

# Explore the Inca Trail, Peru



Your first taste of the Inca world will be in Cusco, the capital of an empire that once ruled over a huge expanse of South America. You will have time to wander the streets and marvel at the mix of both Inca and Spanish colonial architecture, before driving to the Sacred Valley of the Incas, a wide, fertile valley that provided the agricultural heartland for the Inca Empire. Here you will visit some of the major Inca sites, often perched on high ridges, providing spectacular views of the surrounding mountain scenery and giving further insights into the complex development of the Inca world.

Following the Urubamba River, you will continue to Ollantaytambo, a living Inca town, surrounded by terracing and dominated by a ridge-top sun temple. It is only a short drive from Ollantaytambo to the trailhead and the beginning of your trekking challenge. Your first day's hike brings you to the entrance of the Machu Picchu sanctuary and the extensive ruins of Q'ente. From here you will trek alongside the Cusichaca River, slowly ascending into the mountains until you reach Llulluchapampa, with Mt. Huayanay, a five-pronged snow-capped peak providing a wonderful backdrop.

The next day you will make an early start, as you will be crossing two high passes in one day. The flag-stoned trail takes you through high grasslands and dank cloudforest and passes by the spectacularly situated ruins of Runkurukay and Sayacmarca.

You will then begin your descent and the push to your final destination - Machu Picchu - the lost city of the Incas. Stepping through the Incan Sun Gate for your first sight of the citadel is a truly magical moment. After spending a night at a small town on the banks of the Urubamba River 1000ft below, you will return to spend a full day exploring the urban layout and

hidden treasures of the city, discovering exactly why this is South America's number one attraction.

## Day 1: International Departure

Take your flight from London Heathrow Airport to Lima, Peru; our Charity Challenge representative will be at the airport to assist you with the check-in and any last minute questions. On arrival in Lima, you will be met at the airport by a Charity Challenge local agent who will transfer you to your a local hotel for dinner and an overnight stay.

## Day 2: Lima to Cusco

First thing in the morning, you will transfer to the airport to board your one-hour flight to Cusco, the centre of the Inca world. Once in the city of Cusco, you will transfer to your centrally located hotel, and have the rest of the day to acclimatise to the altitude (3,400m/11,400ft) on a guided tour of the city. You will have the chance to visit Cusco's impressive cathedral and the nearby Inca ruins of Qoricancha, and start to hear about the Inca way of life. In the evening, you will be fully briefed about the challenge facing you in the week ahead. Meals included at local restaurants.

## Day 3: Sacred Valley Tour

Today provides a full day tour of the Sacred Valley of the Incas, where the nearby ruins of Sacsayhuaman, Kenko and Tambomachay will introduce you to the history of this astonishing region. Depending on the day of the week, you may get the chance to visit the colourful Pisac market, which provides a great opportunity to buy handcrafted souvenirs and take photos. Lunch in Pisac, then continue onto Ollantaytambo where you can explore the ruins. Return to Cusco where you will eat at a local restaurant & stay overnight.

## Day 4: Cusco to Q'ente

This morning you will take a spectacular train journey to KM88, and then it's just a short walk to your campsite. Once you have settled in, you will start a half-day hike to the Qente ruins, which offer a marvellous chance to explore an Incan ruin without other tourists to disturb the peace and quiet.

### **Day 5: Qente to Llulluchupampa - 10Kms trek**

You will start your trek on the trail as it winds slowly uphill following the beautiful Cusichaca River, passing more ruins and the homes of local farmers to reach the community of Huayllabamba. From here the trail ascends steeply along a narrow hanging valley through a twisted cloud forest of endemic Queñua trees before emerging at Llulluchupampa, your overnight camp. The view from here back down the trail and across to Mt Huayanay is breathtaking. (Trekking time: 6 hours.)

### **Day 6: Llulluchupampa/Phuyupatamarca - 15 kms**

A spectacular day begins with an early start. The trail first ascends at an angle of 30 degrees towards Warmiwanusca (4,050m). After a hard climb you descend to the Pacaymayo River before climbing again past the ruins of Runkuraqay and continuing up to the second pass of the day at 3,900m. The trail then drops again down to the stunningly situated ruins of Sayacmarca, the waiting village. The afternoon walk is more relaxed; skirting the mountainside through a dank and dripping cloud forest until you finally reach Phuyupatamarca, translated from Quechua = the town at the edge of the clouds where you will be camping overnight. (Trekking time: 8hrs.)

### **Day 7: Phuyupatamarca to Machu Picchu - 11 kms**

From the ruins of Phuyupatamarca, a flagstone trail winds sharply down into the cloud forest to the ruins of Winay Wayna. The trail is lined with flowers and the ruins themselves are often covered with the orchids after which they are named. The final stretch of the trail is sub-tropical with hummingbirds flitting around and views down to the tumbling Urubamba River. After a two-hour walk we arrive at Machu Picchu as the Incas once did, through the sun gate or Inti Punku. After a short visit to the site we take a bus to the small town of Aguas Calientes and overnight in a hostel. Dinner will be taken at a local restaurant. (Trekking time: 6hrs.)

### **Day 8: Machu Picchu to Cusco**

The whole day is dedicated to exploring these extraordinary Inca remains. If you are still feeling energetic you can also climb Wayna Picchu, the mountain overlooking the site. The mid-afternoon train takes you back to your hotel in Cusco. This evening is celebration time, for achieving your Charity Challenge goal, and discovering the majesty of Machu Picchu. Dinner

will be taken at a local restaurant. Overnight in hotel in Cusco.

### **Day 9: Cusco to Lima**

Leaving Cusco behind, you will transfer to the airport for your return flight to Lima and visit a typical Peruvian restaurant for lunch. With the afternoon to do a very brief city tour, you will transfer back to the airport for your flight back to London Heathrow.

### **Day 10: Arrive Home**

Your flight arrives back in the UK.

N.B. The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

### **Optional Extension**

#### **Day 9: White Water Rafting**

After breakfast, you will transfer to your put-in point on the Urubamba River. A safety and familiarisation briefing will be followed by a half-day of white water rafting (for beginners!) on this section of the river. You will have lunch on the shores of the river. After lunch, you will head back to the hotel in Cusco or Urubamba, where you will overnight in a comfortable hotel (3 star). Dinner will be taken at a local restaurant.

#### **Day 10: Free to Relax**

The day is yours to walk around Cusco and relax in one of the many street side cafes. Overnight in the hotel at Cusco. Meals will be taken at a local restaurant.

#### **Day 11: Cusco / Lima / UK**

Transfer out to airport for your flight back to Lima, and from Lima to the UK. City Tour and lunch included in Lima.

#### **Day 12: Arrive UK**

Arrive London, Heathrow.

The optional extension costs GBP£175 including all accommodation in a 3 star hotel in Cusco and/or Urubamba, meals (Breakfast, lunch and dinner), ½ day guided white water rafting on Day 09, City Tour of Lima, and extending your travel insurance.