

Machu Picchu by Train 2020

9 days | Lima to Cusco



Discover the incredible highlights of Peru, from the buzzing culinary capital of Lima to the dense bio diverse Amazon Rainforest, on this exciting 9 day tour. Visit sacred sites, colourful markets and travel by scenic train through the Andean Mountains. Explore some of Peru's most enchanting destinations as you visit the mysterious Inca ruins at Machu Picchu as well as the terraced ruins of Ollantaytambo. Spend two nights in the Amazon Jungle learning about some of the numerous species of birds and animal that live here.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- The Amazon – spend two nights in the jungle at a unique eco lodge and explore the world's largest tropical rainforest
- Cusco – take in the highlights of the captivating capital of the Inca Empire on a guided tour and explore the Sacsayhuaman Fortress
- Sacred Valley of the Incas – roam around the Pisac ruins, the temple of Ollantaytambo and local markets

- Machu Picchu – enjoy a scenic train ride to explore the spectacular Inca citadel, which is one of the New 7 Wonders of the World
- Lima - explore the capital of Peru with its vibrant Plazas & Spanish colonial architecture

What's Included

- 8 breakfasts, 2 lunches & 2 dinners
- 7 nights 4 star hotels & jungle lodge and 1 night 3 star hotel in the Sacred Valley
- 2 economy flights: Lima - Puerto Maldonado - Cusco
- Airport transfers on day 1 & day 9
- Guided tour of Lima, Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu
- Expedition train to Machu Picchu
- Escorted by English-speaking local tour leader (for groups of 4 or more) and specialist local guides for included sightseeing
- Transfers & transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles
- Entrance fees and Cusco Tourist Ticket

What's Not Included

- International flights to/from our tour start/end points and visas
- Items of a personal nature and additional meals
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Lima



Welcome to Peru! Upon arrival at the Lima airport you'll be transferred to our hotel in the popular Miraflores district of the city. The rest of the day is free to relax or explore the city before our welcome meeting at 6pm this evening where you will meet your tour leader.

Overnight - Lima

Day 2 : Lima

Today we explore the beautiful city of Lima, also known as the 'city of kings', we'll visit the well preserved historical centre. Making our way through Plaza San Martin, we'll also take in Plaza Mayor, the Government Palace and the City Hall. Our tour of the city continues with a visit to the San Francisco Monastery and its famous underground crypts which are home to an estimated 70,000 remains. This bright yellow architectural wonder is also home to an incredible library, holding

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thousands of antique texts, some of which pre-date the conquest in the 16th century. Later we'll head through the residential districts of San Isidro and Miraflores, passing by Huaca Pucllana, a clay pyramid that was the ceremonial and administrative centre of the Lima culture and later considered a sacred town by the Inca's. Next up we'll stop at El Olivar park, a peaceful space where we'll find olive trees that were brought to Peru in the 15th century from Spain. Our final stop on today's tour of Lima is El Parque del Amor, this romantic spot is situated on the cliffs of Miraflores overlooking the Pacific ocean.

The rest of the day is at leisure for you to explore this fascinating city at your own pace. With Lima fast becoming one of the gastronomic capitals of the world, be sure to taste some of the delicious local cuisine.

Overnight - Lima (B)

Days 3-4 : The Amazon Jungle



Lima - Puerto Maldonado. You will start today with a hearty buffet breakfast at your hotel before being picked up and taken to the airport in order to catch a flight to Puerto Maldonado. Once you have arrived, you will be transferred to the Inkaterra Lounge (Butterfly House) and checked in before we hop in a canoe and make our way along the Madre de Dios River to the Hacienda Concepcion. A delicious lunch buffet, bursting with local flavours, is served on arrival before we embark on a walk along the property's nature trails. As we walk, a guide will tell us about the importance of the rainforest and the vital role it plays in the equilibrium of the planet. At dusk we get back in the canoes and get the chance to observe nocturnal animals and learn about the southern constellations.

Day 4 starts with a big breakfast followed by an excursion on the hacienda's private cocha. During the trip we will be able to try our hand at some native fishing techniques, such as the 'catch and release' method. We might even spot some exotic birds while we are at it, including hoatzins and fly-catchers. We will disembark the boat near the remains of the old Fitzcarrald steamboat and learn about its history. The next activity of the day is another boat trip but this time we will be heading to Rolin, a river island with a rich ecosystem. We will explore the island whilst admiring the vegetation and looking for birds before making our way back to land to seek out one of the lodge's clay licks. Here we will discover the difference between collpas and look for animal tracks in the walls of the clay lick. **Overnight - The Amazon (B:2, L:2, D:2)**

Days 5-6 : Cusco



Puerto Maldonado - Cusco. On day 5 we travel back to Puerto Maldonado by canoe and fly onwards to Cusco, where you can relax and adjust to the altitude. This beautiful city full of history and intrigue, is located 3,399m above sea level.

The following day we enjoy a guided tour of the city, taking in some of its most iconic sites, including The Plaza de Armas, the Cathedral, the Koricancha Temple. We'll also visit the surrounding ruins of the Kenko Amphitheater, Tambomachay, Puca Pucara and Sacsayhuaman Fortress. There are no planned activities in the afternoon so you are free to relax or carry on exploring the city at your leisure. **Overnight - Cusco (B:2)**

Day 7 : Sacred Valley



Cusco - The Sacred Valley. Today we enjoy a full day tour of the Sacred Valley. Our first stop is the popular Pisac Markets, where artisans from the region get together and exchange or buy and sell their products. Originally only held on Sundays, Pisac Market was a place for artisans from across the region to trade in their products. Today the market is a daily occurrence where locals and visitors alike can find some of the finest textiles, jewellery and clothing typical of this area of Peru. There's plenty of time to explore the market, see the variety of colourful handicrafts and textiles on offer, and barter for souvenirs.

This afternoon we visit Ollantaytambo's fortress with its enormous Inca terraces constructed on the side of a steep mountain. One of the best examples of Incan architecture, many of the inhabitants of Ollantaytambo still live according to the customs and traditions they have inherited from generations of ancestors, leading to it being known as a living Inca town. After a tour through the area we check into our hotel for the night. **Overnight - Sacred Valley (B)**

Day 8 : Machu Picchu



Sacred Valley – Machu Picchu - Cusco. Today is the day you've been waiting for as you finally get a chance to witness first hand one of the most fascinating ancient sites in the world. In the morning we will take the train from

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Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes and then board the bus to Machu Picchu – remember to look out the windows as the scenery along the way is utterly breathtaking.

Situated on a mountain ridge above the Urubamba River and surrounded by tropical forest, the Inca city enjoys a truly spectacular setting. When we get there, a guided tour will take us through the citadel. Built in the classical Inca style with polished dry-stone walls and terraces that seem to have been crafted naturally from the rock escarpments, Machu Picchu is a spectacular testament to the greatness of the Inca civilisation. The ruins are divided into the Urban and Agricultural Sectors with features ranging from terraced fields and water fountains to storage buildings, guardhouses and religious temples as well as bridges on the trails leading out of the citadel. After the tour there's plenty of time independently explore and take photos before we take the train back to Cusco from Aguas Calientes. **Overnight - Cusco (B)**

Day 9 : Cusco



Our tour comes to an end after breakfast today. A transfer will take you to Cusco airport for your onward travel. Adios! (B)

Passports

In accordance with a government requirement related to money laundering, the Peruvian State requires Tourism Operators to obtain and keep on file a copy of the passport of foreign passengers to Peru. Therefore we do require a copy of your passport prior to your departure to Peru. If you change your passport, please remember to inform us as soon as possible - however, please be aware that changing your passport can cause issues if you need to apply for visas or permits (such as the Inca Trail) in advance.

As a general rule most countries expect that your passport is valid for 6 months after the end of your trip and will refuse entry to anyone with shorter validity. A temporary or 'visitor's' passport is not valid on our trips. Please ensure the name on your passport matches the name on your booking and flight tickets. We recommend bringing a copy of the main passport page with you on your trip and leave another copy at home with family or friends.

Tour leaders

Our Peru tours are escorted by a tour leader, for groups of four or more travellers. Our tour leaders are responsible for the day-to-day running of the tour, so you are free to sit back, relax and enjoy the journey. All of our tour leaders are Peruvian and passionate about sharing their country with you. On this tour a tour leader will escort the group from Lima to the Amazon and then a new tour leader will meet you in Cusco and escort you for the rest of the tour.

Please note that our tour leaders are not "Tour Guides" in the normal sense. They are not experts in all aspects of the culture and history of each area. They are employed to ensure the smooth running of your trip.

Groups of 2-3 travellers will be unescorted in Lima and the Amazon, with the services of local guides for all scheduled sightseeing.

Irrespective of the group size, all included sightseeing will be led by specialist local guides who reside in the city you are visiting, and for the Amazon excursions you will be escorted by the lodge's own specialist guides. Please note that on Amazon excursions you will be joined by other people staying at the lodge, not solely On The Go travellers.

Tipping

Although tipping is not a natural part of many Western cultures it is expected in Peru. The local people work very hard to provide a good service and this is due in part to the tips they have received from foreigners in the past. However all tips are at your own discretion and you should not feel obliged or pressured to tip at any time – particularly if you feel that the level of service was not up to standard.

As a general guideline a gratuity of 10% of the total bill for your waiter is recommended in restaurants. You should be aware that prices on the menu often exclude service charges but they are added to the bill (10%) and local taxes (anywhere between 2% and 20%). If it is included then you are not expected to pay an additional tip, although this is still appreciated. Some restaurants have a 'cubiertos' (cover charge) which is normally added onto the food section of the bill, not the total, so watch out for this when dividing the bill with other group members.

It is also customary to tip local guides for included sightseeing and tips are appreciated by your drivers and tour leaders. As a guideline, we recommend:

- Local guides for a full day excursion: approx US\$3-5 per person
- Tour leader: approx US\$4-6 per person per day
- Drivers: approx US\$2 per person per day

This information is given as a guide as many travellers are unsure and uncomfortable about how much to tip. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and only if you feel that their service was up to standard. It is completely at your own discretion.

Domestic Flights

If your tour includes a domestic flight or you have independently booked domestic flights separate to that of your international flights, please be mindful that that free baggage allowance for Economy class travel on all flights within Peru is 22kg with 8kg of hand luggage. Business class travel offers considerably more. Additional weight will be subject to a fee.

Electricity in Peru

The voltage in Peru is 220V and sockets are a mixture of the European, two-pronged round variety and US flat-pin. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor that will allow you to use a hairdryer, electric shaver, charge a mobile phone or other electrical items. You will also need a voltage converter if you're using appliances from the US.

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The Amazon

What to Bring

Due to the weight and space limitations of the Amazon lodge's transport canoes, your luggage should weigh no more than 10kgs — packing it in a carry-on bag is ideal. The lodge has storage available near the airport in Puerto Maldonado for travelers carrying luggage that exceeds these weight restrictions.

Suggested packing list for the jungle

- Clothing suitable for layering
- Hiking boots or sturdy shoes
- Raincoat or jacket
- Sunglasses, hat or visor, and sunscreen
- Backpack or tote for day tours
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications
- Antibacterial wipes or gel
- Binoculars (they can also be rented at the lodge for a small fee)
- Zip-close bags to keep articles dry and a plastic bag to keep wet or muddy clothing separate

What to Expect

The lodge does not offer Wi-fi, though there is intermittent cell service. Apart from a small boutique, there are no places to buy supplies once you have left Puerto Maldonado. You should take care to pack all clothing, toiletries and medications that might be needed during your stay because any items you forget to pack will not be easy to acquire at the lodge. The nearest medical facilities are in Puerto Maldonado.

Weather and Seasons

The Amazon rain forest has a tropical climate. Conditions are hot and humid throughout the year, and daytime temperatures average around 30 degrees celcius. During Peru's winter months of June through September, the area can experience the occasional cold front, with temperatures sometimes dropping as low as 10 degrees celcius overnight. The dry season runs from May through October and is ideal for land exploration, as less frequent rains make trails easier to navigate. November through April are the region's hottest months and also correspond with the jungle's rainy season. During this period, heavy downpours can cause the rivers to

swell, making it an ideal time to explore the forest by boat.

Essential packing

- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- A photocopy of your passport data pages
- A universal power adaptor
- Insect repellent to guard against mosquitoes
- Spare camera batteries/memory card
- Buy some Peruvian Sol at the airport on arrival
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions

Health

You should seek medical advice from your local health practitioner before travelling to Peru and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide tetanus, diphtheria, polio, typhoid, hepatitis A are recommended. There is the risk of malaria in certain areas of Peru, most notably the Amazon jungle, so it is very important to check with your health practitioner before you go to see whether malarial medication is required for the areas you are visiting.

Altitude can affect anyone at moderate to high altitude (generally anything over 3,000 metres). Altitude sickness is caused by the lack of oxygen which can be up to a third less than at sea level. No one understands why some people are affected and others not, and age, level of fitness and strength is no indication of how well you will fare. With altitudes of up to 4,200 metres on the Inca Trail and 4,600 metres on the Lares Trek, it is imperative that you speak with your doctor prior to departure as drugs are available to combat the effects of altitude sickness and may be recommended. Whether you decide to take altitude sickness medication or not, make sure you allow a few days' of acclimatisation before the trek with minimal physical activity and plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. Be aware that you may experience altitude sickness in Cusco, which sits at an elevation of 3,399 metres.

Not like home

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from

what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries. Peru is a destination where you'll be afforded plenty of unique encounters, and if you can travel with an open mind you will have a wonderful time here. In return, please remember to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for local customs.

Personal safety

It is not advisable to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in Peru. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety. Crime in Latin America is not as bad as its reputation but you must be sensible and alert.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Peru Country Guide

Peru - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Peru
 - Capital: Lima
 - Population: 30 million
 - Total Area: 1.285 million square kilometres (twice the size of France)
 - Official Language: Spanish, Quechua and Aymara also spoken in places
 - Religions: Roman Catholic 90%
 - Voltage: 220 volts. Sockets are a mixture of the European, two-pronged round variety and US flat-pin.
 - Dialling Code: +51
 - Time Difference: GMT/UTC -5.
- For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- Airport Departure Tax: US\$31

Peru - Visas

Currently, EU, US, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand citizens can enter Peru without a visa for up to 90 days (on arrival ask for 90 days as the standard issued is 30 days). As this situation changes periodically, we advise you

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check with your local Peruvian embassy prior to departure. All tourists will be presenting with a tourist card to enter Peru, which will be issued to you by your airline before landing and will be stamped by an official upon arrival where you will also be asked to present a return ticket or proof of funds for your stay and return ticket. This must always be kept with you throughout your stay in South America (as per Peruvian law, everyone must carry some form of ID at all times) – especially when travelling outside of main towns and cities. You must also retain this card for when you exit Peru (this is a big deal, if you lose it, you can't leave & must go through all sorts of bureaucracy - which takes days). Take a copy or a digital photograph copy.

Peru - Climate

Peru is split into three main zones – the coast, the mountains and the jungle, all boasting different climates. From the driest hottest desert in the Americas, to the Andean peaks, to the lowland Amazon Jungle, each zone offers different seasons.

It rarely rains along the coast; however, the capital does experience a substantial amount of smog, coastal fogs and even drizzle, particularly between the months of May and November.

The mountains and the jungle regions can be divided into wet season between November and April and dry season between May and October. During dry season there can be some showers however it is not as heavy or as frequent. Rainy season normally means a few downpours a day rather than continuous rain.

Peru - Money

Local currency

The monetary unit in Peru is the Nuevo Sol. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

US dollars are used and accepted for payment in Peru, especially in tourist areas however we recommend you always carry some local currency where you can as you are more likely to get preferable exchange rates. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency you can bring into Peru however large sums

must be declared on arrival. We recommend keeping a small supply of small denomination notes and coins as there is usually a lack of small change.

Traveller cheques are also better exchanged in US dollars. Banks will usually accept and exchange traveller's cheques however it can be trickier and a much slower process than when in Lima.

We recommend you change enough money to get through the first few days of your trip – especially over a weekend. Please note you can change cash at the Cambio or withdraw money from an ATMs in the capital (as well as Arequipa, Cuzco and Puno) where ATMs are open 24 hours a day.

Important

Please note that ATMs in Peru do not always automatically release your credit or debit card at the time when you receive your money. Please be aware that you sometimes must push a button to request your card to be returned. Many ATMs in main towns have instructions in English.

Peru - Local Transport

We recommend using local taxis for your journeys in Peru, especially outside of main cities. Taxis do not usually have meters, so the fare must be agreed with the driver beforehand. Be sure to ask the hotel reception or your tour leader for a rough guide of the price so when you start your negotiation with the drivers you know how much the fare should be. It also helps if you speak some Spanish to help you however please expect to pay more than the locals do.

Local buses are also available and cheap to use however you really do need to speak reasonable Spanish to get by. There are also bus stops, especially in the capital where tourists are recommended to avoid.

Peru - Food & Drink

Peruvian cuisine is known for its hot and spicy nature which comes from the classic mix of garlic and hot pepper that we have come to celebrate abroad. Due to the diversity of the Peruvian landscapes, the country enjoys a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

The basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, (however be prepared to see some exotic meats such as guinea pig on offer) accompanied by rice, chips and salad. Specialities along the coastal regions include 'Cerviche', raw fish marinated in lemon juice, with onion and hot chillies. Another local speciality is 'Cuy', roasted guinea pig served whole and accompanied with yucca and potatoes.

In the highlands, diets focus on potatoes and vegetables, with the country producing over 2000 kinds of cultivated and indigenous potatoes there is an array of variety. 'Causa', a dish made from yellow potatoes, lemons, eggs, sweet potato, cheese and onion sauce. 'Tamales' boiled corn dumplings wrapped in banana leaves and filled with meat are another local favourite.

In most larger cities and towns, you will find an array of restaurants offering international cuisine. Chifas (Chinese restaurants) are very common in Peru, as well as Italian pizzerias, Japanese and Indian restaurants have begun to open however we also recommend trying the 'menu del dia' in local restaurants for a cheap authentic meal.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

Please note that drinks will be at your own expense throughout the duration of the tour. Most hotels we use will either have a bar onsite or within walking distance. Imported spirits and beers are available but at a higher price. There are also local drinks available including 'Pisco' clear brandy distilled from grapes.

'Inca Kola' is the country's soft drink of choice, so popular that MacDonaldis had to allow it to be sold in Peruvian branches due to exceptionally high demand.

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You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer.

Peru - Bugs

If your tour includes a visit to the jungle region, we advise that you prepare yourself to encounter an array of wildlife including insects and bugs etc. Most creepy crawlies are harmless and will not cause problems at all. If you do find any in your room, it doesn't mean that the room is unclean, just that you are in the jungle and its completely normal – if anything it's part of the jungle experience. If you do not like creepy crawlies we recommend plenty of repellent spray and coils to place in your room.