

# Hiker's Journey to Machu Picchu

BEST TRAILS IN PERU'S SACRED VALLEY,  
PLUS HUAYNA PICCHU AND THE GATE OF THE SUN



Wilderness Travel



# Hiker's Journey to Machu Picchu

## TRIP DATES

2025

June 7-15, 2025  
August 15-23, 2025

2026

June 6-14, 2026  
August 9-17, 2026

Machu Picchu is the crown jewel of the Sacred Valley of the Incas, but you don't have to hike the Inca Trail to be surrounded by the sheer wonder of this fabled realm. Our hiking adventure brings breathtaking panoramas throughout the Incas' mountain-ringed Sacred Valley (the Urubamba Valley) as we hike to hidden Inca sites high in the valley. We'll even have llamas to carry our picnic lunch supplies on one hike. Our final hike follows the famed Inca Trail up to Machu Picchu and we enter it through the Gate of the Sun, as the Incas once did. Sampling the renowned local cuisine and relaxing in gorgeous hacienda-style accommodations add to the delight as we explore the world of the Incas.





# Itinerary

## TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

- Length:** 9 days
- Arrive:** Cusco, Peru
- Depart:** Cusco, Peru
- Lodging:** 5 nights hotels, 2 nights tented eco-resort, 1 night full-service WT permanent tented camp
- Meals:** All meals included except 1 lunch (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Activity:** Cultural Adventures, Hiking / Trekking
- Trip Level:** 1 2 3 ④ 5 6  
Moderate to strenuous hiking, mountainous terrain between 8,000-13,200 feet

## DAY 1 CUSCO, PERU

Arrive early in the morning at the airport in Lima and connect with a spectacular flight over the Andes to Cusco (11,200'). Upon arrival, we are met and transferred our hotel, close to Cusco's central square. Here we drink a cup of maté de coca (the local herb tea) to help us acclimatize to the high altitude, and take deep breaths! Lunch is on your own. In the afternoon, we enjoy a walking tour through central Cusco for a glimpse into the ceremonial heart of the Inca Empire. Our walk includes a visit to the Coricancha, a sacred Inca temple whose walls were once covered with sheets of gold, the Plaza de Armas, and the Baroque cathedral, built on the site of an old Inca palace. We gather for a Welcome Dinner this evening. Overnight at Casa Andina Premium Cusco...D (If most travelers arrive in Cusco prior to Day 1, we will begin with a city tour in the morning, enjoy a Welcome Lunch, and dinner will be on your own.)

Note: We recommend coming to Cusco one day early to acclimatize to Cusco's altitude (it's also a delightful place to explore on your own). An extra day makes a world of difference after the long flight from the US. We are happy to book additional hotel nights for you at Casa Andina Premium Cusco (an "on your own" expense).

Cusco: Inhabited by proto-Incas as early as the 12th century AD, Cusco was completely rebuilt in the early 15th century by Pachacutec, the Inca warrior-king. He is credited with creating the Incas' form of worship, system of government, and the distinctive masonry style we still marvel at today. Cusco was the heart of Tahuantinsuyo, the Land of the Four Quarters, as the Incas called their kingdom. The boundary lines of each quarter of the kingdom originated from the main plaza. An elegant imperial city, Cusco was laid out in the shape of a puma. The great

fortress of Saqsayhuaman formed its head, while palaces, temples, squares, and streets formed the puma's body and legs. Cusco's paved avenues were flanked by temples, and there were rock-hewn palaces with gold- and jewel-encrusted doors and villas for the brilliantly clad Inca nobles and their retinues. The capital's opulent inner sanctum was the Coricancha, or House of the Sun, once a glittering temple to the gods, full of golden statues (today it forms the foundation for the colonial Santo Domingo church). Although the Spaniards looted the gold and silver from the elaborate Inca temples, most of Cusco remained undisturbed after Pizarro, the Spanish conqueror, made his triumphant entrance into the city in 1533. But in 1536, Manco II, the rebel Inca, led an attack against the Spanish. His men used slingshots to rain hot coals into the city, setting it ablaze. The Spanish triumphed, but the once-glorious city was left a smoking ruin.

## DAY 2 PISAC FORTRESS AND VILLAGE / SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS

This morning we drive out into the Sacred Valley of the Incas (the Urubamba Valley) to explore Pisac, a spectacular fortress set on a high promontory and filled with wonderful examples of Inca stonework and engineering. Pisac was the largest fortress-city complex of the Incas, yet it is another enigma to archaeologists. It was a classic Inca pucara, a huge defended area into which the entire population of a wide area could retreat during a military threat. But despite its natural defenses, the Incas made no stand here against the Spaniards. The fine Inca terraces of Pisac are still cultivated by local inhabitants, and the terracing exhibited here reflects a level of engineering ingenuity unrivaled anywhere else. With its

high-status temple architecture and elaborate visual design, Pisac may have been a royal estate or a ceremonial center like Machu Picchu. We'll explore this incredible monument on foot, then hike the trail leading down from the ruins to the colonial village of Pisac below. The town a perfect example of Inca city planning, with its original cobbled streets leading to the Plaza de Armas. We'll have lunch in town, with time afterwards to explore and photograph in the bustling local market, one of the most famous in the Cusco region. Indigenous Quechua communities from the surrounding region come here to buy fruit and vegetables as well as to sell their wares. Our home for the next two nights is the Aranwa Sacred Valley Hotel, a luxurious resort immersed in the countryside in a gorgeous and serene setting...BLD  
Hiking Details: Approximately 2-3 hours, 4-5 miles  
Driving Details: Approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes

## DAY 3 HIKE TO HUCHUY QOSQO

We'll get an early start for a drive to a little mountain community above the Sacred Valley this morning. Our hike begins from this village with a short ascent to a small pass with fantastic panoramas of the Cordillera Vilcanota and the Sacred Valley below. Our trail brings us along creeks and agricultural terraces with views down to the Vilcanota River and Cordillera Urubamba mountains in the distance. Arriving at Pucamarca ("Red Village") at 13,180 feet, we follow a secret Inca trail hidden along a narrow gully, finding ancient water channels, stairs, and bridges along the way. Archaeological remnants are abundant in this area in the midst of a breathtaking natural world.



Our trail eventually leads to Huchuy Qosqo (“Little Cusco”), an off-the-beaten-path Inca ruin at 11,980 feet that was an important strategic military and religious site in the heights of the Sacred Valley. History tells us that this was the refuge of the Inca Viracocha, defeated by the Chancas (people from the central Andes who invaded the city of Cusco). Later his son Pachacutec recovered Cusco for the Incas and pushed the fierce Chancas back to their place of origin. We have our picnic lunch here and visit the citadel, enjoying the incredible views across the landscape. Afterwards, we descend a seldom-traveled dirt road into the Sacred Valley, where we are met by our vehicle for a return to the Aranwa Sacred Valley Hotel... BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 3-4 hours, 5.7 miles

Driving Details: Approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes

#### DAY 4 HIKE FROM SAPACTO TO KINSACOCHA

We drive to the Sapacto area this morning, where we meet the llamas that will be our pack animals on today’s hike. They will carry our picnic lunch and gear and be a photogenic group as they follow the trails with us. Our hike begins with an ascent up from the valley into the high puna (plateau) and wetlands, a unique environment that is ideal for herds of alpacas, llamas, and sheep. We may see local farmers working the land with traditional methods and grazing their herds. We will also see interesting traditional homes built by hand with stones, mortar, and straw roofing. Our picnic lunch will be delicious and made with local and healthy ingredients. We’ll take our time at lunch to enjoy the beautiful landscape all around us.

After lunch, we hike for a couple of more hours, enjoying the absolutely panoramic views of the astonishing mountains of the Sacred Valley. Finally, we reach the first of the three alpine lakes at Kinsacocha (“Three Lakes”) at 13,125 feet. After enjoying the views, we’ll be met for a drive down to the Las Qolqas Eco Resort, just outside the town of Ollantaytambo... BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 5-6 hours, 7.7 miles

Driving Details: Approximately 3 hours

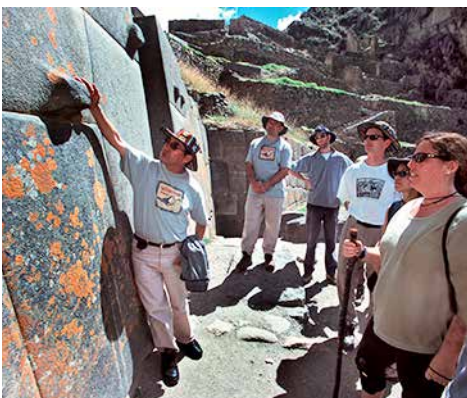
#### DAY 5 HIKE TO PUMAMARCA AND OLLANTAYTAMBO

A delicious buffet breakfast will give us energy for the day as we begin our beautiful hike up to Pumamarca, ascending through a ravine populated by the native trees of the high Andes, including polylepsis, unca, and chachacomos. Woodlands of the gnarled and twisted polylepsis (Queña in the Quechua language) grow at altitudes as high as 16,000 feet and provide protection against soil erosion and a habitat for endangered birdlife. On arrival at Pumamarca, the ruins of a hillside fortress overlooking the Sacred Valley, we’ll explore this impressive archaeological site, enjoy panoramic views, and have our picnic lunch. From here, we’ll hike down the Inca Trail to the important town of Ollantaytambo (9,160’), continuously inhabited since before the Incas. It is rich with history and archaeological remains. From here we head back to the Las Qolqas Eco-Resort for dinner and overnight...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 3-4 hours, 5.5 miles in the morning, 2 hours, 3.4 miles afternoon

Driving Details: Approximately 1-2 hours





## DAY 6 OLLANTAYTAMBO / HIKE TO KILOMETER 82 ON THE INCA TRAIL

We'll explore Ollantaytambo's stunning fortress this morning. It is one of the few places where the Conquistadors lost a battle with the Incas. The lower ruins consist of beautifully preserved terraces, while the upper ruins boast some of the finest Inca masonry known today. The village of Ollantaytambo lies below the ruins and is unique in that the foundations have survived exactly as the Incas laid them out hundreds of years ago. The major difference between this and modern-day Peruvian highland towns is that each block, known as a cancha, is a self-contained unit with only one entrance onto the street.

We'll drive a short distance to Tancca to start our pleasant hike to Kilometer 82 on the Inca Trail. En route we'll see the local people working in their fields and get an idea of day-to-day life in this rural valley. We'll also enjoy panoramic views of the snow-capped Cordillera Vilcabamba and dazzling Mt. Veronica (18,700') and its glacier. Wilderness Travel's beautifully situated private permanent campsite is set on the banks of the Urubamba River at 8,900 feet and close to the Machu Picchu park entrance. Amenities include thatched-roof tent chalets with en-suite bathrooms and hot showers—and even a wood-fired sauna! This is the staging site of all WT's Inca Trail treks and a wonderful spot to relax.

Tonight we'll have a special "pachamanca" dinner (traditional meat and vegetables slow-roasted in a pit over hot stones). Pachamanca is a Quechua word that literally means earth

("pacha") pot ("manca"). Cooking food this way pays homage to Pachamama, the Inca's Mother Earth goddess. Once the hole for the pachamanca is dug, it is lined with sizzling-hot rocks. Then potatoes or other long-cooking vegetables go in. Later the meat goes in, usually pre-marinated in a garlic, salt, and a native herb mixture with a minty taste. Wet banana leaves are placed over the meats to build up steam and keep smoke and heat from escaping. Fava beans, corn, and tamales might be added, and then the pit is covered to let everything steam for a couple of hours. The result is delicious and uniquely Andean! Overnight at private camp...BLD  
Hiking Details: Approximately 3 hours

## DAY 7 VISTADOME TRAIN / MACHU PICCHU / MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO HOTEL

After breakfast, transfer to Ollantaytambo for an early morning ride on the Vistadome train to Kilometer 104, where we start our spectacular hike up to Intipunku, Gate of the Sun. Here, a magnificent view unfolds before us: the storybook ruins of Machu Picchu, straddling a green ridge high above the Urubamba River. This spot has the absolutely classic view of Machu Picchu, and we will hike down into the ancient city just as the Incas would have done. We'll have a box lunch along the way and meet our specialist guide for a tour of Machu Picchu, then descend by bus in the late afternoon to our hotel, the award-winning Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, located in Aguas Calientes below the Machu Picchu ruins...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 5-6 hours, 7.6 miles



Bus Details: 20 minutes  
Train Details: 1.5 hours

Machu Picchu: So well hidden in the jungle-covered ramparts of the Cordillera Vilcabamba that the Spaniards never knew of it, Machu Picchu allows us a glimpse into the Inca world. American historian Hiram Bingham, who had a fascination with Peruvian archaeology, found the site in 1911 while searching for the ruins of Vilcabamba, known to be the last place where the rebel Manco II took refuge. A villager told Bingham about some ruins on a high ridge above the Urubamba River and led him there; thus, Bingham found the ruins not of Vilcabamba, but of a mysterious Inca city now believed to be one of the royal estates of the 9th Inca king, Pachacuti—whose name translates as “Transformer of the World.” Pachacuti was a kind of New World Alexander the Great, whose son and grandson continued and consolidated the expansion of Inca power. Bingham returned in 1912 and 1915 to undertake the difficult task of clearing the thick forest that had engulfed the ruins. Peruvian archaeologist Luis Valcarcel undertook further studies and vegetation clearing in 1934, and in 1940 and 1941, a Peruvian-American expedition led by Paul Fejos did more study. Archaeologists know that Machu Picchu was built, occupied, and then abandoned in the course of 100 years. The Palace of Princesses, Temple of the Sun, Temple of the Condor, and the astronomical observatory are only a few of the remarkable restored ruins here. The many beautiful altars, terraces, fountains, and mysterious chambers all display intricate stonework. Discoveries in the 1980s of

many other small ruin sites close to Machu Picchu have given weight to the theory that Machu Picchu also served as the administrative center of a huge and populous region. Whatever Machu Picchu’s purpose was, it is certainly one of the most stunning archaeological sites in the world.

#### DAY 8 MACHU PICCHU / OPTIONAL HUAYNA PICCHU CLIMB / CUSCO

We have tickets for an early entrance to Machu Picchu this morning, so we we’ll take the bus up to the ruins, arriving between 6-7 am, in time to observe the sunrise. We’ll have several hours of exploring Machu Picchu, with time for an optional hike up the steep yet rewarding mountain trail of Huayna Picchu. The view from the top is stunning, with sweeping vistas of Machu Picchu in the morning’s soft light. Lunch is at the Sanctuary Lodge restaurant, after which we return to Aguas Calientes by bus and take the afternoon Vistadome train to Ollantaytambo for a drive back to Cusco. We’ll arrive in Cusco between 7-8 pm and gather for our festive Farewell Dinner. Overnight at Casa Andina Premium Cusco...BLD

Bus Details: 30 minutes  
Train Details: 1.5 hours  
Driving Details: 1.5 hours

#### DAY 9 DEPART

Fly to Lima and depart on homeward-bound flights...B

# Trip Details

## DATE AND PRICING INFORMATION

### TRIP COST

#### Prices are per person, valid through 2025

\$6,695 (10-15 members)

\$7,095 (4-9 members)

Single supplement: \$1,475

KM104 Trail Permit: \$95 (subject to change)

*Please call for future years' pricing*

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

### CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

### TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guide
- Accommodations in hotels and at private camp
- All meals included except 1 lunch as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- A glass of wine or beer with dinner

- Airport transfers as noted

### TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff, additional hotel nights that may be necessitated by airline schedule changes or other factors, travel insurance, and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

### PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

### CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee (KM104 trail permit fee): \$95 per person

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details:

[www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance)



# Extend Your Adventure

To help you make the most of your adventure, we've created several exciting trip extensions. For detailed information, including full itineraries and complete pricing, please visit our *Hiker's Journey to Machu Picchu* webpage and click on the "Extensions" tab: [www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/peru/andes-machu-picchu-hiking/extensions](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/peru/andes-machu-picchu-hiking/extensions)



## AMAZON RAINFOREST EXTENSION: RESERVA AMAZONICA

Enter the enchanting world of the Amazon rainforest as you listen to the dawn chorus of bird songs, hear the howls of monkeys in the high forest canopy, walk lush rainforest trails, explore by boat along vine-draped waterways, and learn about the ecosystem of a tropical rainforest from knowledgeable local guides. Accommodations are at Reserva Amazonica, set in a 40-square-mile private ecological reserve adjacent to Peru's Tambopata National Reserve.

*4 days. From \$935.*



## AREQUIPA AND COLCA CANYON EXTENSION

Take in the colonial splendor of Arequipa, set on the edge of the Andes and surrounded by spectacular mountains, including snow-capped El Misti, a 19,000-foot volcano that makes a striking backdrop for the city. Explore the city's harmonious and beautifully preserved colonial center of white stone architecture, recently listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, then head out into the countryside to enjoy the grandeur of massive Colca Canyon, one of the deepest in the world, flanked by glaciers and volcanoes. The canyon's walls preserve some of the finest Inca terracing in Peru and shelter traditional Indian villages. Here you may spot Andean condors circling up from the canyon depths.

*4 days. From \$1,895.*

# Accommodations



## CASA ANDINA PREMIUM CUSCO

*Cusco, Peru*

*Day 1 (1 night), Day 8 (1 night)*

Just three blocks from the Plaza de Armas in the heart of old Cusco, this charming hotel is a renovated colonial manor house. It features a series of interior garden courtyards and a small sitting room and bar with a wonderful stone fireplace—a great place to relax after a day of exploring the city. The hotel's entire staff is most helpful, and the restaurant is known for its selection of Novo Andino dishes.



## ARANWA SACRED VALLEY HOTEL

*Urubamba, Peru*

*Days 2 to 3 (2 nights)*

Set on the banks of the Vilcanota River, this lovely hotel is on the site of a 17th century colonial hacienda. Spacious, well-appointed guest rooms are decorated in modern, minimalist style, but retain an air of colonial elegance. The grounds are stunning and park-like, with a koi pond, chapel, and river walk, and you might even see alpacas grazing on the lawn. If you have time, indulge yourself with a soothing treatment at the spa. The hotel is a member of Historic Hotels Worldwide, dedicated to promoting heritage and cultural travel to prestigious historic treasures.



## LAS QOLQAS ECO RESORT

*Ollantaytambo, Peru*

*Days 4 to 5 (2 nights)*

This unique eco-resort offers a “glamping” experience with tented bungalows that offer king or twin beds, en suite bathroom, a woodstove, and a private deck with panoramic views. The resort's grounds are like a botanical garden, hosting a variety of the Sacred Valley's indigenous plants, trees, and herbs. Each tent is surrounded by, and named after, an indigenous type of flower such as the cantuta, native fuchsia, or *duranta erecta*. The restaurant is set in a greenhouse where some of the ingredients are grown, and meals are sourced locally based on the seasons. After a long hiking day, treat yourself to an optional sauna at the spa, followed by a massage or foot reflexology.



## PRIVATE CAMP AT KILOMETER 82

*Chilca, Peru*

*Day 6 (1 night)*

We have exclusive use of the private tented chalet camp at legendary Kilometer 82, right by the start of the classic Inca Trail. This “only-with WT” feature gives us wonderful privacy for our groups, incredible views of the Veronica snow peak, and great access to the Inca Trail. The thatched-roof chalets feature twin or king-size beds, electricity, full bathrooms with hot and cold running water, tiled solar-heated showers, and flush toilets. Each tent has its own veranda where you can savor views of the surrounding mountains. Stone pathways connect the tents through landscaped gardens to a cozy lounge area with a fireplace and an enclosed dining room where our delightful meals are served, featuring a wonderful mix of Peruvian and North American dishes. The comfort factor is high here, yet your environmental footprint is small—solid waste is managed with bio-digesters and power is supplied by a hydro-electrical source. The camp also has an on-site sauna, so be sure to bring your suit! This is a unique, exclusive experience, and promises to be a highlight of your Inca Trail hike.



## MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO HOTEL

*Aguas Calientes, Peru*

*Day 7 (1 night)*

Located in Aguas Calientes below the Machu Picchu ruins, this hotel is spread over 12 acres of lush cloud forest. The rooms are comfortable bungalows with fireplaces and private terraces for admiring the tropical foliage and watching birds. Not having TVs in the rooms adds to the “away from it all” feeling, and you can take guided early morning bird walks or stroll one of the most extensive orchid gardens in the world. Meals are exceptionally good, and check out the hotel’s traditional-style Andean sauna. It’s easy to get to and from Machu Picchu by bus (a 30-minute ride). People love this hotel’s peaceful natural setting, and you can walk across a bridge into Aguas Calientes town for a visit to the extensive local handicraft market.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Hiker's Journey to Machu Picchu* webpage and click on “Accommodations.”

# Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

If you have booked extra services before or after the trip, an Extra Services Confirmation will be sent with your Final Documents.

## ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Cusco, Peru

**Suggested Airport:** Cusco, Peru (CUZ), via Lima (LIM)

**Suggested Date & Time:** Day 1, before noon

**Meeting Place:** Upon arrival, you will be met by your WT representative outside the arrivals hall at the Cusco airport.\*

\*Please leave a 3-hour connection time in Lima before flying on to Cusco.

## DEPARTURE

Cusco, Peru

**Suggested Airport:** Cusco, Peru (CUZ), with an onward connection in Lima (LIM)

**Suggested Date & Time:** Day 9, anytime

At the end of the trip (Day 9), we will transfer you to the Cusco airport for your departing flight.\*

\*Be sure to leave a 3-hour connection time in Lima before your international flight home.

## INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Peru. Airlines with the most convenient schedules for this trip include American Airlines, United Airlines, and Delta.

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at [www.exitotravel.com](http://www.exitotravel.com).

Note: It is necessary to depart from the US at least one day prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. We also encourage you to arrive in Cusco a day earlier to help adjust to the altitude.

The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

**Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip.** Once tickets have been purchased, please forward a copy of your email confirmation from the airline. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

## EXTRA HOTEL NIGHTS

We are happy to arrange additional hotel nights for you in Cusco or Lima. Please contact our office to book these reservations.

# Our Guide

Our Peru Trip Leaders are the best and most experienced guides in the country, with a gift for bringing history and culture to life. Their language skills, long-term friendships with locals, and deep knowledge and insights give you the privilege of authentic cultural exchange as they introduce you to the welcoming people, natural beauty, rich cultural history of this magical country.



## JHON ELGUERA

Jhon Elguera was born in 1980 near the ancient Inca stronghold of Machu Picchu in the Santa Teresa Valley. After graduating from high school in Cusco, he undertook computer studies, then later attended guide school, receiving a diploma in cultural tourism. Jhon has been guiding tours in Peru since 2002. An outdoor enthusiast, he has completed several first aid and mountain rescue courses.

# What the Trip is Like

## WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is Level 4, Moderate to Strenuous. Most hiking is between 8,000 and 13,200 feet on mountainous terrain. You will need to be comfortable hiking over 7 miles a day, being on your feet for up to 7 hours a day, and hiking on uneven surfaces with long descents that can be hard on the knees. While no climbing or mountaineering experience is necessary, all trip members should have ample hiking experience and be able to keep up with the group, as there are no alternative hiking options available. Trail conditions, weather, and the group's level of fitness can affect hiking times and pacing.

The altitudes are high, but our first hotel night is in Cusco at 11,200 feet, our second and third overnights are in the Sacred Valley of the Incas at 9,700 feet. These first days will help your altitude acclimatization

## TERRAIN

Peru's mountain trails can be a bit rugged, not the well-maintained trails you may be accustomed to in the United States. A hiking pole is recommended. Note on optional hike up Huayna Picchu on Day 8: At Machu Picchu, you will have the option to climb Huayna Picchu, the spectacular peak rising from the ruins. This hike is quite rewarding but not for the faint of heart or those with a fear of heights. It is steep, a bit of a scramble, and can be slippery. It's suitable for very fit hikers who like a challenge. Think stairmaster at the highest level!

## GETTING IN SHAPE

We strongly urge you to train for your trip, as your enjoyment will be highly dependent on your level of fitness. The best training for a hike is to hike, especially over hills or rough terrain. Next best are running, swimming, bicycling, or other cardiovascular exercise. Stair climbing machines are

excellent preparation for hiking uphill. Your feet should also be well prepared—make sure your hiking boots are sturdy, comfortable, and thoroughly broken-in. For the most part, you can hike at your own speed because we always have a staff member hiking in the lead as well as one behind with the slowest hiker in our group.

## WEATHER

Being so close to the equator, Peru has only two climate seasons: a dry season from April to October, and a wet season from December to March. Altitude is the main factor controlling the climate. In the mountains, you'll encounter sunny days with daytime temperatures ranging between 65°F and 70°F, dropping to the 40s and lower at night. The sun is very strong at high altitude and it can often be warm enough to hike in shorts and a t-shirt. However, it can also get extremely cold; if you're familiar with mountain weather, you know how suddenly it can get cold even in the daytime if the sun slips behind a cloud. Nighttime temperatures can drop to below freezing. Rain should not be a problem on our treks, but always keep in mind that mountain weather is unpredictable and sudden storms can occur, especially on high mountain passes.

Lima lies in a coastal desert where rainfall is rare and temperatures are usually warm (70s and 80s). Days are overcast most of the year due to the Humboldt current that comes up from Antarctica and meets the warm, tropical El Niño current from the north to create the garua, or coastal fog/mist.

The climate in the Amazon Basin is generally warm and humid throughout the year but can also be unexpectedly cool (usually 60s) due to the breezes that blow down from the Andes.

HIKING DETAILS BY DAY			DRIVING DETAILS
DAY	HOURS	MILES	HOURS
1			30 mins
2	2-3 hours	4-5 miles	1.75 hours
3	3-4 hours	5.7 miles	1.75 hours
4	5-6 hours	7.7 miles	3 hours
5	5-6 hours	9 miles	1-2 hours
6	3 hours		
7	5-6 hours	7.6 miles	Bus 20 mins, train 1.5 hours
8			Bus 30 mins, train 1.5 hours, driving 1.5 hours

AVERAGE DAILY MAX/MIN °F												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Cusco	64/45	64/46	65/46	66/43	67/39	66/35	66/34	66/37	67/41	68/44	67/45	66/45
Ollantaytambo	59/37	59/37	60/37	60/35	60/32	60/28	59/28	61/29	62/33	63/35	63/36	61/36
RAINFALL - INCHES												
Cusco	5.9	4.5	3.8	1.5	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.9	1.9	2.7	4.3
Ollantaytambo	6.0	5.5	4.9	2.0	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.4	1.2	1.8	2.8	4.5

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Our accommodations are generally in small family-run lodges with private bathrooms. They have been chosen for their ambiance and history as much as possible and are delightful for the local color and dining that they offer. While they are well-located, clean, and comfortable, they are rustic and can be more basic due to their remote location. Since they are often in historic buildings, the rooms are not always of uniform or international size. Our leaders do their best to assign rooms in a fair way so that all participants experience an equal advantage throughout the trip as a whole. Single rooms can be requested but are not always available, due to the limited space in the hotels. If you prefer a single room, please make your request as early as possible.

## CUISINE

We'll fuel our hikes with hearty Peruvian cuisine. Our lunches will often be packed lunches. Most evenings we have dinner at our hotels. Cusco's cuisine has long been based on corn, potatoes, rice, and indigenous animals. Typical dishes include cuy chactado (fried guinea pig), lomo saltado (stir-fried beef), and anticuchos (skewers of marinated, grilled meat). You'll also find dishes from other parts of Peru, including ceviche (raw fish) and empanadas (meat turnovers). Peru is home to more than 3,000 types of potatoes, developed over millennia by Incan agricultural practices, and you'll find many potato-based dishes. The most popular local soup is made with quinoa and vegetables, and other soup, chairo, is made with lamb and vegetables. The new "Novoandino" cuisine of Peru combines the food of pre-Hispanic Peru with modern techniques and trends from different parts of the world, often including indigenous root vegetables such as maca, achira, arracacha, and yacon.

## TRANSPORTATION

Our bus will transport the group's luggage, so you only need to carry a daypack for items you need during the day

(rain gear, sweater, camera, water bottle, etc.). Trip members are always free to skip a day's hike and travel to the next destination in the support vehicle (or remain at the hotel if we are not transferring that day).

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Latin America Manager or email us at [latinamerica@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:latinamerica@wildernesstravel.com).

## REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At [www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com), you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.

## TOUCAN CLUB

We're proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business! The Wilderness Travel Toucan Club was established to reward our travelers for their loyalty. For details, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at [www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club)



## WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

**Best Travel Specialists in the World:** *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

**World's Best Tour Operators:** *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

**Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips:** *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *USA Today*

**Trip of the Year:** *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

**50 Tours of a Lifetime:** *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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