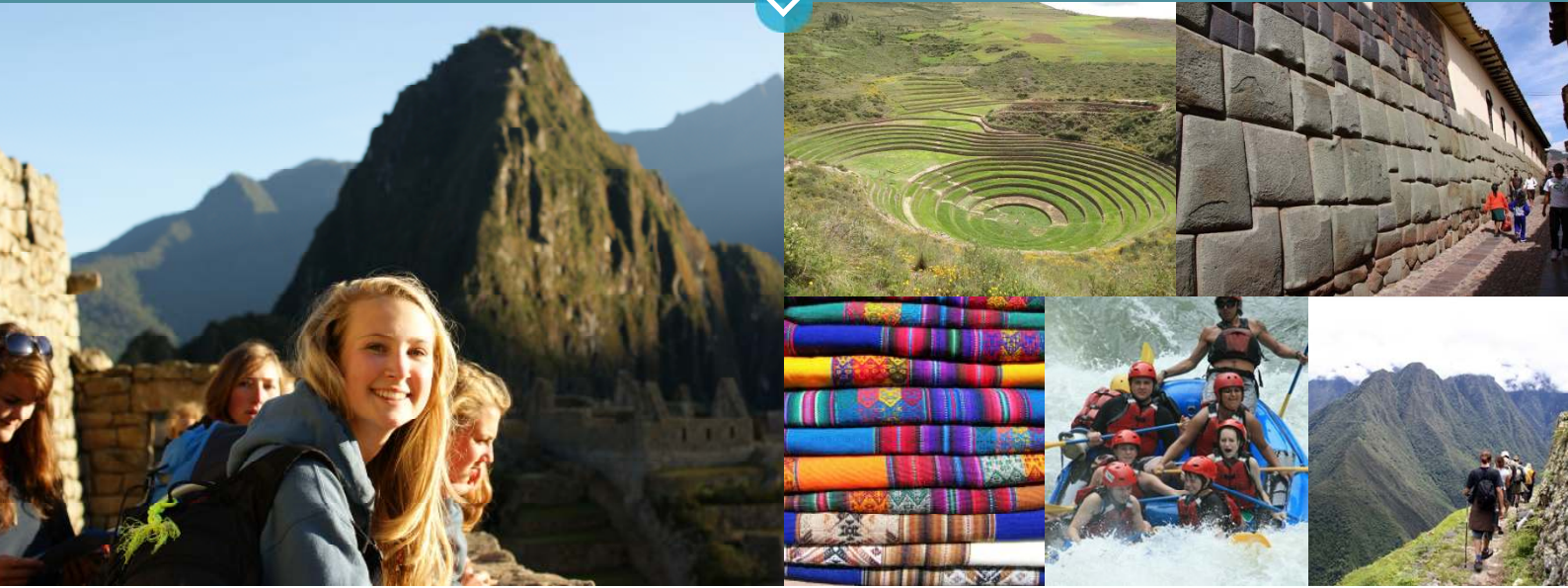


# Peru

## Land of the Incas - The Inca Trail



For those short of time, this trip is the perfect introduction to Peru. It keeps travel to a minimum, yet has all the big highlights you want in a first time visit to the country. Spending the majority of our time in the Sacred Valley and Cusco region allows us to see more of the area's Inca heritage. We also get to trek the legendary Inca Trail which culminates at the incredible ruins of Machu Picchu, perched high above the Urubamba River in the most awe-inspiring of settings. And, throughout it all, we've got some of the regions best guides to tell you about their culture, history, flora and fauna. It's a great adventure - we hope you can join us!



### Recommended itinerary:

#### Day 1: Depart UK and fly to Peru.

Flights are usually overnight, arriving in Peru on the morning of day two. After a short wait, we connect with our internal flight to Cusco.

#### Day 2: Airport transfer and "Locals' guide to Cusco" tour.

On arrival at the airport, we will be met and escorted to our hotel. After check in we are introduced to the city with the "Locals' guide to Cusco". This short walking tour is a great way to get our bearings and also helps us get used to the altitude. Cusco lies at 3,200m and we are likely to feel a little short of breath on arrival. It is easy to see why the beautiful historic centre was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 and there is Inca and colonial architecture evident all around. Later in the day our guide will give us a full briefing about the adventure that lies ahead.

#### Day 3: Cusco Outlying ruins - half day tour including entrances.

Today we stretch our legs with a delightful hike in the hills above Cusco. First we visit the impressive site of Sacsayhuaman. Huge stone ramparts surround a beautiful grass amphitheatre. Once the scene of fierce battles it now hosts the recreation of traditional Inca ceremonies such as Inti Raymi and Warachikuy. Next is the Inca water temple of Tambo Machay lying at 3700m (12,000 feet). With its intricately carved water channels this is thought to have been used both for ritual cleansing as well as the worship of water. From here we carry on down to Cusco, stopping at the Temple of the Moon and other historical sites along the way.

#### Days 4 to 7: The Inca Trail

The Inca Trail is within the abilities of most reasonably fit people, but do come prepared: the trail is 45 km (28 miles) long and often steep. Generally each day's journey consists of 7 hours walking on average (both uphill and downhill), plus stops for snacks and lunch. Normally trekking starts at 7am (except for the fourth morning) and you reach the campsite around 4-5pm. Accommodation on the trek is camping (3 nights). Double tents (twin-share) and foam camping mats will be provided. Tents are set up by the porters. Meals are prepared by the trek cook. Day 1: Today we travel by minivan to the 82 km marker and join our crew of local porters, cook and guide. The starting point of the trek is located at 2,850m. Our first day includes some uphill trekking to the campsite - at over 3,100 m above sea level.

Culture shock rating:



Physical rating:



Today you will see the ruins of Llactapata, burnt to the ground by the last Inca emperor to discourage Spanish pursuit down the trail.

**Day 2:** This is the most challenging day of the trek as we ascend a long steep path (approx 5 hours) to reach the highest point of our trek, Warmiwanusca ('Dead Woman's Pass'), at a height of 4,200 m (13,779 ft), before descending to our campsite in the Pacaymayo Valley at 3650 m.

**Day 3:** Today we start with a climb up to the second pass known as Runkuracay at 3,980 m - approximately 90 minutes uphill from the Pacaymayo Valley. From here we can enjoy views of the snow-capped Cordillera Vilcabamba before descending to the ruins of Sayacmarca (2-3 hours). Continue over the third pass and soon reach the beautiful ruins of Phuyupatamarca, the 'Town above the Clouds', at 3,850 m (approx 90 mins walk). From here we start our descent along Inca steps (2 hours) to reach our final night's camp by the Winay Wayna ('Forever Young') archaeological site at 2,750 m. Grab a drink and enjoy the panoramic views of the valley below.

**Day 7: Machu Picchu** The day starts before dawn with breakfast served nice and early at approximately 4.30am. The early start serves two purposes: Firstly, we say farewell to our porters as they descend to the train station to catch their train home and secondly, we are ready to start hiking by 05.30am when the gate that leads through to the Inti-Punku (sun gate) opens. The walk to the sun gate takes approximately 2 to 2.5 hours.

We've all seen the photos, but visiting Machu Picchu in person is a truly breath-taking experience. Perched high above the Urubamba River and surrounded by towering mountains and deep valleys, it is one of the Modern Wonders of the World and set in the most awe-inspiring location. Afterwards, there is time to hike to the Inca Bridge, Watchman's Hut or else just wander through the ruins soaking up the atmosphere. In the afternoon we descend to the waiting train to enjoy one of the great train journeys of the world back along the Sacred Valley to our hotel for the night in Cusco

**Day 8: Cusco** There are a number of activities that can be organised for our last day in Peru, these include Mountain biking in the Sacred Valley and visiting a number of the colourful markets. Tonight we will have a meal to celebrate our last night in Peru as we look back on an action packed week of adventure.

**Day 9: Cusco Airport Transfer.** We transfer to Cusco airport in time for our homebound flight. After a connection in Lima, we fly back via Europe arriving in the UK on day 10.

**Day 10: Arrive back in the UK.**

It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or natural events, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.



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