

PERU: CUSCO & MACHU PICCHU

DAY 13, MAY 19 SUN: GALAPAGOS / LIMA

Arrival in Quito (or Guayaquil) from Galapagos and evening flight to Lima. Walk to your airport hotel.

Accommodations: Wyndham Costal del Sol Lima Airport

Meals included today: Breakfast

DAY 14, MAY 20 MON: LIMA / CUSCO

Morning flight to Cusco where you are greeted by our guide and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the morning is at leisure.

In the afternoon, we start out on an easy-paced 3-hour walking excursion through the ancient streets of Cusco. Our first stop is at *Qoricancha* or “Temple of the Sun” where we encounter a statue in honor of Pachacutec, the Incan King that designed and ordered the construction of Machu Picchu (closed Sundays and some holidays). Mummies were housed inside this temple, where Incan priests presided the worshipping of the Sun and the Moon. Imagine the stone walls literally covered in laminated sheets of gold, as well as countless gold ornaments that were eventually melted down and shipped to Spain. Just off Plaza de Armas lies the *Cathedral*, an exquisite blend of Catholic and Incan iconography and design. And at the turn of every corner you will marvel at the Incan stone foundations supporting Spanish colonial structures.

Accommodations: Costal del Sol Ramada Cusco

Meals included today: Breakfast

DAY 15, MAY 21 TUE: SACRED VALLEY / OLLANTAYTAMBO

Morning pick-up from your hotel to drive some 40 minutes to the village of *Chincheros*, boasting a remarkable colonial church and ancient ruins. Here, local Quechua women dye yarn and weave in their traditional back-strap looms, creating superb tapestries with no reverse side! Continue for another 20 kilometers (12 miles) to the unusual concentric steps or terraces at *Moray*, thought to be greenhouses for sophisticated botanical speciation as well as ceremonial events under the direction of the Inca. Next is an 11-kilometer (6-mile) drive to Maras – a terraced salt mine used for centuries to this day. These “salt ponds” can be seen glistening from far away and are still an important part of the local economy, as well as tradition. Then, is *Ollantaytambo*, the oldest inhabited town in Peru, with its humongous stone architecture that dominates the Sacred Valley – the last Inca stronghold when Emperor Manco defeated the Spanish in a famous battle in 1536.

Accommodations: Hotel Pakaritampu

Meals included today: Breakfast

DAY 16, MAY 22 WED: INCA TRAIL / AGUAS CALIENTES

After an early breakfast, walk to the station with your daypack and board an early train for a 1-hour train ride to kilometer 104. The train stops for you to jump off, then cross the bridge over the *Urubamba River*. After passing the checkpoint, you begin your 12-kilometer (7-mile) hike, with hearty box lunch in hand, on one of the most spectacular footpaths, with towering mountains above and rushing streams below on this 5-6 hour journey, just like the Incas do so hundreds of years ago! As you hike up a canyon on short stone steps as opposed to lengthy zigzagging switchbacks, the path will lead you to the ruins of *Wiñay Wayna*. Indeed, this road system not only guaranteed the shortest route, along with the natives’ trusty llamas, but also

was a hindrance to the Spanish armies that could not negotiate such steep steps and switchbacks. This will become obvious as you pass by waterfalls and lush landscape of the cloud forest to make your way to *Inti-Punku* (Sun Gate) for your first glimpse of the famous citadel of *Machu Picchu* down below. After an hour's descent through this ancient settlement, you would have left the complex and ready to board the shuttle buses that depart every 10-15 minutes for an exciting 25-minute ride to *Aguas Calientes*. After check-in at your hotel, enjoy dinner (on your own) at a nearby restaurant. (Note: Luggage will be stored at the hotel in Cusco. You must bring backpack to carry everything you need for hike & overnight. Passport is required to enter the hiking trail).

Accommodations: Hatun Inti Boutique Hotel

Meals included today: Breakfast

DAY 17, MAY 23 THU: MACHU PICCHU / CUSCO

After an early breakfast, walk to the boarding area for your shuttle bus back up to Machu Picchu where you'll enter once more with your personable guide for a private tour of the ruins. (Note: Earliest bus departs around 5:20 am). From the guardhouse that overlooks the agricultural terraces, we enter the main gate of the city for a close look at multiple temples and other magnificent structures nestled at the base of towering mountains. There will be some free time to explore this complex on your own. You then take the shuttle bus downhill to *Aguas Calientes* for a quick lunch and proceed to the train station for the return trip to *Ollantaytambo* and then a 2-hour drive by vehicle to your hotel in Cusco, arriving at about 7 pm.

Accommodations: Costal del Sol Ramada Cusco

Meals included today: Breakfast

DAY 18, MAY 24 FRI: OUTSKIRTS OF CUSCO

Today, we enjoy a 5 to 6 hour hike (or 4 hours by car) to explore the outskirts of town beginning at *Tampumachay* (guest house), accented by aqueducts, canals and cascading water over tightly-fitted stones. It is here that the Incan king performed religious ceremonies as he bathed in its crystal-clear waters. From here, we begin a leisurely 7-kilometer (4-mile) hike to *Qenco* where mummification and other rituals took place. Next is imposing *Sacsayhuaman*, perched high on a hill dominating the city, whose construction was initiated by the Killke culture 1100 AD and finished during the later Incan period. You will find it hard to believe how such gigantic stones were carved and moved into place, some the size of a bus and weighing many tons. Some records reveal the participation of 20,000 to 50,000 stone masons during a time period of 50 years to complete this world wonder.

Accommodations: Costal del Sol Ramada Cusco

Meals included today: Breakfast

DAY 19, MAY 25 SAT: DEPARTURE

Your driver will arrive to your hotel 2 hours prior to your scheduled plane departure to Lima.

Meals included today: Breakfast