

Explore the Inca Trail, Q&A



How big is the group?

Each group is intended to be no more than 15 people in line with existing National Park regulations along the Inca Trail. It is possible that more than one group of 15 will depart and return together, but you will have a separate support team when on the trek.

Who do we fly with? How long is the flight?

You will be flying with KLM from London Heathrow Airport to Lima, Peru (via Amsterdam) or Iberia Airlines from London Heathrow Airport to Lima, Peru (via Madrid) The journey will take approx. 14-16hrs including the stop at Amsterdam or Madrid airport. Internally, you will fly from Lima to Cusco with Lan Peru, part of the One World Alliance. The flight takes 55mins. Your flight tickets will be issued upon departure at the airport.

What's the luggage allowance and who will carry my bags?

As no formal clothes are needed, luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum - details on what to pack are provided in your Kit List. Your main kit bag or rucksack (suitcases are not appropriate) must not exceed 15kgs in weight, but for the five days you are away from Lima & Cusco, you may only take '8kgs' as the porters cannot carry any more. The rest of your kit can be safely stored in Cusco. Each day, your personal kit will be transported to the next camp by a team of porters and will be waiting for you on arrival. You will carry a daypack for your daily needs such as sun cream, water, camera and lightweight waterproofs.

How do I confirm my return flight?

Please ask your tour leader or ground handler to reconfirm your return flights for you. This is very important.

What will the accommodation be like?

In Lima, Cusco and Aguas Calientes the accommodation will be in small family run hotels (2 or 3 star), and rooms are for two people sharing. During the trek you will camp in spacious two person dome tents. If you would like your own room / tent, this can be arranged but there will be a single room supplement. Please let Charity Challenge know if you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with.

What will the toilet and washing facilities be like?

Toilet tents are supplied during the expedition. They are set up near the campsite at specific locations away from watercourses and toilet paper is provided. You will be provided with warm water for washing yourself at camp. During the actual trekking days, you will have to make use of the trees and bushes. If you are brave enough, you can wash in the nearby rivers/streams but only if you have bio-degradable soap.

Do we need to take our own sleeping bags and mats, etc?

Thermarests are provided in Peru. You will need a good four-season sleeping bag. The dual bag that offers 3-season as standard and upgrade to four-season with fleece liner is ideal. Don't forget that you will only be camping for three nights and so it is not worth spending lots on a new bag so you can hire one in Peru for £20, please let Charity Challenge know, or you can hire them from Trek Hire UK (www.trekhireuk.com or telephone + 44 (0)1732 865 858). Also see Kit List.

Will my valuables be safe?

We will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions. The general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces & rings. Your flight tickets can be left in a safe in the hotel in Cusco or with the ground handler and collected on your departure. You must take your passport with you during the trek, it should be kept in a plastic bag to protect it from damp or water damage.

What is the food and drink like?

The meals we provide are nutritionally balanced according to the particular environment and altitude. Breakfast usually includes cereals, bread, fresh fruit, juice and coffee. Lunches will either be in the form of a snack pack given out at breakfast to be carried in the daypack, or set up along the route, or taken in a local restaurant. Dinner always includes a soup, main course and a dessert. The vegetarian food is excellent. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any dietary requirements or allergies.

Who will be leading the group?

We employ a number of first aid qualified expedition leaders, all of whom speak fluent English. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

What is a typical day?

During the trekking days we rise early and pack up camp after breakfast, then trek carrying only daypacks for 7 - 9 hours. There will be a lunch en route either in a local restaurant or it will be set up and waiting for you along the trail. There will be plenty of time to stop and view the remarkable scenery. The trek zone is remote and rare flora and fauna will be seen. The evenings are spent in beautifully located camps overlooking the Inca ruins or in the shadows of nearby mountain peaks. The food and facilities are fairly good.

How fit do I need to be?

Training and fitness are definitely required as this expedition is graded as 'Tough'! Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be OK as long as they train regularly over a period of at least three months leading up to the expedition. Don't forget that the

temperature and the altitudes are different from the UK - the highest pass on the Inca Trail is 4,200m. You will be trekking constantly for days on end on a solid stone path, with hundred of steps. While strength is important, endurance training should be your primary focus. Walking up hills and climbing stairs are both ways to condition your lower body. Begin slowly, without the weight of a pack, eventually adding weight as you increase your training pace. Take a long hike (6-8 hours) several times with a weighted pack, up and down hills or on small mountains (weigh your pack with water containers and pour out the water before your descent to minimise knee stress). Also see Fitness Training notes.

What happens if I can't keep up, fall ill or there is an emergency?

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking abilities, which is catered for. There will always be a staff member at the back of the group to ensure you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. Back up support will never be far away and can be brought in, in the event of an emergency. Contact will be maintained between guides and the support teams where possible. Your guides are constantly in touch with the various National Parks' Authorities along the trail. We will carry oxygen with the first aid kit.

What is included in the cost of the expedition?

The following items are included in the cost of the expedition: International flights to and from Peru, all internal transfers including internal flights to and from Cusco, entry into National Parks, all meals (inc. drinking water on the Inca Trail and at most restaurants) unless otherwise stated in the itinerary, all accommodation (whether in tents/ hotels), group first aid supplies, an English speaking expedition leader and full local support team (drivers, cooks, porters, etc), relevant back-up facilities, a Charity Challenge T-Shirt, US\$20 to the local community project, and discount from Field & Trek and Nomad Travellers Stores for personal equipment.

What is not included in the cost of the expedition?

The following items are not included in your expedition and will be at your own expense - tips for the local support team, activities not mentioned in the itinerary, alcoholic beverages and extras such as laundry, personal spending money, international departure tax (US\$29) and domestic departure tax (US\$5).

What shall I do about spending money?

You will not need large amounts of money during this trip and other than at the start and end of the trip, you will be in the mountains away from any foreign exchanges or banks. You will only need money for tips, food & drink (additional), gifts & souvenirs, international airport departure tax and domestic departure tax. There are a wide range of things to spend money on including rugs, ponchos, jewellery and so on. On average around £200 + a credit card in case of an emergency.

How much would you recommend for tips?

Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. US\$10 per person per day (approx \$80) and this should be given to the expedition leader at

the end of the expedition who will distribute it among the support team, including guides, assistant guides, cooks, and porters.

What do you do to protect the environment?

We are keeping to a small group so that we limit the impact we have on the surrounding environment. We will ensure that all rubbish is carried out of the area and disposed of responsibly. We follow the local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect. We will also be donating US\$20 per participant towards a local Andean community project (educational, health or environmental) to enhance local living conditions, which you will be informed about after our expedition.

Can you recommend any literature about the region?

- *The conquest of the Incas* by John Hemming is the best regional history book.
- *The Rough Guide to Peru*.
- Pablo Neruda, a Chilean poet, describes Machu Picchu as *Mother of stone & sperm of Condors*, which is only one of the many powerful images he uses in his epic poem, *The Heights of Machu Picchu* available in English.

English

Hello
 Goodbye
 Good morning
 Good evening/night
 Please
 Thank you
 How are you?
 You're welcome
 Excuse me
 I'm sorry!
 I understand
 I don't understand
 Yes
 No
 How much?
 Toilet
 Do you speak English?
 I don't speak Spanish
 Zero
 One
 Two
 Three
 Four
 Five
 Six
 Seven
 Eight
 Nine
 Ten

Spanish

Hola
 Adios/Ciao
 Buenos dias
 Buenos noches
 Por favor
 Gracias
 Como esta?
 De nada
 Disculpe
 Disculpe/Lo siento
 Entiendo
 No entiendo
 Si
 No
 Cuanto?
 Bano
 Habla ingles?
 No hablo Espanol
 Cero
 Uno
 Dos
 Tres
 Cuatro
 Cinco
 Seis
 Siete
 Ocho
 Nueve
 Diez

NB: The information provided above was correct at the time of going to print.