an innocent stumble that causes a sprained ankle, can happen to anybody and will severely disrupt the experience. As this is a self-guided tour, there won't be anybody along the way mitigating all the possible risks for you. **It will be your responsibility before the tour, and throughout the duration of the tour, to make decisions that keep you safe.**



The purpose of this Safety Briefing is to inform you of the known risks for your tour and the actions you can take to mitigate that risk. This information is largely reliant on the statistics of various Search and Rescue organizations, as well as based on our own

analysis of your route. As travel and outdoor adventure are both known to be full of surprises, this list is far from comprehensive. There are a multitude of things that can go wrong during your tour. Many of these may cause disruptions to your itinerary. But hey, it wouldn't be an adventure if everything was guaranteed to go exactly as planned.

By booking a tour with Alpenventures GmbH, you acknowledge and accept all risks, both listed and not listed, and agree to release Alpenventures GmbH from any liability.

Here is a list of the known risks for mountain hiking, and we'll include any specific dangers related to your tour at the end of this document. It's helpful to know that most accidents happen while descending and most happen in clear weather conditions and in mellow terrain. In other words, accidents are more likely to happen when we least expect them.

General Risks for Mountain Hiking	
Risk	Mitigation
Tripping or stumbling	It may not surprise you to know that the most common accident in mountain hiking is tripping or stumbling¹ . It may; however, surprise you to know that 70% of those accidents happen to hikers who report having defective vision . This tells us, that having your vision checked, and ensuring you have a solution for glasses and/or contacts in place that is suitable for hiking in various weather conditions and at various levels of exertion, may greatly reduce your chances of evacuation. Along with this, it is important to start early enough in the day, so you don't find yourself hiking without daylight. It has also been determined that of those who trip or stumble, those who are already very active, are less likely to sustain an injury.
Cardiovascular failure or other existing major medical conditions	The second most common cause for Search and Rescue operations for mountain hiking is cardiovascular failure or other major existing health problems that the hiker already has. For this reason, we strongly recommend all tour participants, who are 40 and older, visit their General Practitioner for a health check-up prior to their tour. We also want to emphasize that travel may not be the most appropriate time for pushing your own limits. We urge all our customers to make conservative decisions when choosing their tour, as well as when they are out on the trail.
Delayed access to rescue and medical assistance	By nature, trekking tours travel through remote areas, and help may not be immediately available should there be a medical emergency. Search and Rescue operations are often run by volunteers and can take hours to reach you, sometimes longer if there is a storm, if it is dark, or if there are other conditions that are unsafe for the teams. It may be up to 24 hours or more before reaching medical assistance should an accident occur. It is important to have basic first aid skills (we recommend taking a Wilderness First Aid Course), to have first aid equipment with you, and to have the equipment with you that would be needed to survive a night outside if necessary (emergency shelter, insulation, food, water) . Alpenventures UNGUIDED does not provide rescue assistance

	<p>as part of our tour packages. Customers use the local search and rescue infrastructure and should have insurance to cover both medical evacuations and medical service in the destination country.</p>
Getting lost	<p>The trail on this route is very easy to follow (there is only one). Take care at any potential junctions to verify your position. Keep your electronics that are used for navigation functioning with enough battery life throughout your tour². If you think you may have taken a wrong turn, stop immediately to assess the situation, and return to the last known position before continuing.</p>
Blindly following navigation instructions	<p>While we certainly emphasize using our navigation app or a GPS device, there is also a danger in getting too focused on these resources. Rockslides, snowfields, landslides and other conditions can deem a route impassable. It is important to be observant during your tour, to constantly assess conditions, and to use your map to find a safer route should any dangerous conditions be present.</p>
Thunderstorms	<p>Thunderstorms are not common during the months you will be hiking the Salkantay Trek, but they can still occur. Passes and other exposed areas should be avoided in thunderstorms. Thunderstorms rarely last all day, so it is usually a matter of timing. It is best to not only regularly check the weather forecast, but to also ask the local hut staff or a local guide for their assessment of the severity of the weather forecast and the timing of any potential thunderstorms. The rain that comes with thunderstorms can last for hours, so it is important to carry raingear and a pack cover and use these when it first starts to rain to avoid getting wet.</p>
Hypothermia	<p>While hypothermia is not a huge risk, it can become a real risk under wet conditions. For this reason, it is very important to avoid wearing cotton clothing (this takes too long to dry), and to bring good quality rain gear, as well as a pack cover. It is also important to always have a dry change of clothes available and to have adequate layers to stay safe in cold conditions.</p>
Snowstorms	<p>Snow can happen any time of year at high elevations. The most common problem associated with a snowstorm is reduced visibility, which makes navigation extremely difficult and slow. Due to this, coupled with the fact that you</p>

	<p>may not have the appropriate gear to manage a surprise snowstorm, we usually recommend that you stay at the hut or accommodation where you are until visibility improves.</p>
Snowfields	<p>Snowfields are unlikely but can be problematic in steep terrain where it may be slippery. We recommend always checking with hut staff or local guides to check trail conditions for the following day and to plan a diversion if there is anything problematic.</p>
Rockfall	<p>Injuries from rockfall are incredibly rare, but it is a possibility. In most cases, rockfall is most likely to occur during rain and severe storms. Any areas that are prone to rockfall should be avoided during such conditions. If you do need to move through such an area, we recommend you do so quickly and do not take any breaks.</p>
Landslides	<p>Although rare, the steep topography of the trek makes this a real risk. This is an especially high risk during severe storms in the wet season that last several days. You will be hiking this trek during the dry season, when such conditions are unlikely to exist. As always, we recommend you check with the local hut staff or professional guides to identify if they see any risk for this. However, the potential for a landslide is not always identified in advance, and it is important to acknowledge that this is simply a risk of outdoor activity.</p>
Earthquakes	<p>Earthquakes are not uncommon in Peru, and these can create very dangerous conditions to trekking with no warning. The greatest risks with earthquakes include building destruction, rockfall, landslides and bridge collapses. It is possible to be stranded without access to help due to an earthquake.</p>
Falling in an exposed area	<p>This trek does not have any particularly exposed sections of trail, but there are certainly areas that have a steep drop-off where a fall could be problematic. It is your responsibility along the route to ensure you are sure-footed enough to move in such terrain and you use care in such areas.</p>
Dehydration and exhaustion	<p>Both dehydration and exhaustion not only create a dangerous health situation for you, but they also cause impaired judgement and poor decision-making. It is critical that you take care to not only carry enough water with you to stay hydrated, but to also drink regularly. We recommend using a water bladder with a drinking hose, so you can drink regularly on the go. We also recommend eating enough food,</p>

	<p>particularly salty snacks, and taking enough breaks to keep your energy at a reasonable level. Keep in mind that your body needs more calories at higher altitudes, while at the same time, your appetite is suppressed. If you start to feel confusion or moodiness creep in, take a break and eat and drink something before moving on. We recommend carrying a bandana or buff with you that you can dip in streams and then wear on your head to keep cool on hot days.</p>
Sunburns	<p>Sunburns are common, yet so easy to avoid. Please make sure you use sun protection on both sunny and cloudy days. Apply sweat-proof sunblock regularly, and use hats, sunglasses and clothing to protect from the sun's rays.</p>
Blisters	<p>A blister may be one of the greatest threats you face on your tour. Although they rarely require a rescue, a blister can truly suck the fun right out of your adventure. Plan ahead for blisters. The most important step you can take is to ensure your footwear fits well and is worn in. But even with a well-worn pair of hiking boots, the change in the topography where you are hiking, can cause new friction points. We recommend either applying an anti-chafing cream or wearing sock liners to prevent friction as much as possible. ALWAYS stop as soon as you feel a hotspot and apply moleskin (available in the U.S.) or Compeed (available elsewhere) to the hotspot. DO NOT APPLY DIRECTLY ONTO A FORMED BLISTER. If a blister does develop, have a plan and the proper supplies to treat that blister. Tip: duct tape can be very useful in keeping moleskin or bandages in place on your feet. Also, this is somewhat unrelated, but clip your toenails regularly during your tour to prevent pain.</p>
Minor illness	<p>Minor illness can surprise us at any time. And while it may be minor, it can make physical activity extremely challenging. We recommend minimizing the risk of minor illness by eating foods and taking supplements that support your immune system, leading up to and during your tour. We also recommend avoiding foods that are known to cause issues for you, drinking only bottled water, avoiding any fresh food that may have been washed in contaminated water and maintaining good hygiene throughout the duration of your tour. If you do fall ill and it is not wise to continue, please speak with your accommodation and with us to find an alternative solution.</p>

Dangerous wildlife	A dangerous wildlife encounter is extremely unlikely. We recommend that you respect all wildlife that you encounter and keep a safe distance . If wildlife is on your trail, move safely around it if possible, or wait until it moves before continuing.
Flooding	Flooding does occur during and after heavy rainfall, although this type of rainfall is extremely unusual during the hiking season. During times of heavy rainfall, be sure to check with the hut staff and/or local guides for any advice on flooding risk. If you encounter a stream or river that you cannot safely cross, turn around and return to your last accommodation.
Hut/Hotel Fire	Although rare, fires can take place at your accommodation. It is important to always identify the location of fire extinguishers and evacuation routes upon first arriving at your accommodation.
Theft	Theft is a real risk in Peru, and it is important to keep all valuables with you at all times, as well as to avoid wearing any expensive jewelry or accessories that may tempt thieves. Avoid withdrawing large amounts of cash from ATMs in highly touristy areas. It is also important to use safe taxi services. Having your hotel order one for you is a much safer option than hailing one on the street. Express kidnapping has happened with taxis, where the taxi driver has forced the passenger to withdraw cash from an ATM. One of the best ways to protect against theft is to pay attention to those around you, and to not allow yourself to get distracted by a mobile phone or book while in public areas.
Other crimes	Other crime is common in Peru, including drug trafficking and sexual assaults. Stay in safe areas, move around only during daylight, avoid being alone, and use an app-based taxi service to ensure your safety.
Medical services do not meet international standards	Local medical services in Peru do not meet international standards. For this reason, we advise you have travel insurance that also includes medical evacuation back to your home country should medical services be required.
Terrorist Attack	There is a looming threat of terrorist activity in Peru. Terrorist attacks are most likely at high-profile public events, hotels that are frequented by tourists, places of worship, schools, parks, shopping malls and public transportation. We recommend you avoid these areas when possible and remain vigilant.

Public transportation accident	Public transportation is not held to the same safety standards as it is elsewhere in the world. Buses are often overcrowded, poorly maintained and without standard safety features such as seatbelts. Some of the roads are narrow and winding. Use caution when using public transportation and be sure to follow any signs or instructions to remain as safe as possible.
Private transport accident	Vehicle accidents are not uncommon in Peru, and vehicle laws are largely ignored. Roads are often poorly maintained. We advise our customers to wear seat belts at all times and to abide by speed limits and signage. If there are any concerns regarding a vehicle we have ordered for private transport, contact us immediately so we can find a replacement.
COVID-19	Peru has been heavily impacted by the presence and spread of the COVID-19 virus. We advise all of our customers to follow appropriate safety protocol as long as the threat remains. This includes wearing a face mask when indoors or interacting with others, keeping 1.5 meters of distance from others, and washing hands regularly. Huts and hotels may have additional measures in place to keep you safe, and we expect that all Alpenventures customers will follow these.
Other threats identified for your destination country as identified by the World Health Organization and by your home government	The safety situation in Peru is dynamic and can change at any time. We expect all travelers to inform themselves of the safety and health risks their governments warn of for the country of destination, as well as any additional health risks identified by the World Health Organization. Here are some sources to check: Auswärtiges Amt (Germany), State Department (U.S.), Foreign Travel Advice (U.K.), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), and the World Health Organization (worldwide).

¹The most common injury that is evacuated from the trail is an ankle injury. You may be surprised to hear that there is no statistical difference based on the choice of shoe (trail runner vs. hiking boot with ankle support), but instead there has been a correlation shown between the Body Mass Index (BMI) of the hiker and the severity of the ankle injury. Based on this information, we strongly recommend adopting an ankle strengthening routine, as well as balance and stability training, into a regular fitness routine as you prepare for your tour.

²Alpenventures provides customers with free access to a navigation app that works offline on your smartphone. However, this is only helpful if the smartphone remains functioning and charged. There may be opportunities to recharge the smartphone at

the mountain huts and other accommodations along the way, but this is not guaranteed. We recommend either carrying a solar charger and charging cable for your phone, or a GPS device with replaceable batteries (and enough batteries for the tour). Alpenventures can send you the GPS coordinates for your GPS device upon request.

Specific Risks for the Salkantay Trek to Machu Picchu	
Risk	Mitigation
High Altitude	<p>The Salkantay Trek travels to an altitude of 4,625 m. (15,174 ft.). High Altitude Sickness is a likely risk at this elevation, including the serious conditions of High Altitude Pulmonary Endema (HAPE) and High Altitude Cerebral Endema (HACE). The best way to minimize this risk is to acclimatize before the tour. Spending a few days in Cusco and taking on day hikes before the tour is a great way to achieve this. The majority of hikers who do not acclimatize WILL have issues with the altitude during their tour, threatening their opportunity to complete the tour. During the tour, move slowly as you ascend and eat and drink plenty, even if you don't have the desire to. Eating, drinking and resting at the first sign of altitude sickness may resolve any issues. Report any signs of altitude sickness, such as a headache, nausea, diarrhea, wheezing or coughing to your hosts immediately. If symptoms are persistent and concerning, descend. All guests that are 40 years old or above should see a doctor to ensure they are healthy enough for such strenuous conditions.</p>
Black flies	<p>The lower elevations of this trek that are in the cloud forest are home to tiny and vicious black flies. Referred to as mosquitos by the locals, these tiny, sometime unnoticeable flies, love to swarm bare skin and just a few seconds of exposure can lead to a multitude of bites. While these black flies are not known to carry any disease, their bites are brutal, and the extreme itching can remain with you for weeks. For this reason, we absolutely recommend applying insect repellent with deet in it and keeping your skin covered while in this region.</p>
Local services don't meet international safety standards	<p>Peru is a country being overrun by large, international guiding companies. This is having a strong negative impact on the Peruvian communities, while at the same time has little positive economic impact for the regions that are overrun. In order to offer this tour in a manner which we consider to be ethical, we have partnered with local families who live along</p>

	<p>the Salkantay Trek to provide your transfer, accommodation, meals, and other services. But unfortunately, choosing to work with the local families also means accepting the local safety standards, as opposed to the international safety standards established by the large corporations. Some of the accommodation, in particular, is in self-built buildings that do not adhere to international building safety standards.</p>
<p>Language Barrier</p>	<p>Many of the families and guides that will be hosting you along the trek do not speak English. It is very helpful to have the Google Translate App on your smartphone with the Spanish language saved offline. This will allow you to communicate effectively in case of an emergency.</p>
<p>Lack of coordinated search and rescue</p>	<p>Should an evacuation be required during your tour, a well-coordinated and professional search and rescue operation will be unlikely. Instead, your best option is to alert one of the many local guides you will encounter on the trek and ask them for assistance. They may charge for assistance with your evacuation. Your hosts will also be able to assist should you have contact with any of them.</p>



Our Commitment

Your safety is extremely important to us at Alpenventures GmbH. We understand that along the way, you may need to make decisions that alter your itinerary. When presented with these situations, we will be here to help, and will assist with identifying solutions and making changes to your bookings. We will cover the financial costs within reason, but there may be some expensive solutions, such as taking a taxi for a long distance to route around a difficult section of trail, that we are unable to take on for you. All itinerary changes that are made for safety reasons will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Alpenventures does not offer emergency services. Customers will be dependent on the infrastructure available locally for evacuation and emergency response situations.

Summary

While there are certainly risks associated with outdoor adventure, there are a lot of things you can do to minimize those risks. Having a proper training routine leading up to your adventure, ensuring you have adequate vision and are in good health for the tour, as well as planning ahead for navigation and packing the right items are a good start. From there, gathering information, both before and during your tour, and making safe decisions as you go will all help ensure that your big adventure is as safe and secure as possible.