

PER

7 days

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Day 1 *Arrive in Lima*

Arrival in Lima.

In recent years, this city has undergone some wonderful restorations of the plazas, ornate facades, and wooden balconies for which it is famous. Named the 'City of Kings' by the Spanish Conquistadors, Lima is the capital of Peru. Founded in 1535 by Francisco Pizarro, where the River Rimac meets the Pacific Ocean, this was the most important Spanish city during the colonial era with a population of about 100,000 inhabitants. Today the city is home to more than 7 million people.

Overnight in Lima.

Day 2 *Lima: City Tour - Cuzco*

Morning visit of the colonial and modern part of Lima. We start our tour with a visit to the trendy area of Miraflores where people stroll along the cliff tops and watch the sun setting on the Pacific Ocean. The best location is the new "Love Park," with its magnificent monument to lovers at its centre. Later we head to San Francisco's Church to visit the extensive catacombs that lie underneath. We then continue to the Plaza de Armas, the most important plaza in Lima. The oldest surviving part of the plaza is the impressive bronze fountain, erected in 1650. Surrounding the plaza is the exquisite Archbishop's Palace, the cathedral, and the Government Palace where handsomely uniformed presidential guards are on duty all day.

Transfer to airport to board your flight to Cuzco. Arrival in Cusco and transfer to your hotel before starting your introductory City tour of Cuzco and the nearby Inca ruins at Tambo Machay, Puca Pucara, Sacsayhuaman and Qenko. The latter is an Inca sacrificial site carved with inscriptions. Sacsayhuaman is an impressive complex which, like so many others of that time, had both a religious and military purpose. The fortress known as the 'storehouse of the sun' incorporates some of the largest stones ever used in a building. The zig-zag walls represent the teeth of the sacred puma and provide an excellent defensive structure. The stones fit so perfectly together without mortar that not even moss can grow in the cracks!

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 *Cuzco - Machu Picchu - Cuzco*

Today we take the early morning Vistadome train to Aguas Calientes and Machu Picchu. The train journey to Machu Picchu is a highlight of any trip to the Andes; the scenery is simply spectacular, and the train allows you to enjoy it in comfort. The +/- 3 hour trip takes us through a changing landscape with wonderful vistas of the mountains and, deep in its dramatic canyon, the beautiful Urubamba River.

Upon arrival at the Aguas Calientes train station, a bus will take us on the 6 km (4 mile) twisting journey up the mountainside to the site of Machu Picchu. We proceed immediately for a guided 3-hour walking tour of the ruins. We will enter the site through the House of the Terrace Caretakers, which flank the agricultural sector. Once on the site, we will see, among other features: the Temple of the Sun, the Fountain Caretaker's House, the Royal Sector, and the puzzling Temple of the Three Windows. We will also see the Common District, the Sacred Rock, and the prison-like Temple of the Condor.

Machu Picchu, popularly known as the 'Lost City of the Incas,' is an ancient city of stone palaces, towers, temples and staircases. It is a very mysterious place, and to this day our knowledge of it remains sketchy. There are no records or artifacts on the site to indicate

what any of the buildings were used for. Archaeologists have ascertained that the site was most likely a ceremonial centre and possibly used for administrative purposes for the populous region.

Buffet lunch at Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge is included today. In the afternoon return to Cuzco by train and transfer to your hotel.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 4 *Cuzco: At Leisure*

Day at leisure in Cuzco. This Inca city was laid out around a great central square in the shape of a puma, the god of lightning. Today, stone walls built by the Incas line most of Cuzco's central streets and form the foundations of colonial and modern buildings. The Inca buildings were so well built that the Spaniards simply knocked down the upper parts of the Inca temples and palaces and built their churches and mansions on top of the Inca walls. Shortly after the Spanish conquest, the capital was moved to Lima on the coast. Thus Cuzco has retained a wonderful, untouched colonial atmosphere. The culture is also very much alive here, and is evident in the music, clothing and handicrafts of the people.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 5 *Cuzco - Puno*

Transfer to the bus station to take a bus to Puno. The first half of the journey is dominated by magnificent Andes, towering over the deep valleys of the meandering Huatanay River. It then reaches the gentler, rolling Andean Plains, where vicuna and alpaca are often seen. This is a wild, high, windswept and sunburned prairie of isolated communities of shepherds and cattle farmers, wedged between the two distant branches of the Andes visible occasionally on either horizon, when not melting completely with the giant cumulus clouds that dominate the skyline. On route, you will visit Pucara, the Raqchi ruins, and the colonial church of Andahuaylillas. Lunch is included in a typical restaurant in Sicuani.

Arrival in Puno which at 3830m (12,562 feet), is the main settlement on the Peruvian shore of Lake Titicaca and the highest place on our tour in which you will spend some time. Puno is the greatest centre of Peruvian folk dancing and traditional instruments; the markets and streets of Puno are bustling with the brightly coloured costumes of the different groups of the region.

Overnight in Puno.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 6 *Uros Island & Puno*

In the morning we begin our adventure with a boat excursion to the floating islands of Los Uros. The Uros people began their floating existence centuries ago in an effort to isolate themselves from their rivals, the Collas and the Incas. Today, about 300 people live on the islands. The islands are constructed from many layers of floating tortora reeds which grow in the shallow waters of Lake Titicaca. The reeds rot away from the bottom and are replaced at the top, so the ground is soft and springy as you walk over it. Even the buildings on the islands are made of tortora. Today the Uros live mainly from fishing, including catching the giant pejerrey which can grow up to 13.5 kg / 30 lb.

In the afternoon, you will visit Sillustani situated on a wind-swept peninsula on tiny Lake Umayu. The burial towers of the nobles of the Colla civilisation are up to 12 metres / 40 feet high. However, it is not known exactly when they were built. Known as chullpas, it is thought that whole families were buried in the towers.

Overnight in Puno.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 7 <i>Puno - Lima - Depart</i>

Transfer to the airport and fly to Lima. Connect to your onward flight in Lima for your international flight home.

Meal Plan: Breakfast