Peru: Cusco, Machu Picchu & the Sacred Valley

Air Package Itinerary

Set off through the Andean countryside on a walking tour of Peru that showcases the region's rich history and traditions. Explore the ancient Incan city of Machu Picchu amidst misty mountain peaks. Follow winding paths through the lush Andean countryside as daily life unfolds before you, just as it has for hundreds of years. Delight in a scenic ride on the Vistadome train descending the Sacred Valley where you visit lively local markets with a myriad of produce and goods for sale. Along the way, sample traditional *chicha de jora* (corn beer) and other local fare, while staying in luxurious comfort at accommodations where Incan and Spanish colonial influences blend seamlessly together. This unforgettable journey through Peru will leave you with lifelong memories.



Highlights

Delight in a morning walk on ancient farm paths through the peaceful Andean Highlands
Enjoy the bustle and barter at a fruit and vegetable market in Pisac
Walk to the lovely Andean villages of Chinchero and Urquillo
Taste Peruvian chicha de jora, corn beer, at an authentic chicheria
Visit the colorful Qotowincho market in Urbamba
Trek a scenic footpath through the lush Andean countryside to Maras village, where the locals still use traditional techniques to mine the terraced saltpans
Gather with your fellow travelers for a delicious picnic lunch by Huaypo Lagoon
Marvel at mountain and river views from the panoramic windows of the Vistadome train as you make your way down the narrowing valley from Ollantaytambo



Activity Level

This tour is one of our Flex-Guided Walking Adventures and features a combination of cobbled streets, uneven footpaths, and rocky, irregular terrain over hills and through valleys. An elective 8 mile (13 km) Inca Trail hike includes a 2,000-foot (610 meter) elevation gain. Altitudes between 6,500 and 13,500 feet may require a slower pace. Our minibus support is available at specified meeting points for those who would like assistance except on the Inca Trail, where there is no road access and you will be required to walk the entire 8 miles (13 km). Both morning and afternoon walking options are available most days. Appropriate for enthusiastic beginners and ideal for experienced walkers. Several of the walks require a transfer from our hotel to the start of the walk. Our Trip Leaders often use this time in the van for morning

route reviews, so you can enjoy a more leisurely morning at breakfast. As one of our Flex-Guided tours, some days offer options for self-exploration, cultural visits, or free time to relax on your own.

DAY 1

Overnight flight from USA to Lima, Peru

Begin your adventure by departing from a convenient gateway city in the United States or Canada. Spend the first night aloft

DAY 2

Arrive in Lima, Peru

Upon arrival in Peru via Lima's Jorge Chavez International Airport, proceed through immigration. As this is your first point of arrival into Peru, you will need to clear Peruvian immigration and customs. You will be met by the Country Walkers representative who will be holding a sign in the arrival halls after clearing customs. Your representative will then assist you with your connecting flight to Cusco.

Upon arrival at Cusco airport, claim your luggage and look in the arrivals hall for your Country Walkers representative holding a sign. Your representative will make arrangements for the transfer to your hotel in Cusco.

Once you arrive in Cusco (10,900 feet / 3,322 meters), it is advisable to rest and avoid strenuous activity as your body acclimates to the altitude. Also, be aware of dehydration and drink plenty of water to help avoid altitude sickness. A couple of hours' rest at this time will go a long way toward feeling more comfortable later.

Country Walkers provides you with City Information that includes recommendations on what to see and do in Cusco during your stay.

Accommodation: Casa Andina PC Cusco

DAY 3

Join your *Peru: Cusco, Machu Picchu & The Sacred Valley tour*

Transfer to Andean Highlands. Follow Ancient Farming Paths to Cuyuni Village; 4 miles, easy. Transfer to Pisac and Sacred Valley

Breakfast is included at your hotel. Your guide(s) meet you at 8:00 a.m. in the lobby of your Cusco hotel. Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.

Depart Cusco and shuttle to the start of your morning walk, which will give you the opportunity to experience local life as it unfolds in the peaceful Andean Highlands. Begin your walk along the ancient farming paths in this primarily agricultural community. You will make various stops throughout your walk today to learn about local farming, religious ceremonies, and textile production in this region.

After an included lunch, descend to the Sacred Valley (7,841 feet) and continue to the town of Pisac. Here you'll visit a local market where you can view the diverse handicraft stores with souvenirs, art pieces, clothing, and other local products. .

You'll also have a chance to interact with the vendors as they barter their wares. If you didn't pack a smaller bag to take with you to Machu Picchu, this is a wonderful place to pick up a bag.

Tonight enjoy a special welcome reception and dinner at our acclaimed inn.

Please note: Due to the logistics of getting to Machu Picchu, there are restrictions on luggage. Please be sure to pack a lightweight, expandable bag that can be packed within your luggage. You will need to transfer only what you need for these two overnights from your large suitcase. Your large luggage will remain in secure storage during your stay in Machu Picchu. In addition to this duffel, you are able to carry your daypack with you.

Accommodation: Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba
Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4

Andean villages of Chinchero and Urquillo. *Chicha* (corn beer) tasting at a typical Chicheria

Shuttle to village of Chinchero. Chinchero to the village of Urquillo; 5.5 miles, easy to moderate. Afternoon return shuttle to hotel. Loop walk from hotel on the Challa Huasi (house of the viewer) Trail; 1.5 miles, moderate

This morning, shuttle (40 minutes) to the typical Andean village of Chinchero where you will find Inca ruins and a colonial church. Your morning walk begins in this lovely village and passes through picturesque landscapes as you descend to the village of Urquillo – once a significant village during the Inca era due to its location on the Inca Trail to Cusco. Today the town is characterized by its haciendas dating from the Spanish colonial period. Enjoy a box lunch during your walk today. At the end of your walk, enjoy a short ride to a *chicheria* where *chicha de jora*, corn beer, is prepared and sold. It's believed the Incas consumed *chicha* for rituals during religious festivals and today you will have an opportunity to sample and learn about the brewing process of this unique beverage.

Upon returning to the hotel, enjoy some relaxation at your resort. Later in the afternoon, join the guides on an optional two-hour trek from the hotel on the *Challa Huasi* (House of the Viewer) trail.

This evening, venture out of the hotel on a short shuttle to a nearby restaurant for tonight's included dinner.

Accommodation: Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba
Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5

Market of Urubamba. Maras Salt Mines. Independent exploration of Urubamba

Shuttle to Urubamba and the Market of Urubamba. Shuttle to Highland Footpath. Moray Terraces to Maras; 4 miles, moderate to challenging. Maras to Urubamba River; 1.5 miles, moderate. Shuttle to hotel

After breakfast, shuttle to the largest town in the valley – Urubamba. Here you will have the opportunity to visit the very authentic market where you will see sellers from surrounding regions offering their products. This particular Wednesday market is vital for the local people and the varieties of potatoes, corn and fruit

that you will find are amazing. After your visit to the market, venture into the Andean countryside to walk scenic footpaths downhill through the Maras salt mines fed by underground saltwater springs to Maras village. The terraced Inca saltpans of Salineras are still mined for salt using methods unchanged over centuries. You will be rewarded with a sumptuous picnic lunch overlooking Huaypo Lagoon at the end of your walk before shuttling back to the hotel.

The remainder of the afternoon is yours to relax in your comfortable accommodations or join your guides for an optional walk around Yucay before enjoying dinner on your own in the hotel this evening.

Accommodation: Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba
Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6

The Inca Trail. Machu Picchu

Vistadome Train. Inca Trail from Km 104 marker to Machu Picchu; 8 miles, moderate to challenging, 2,000-ft. elevation gain and loss. Non-Inca Trail Machu Picchu walk, 2 miles, easy. Transfer to hotel

Shuttle early this morning to Ollantaytambo to catch the narrow-gauge Vistadome train. Your train ride is down the narrowing valley, which offers breathtaking views of the river and surrounding peaks.

Those who have elected to hike the Inca Trail will disembark at the “Km 104” marker (7,183 feet) to start one of the world's most iconic walks. The walk offers spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and cloud forests, an unforgettable entry into the Machu Picchu Sanctuary. Expect to be on the legendary trail for six hours with a mostly continuous ascent. An elevation gain and loss of about 2,000 feet and some steep stair climbing will keep you on your toes. Note that a minibus support van will not be available on the Inca Trail. You will be required to walk the entire eight miles. A picnic break is well deserved.

All your effort is rewarded when you arrive at Intipunku, the Sun Gate (8,954 feet) and the most spectacular approach to Machu Picchu from above. This was the original entrance to the “Lost City.” Give yourself some time to take it all in, perch on a rock for the best views of the ruins. Then continue down to our hotel located below Machu Picchu. You'll have tomorrow afternoon to discover the wonder of Machu Picchu, with your guides and independently.

For those looking for a less strenuous option (and for those unable to obtain a permit for the Inca Trail), you'll stay on the train past Km 104, arriving in Aguas Calientes in the early morning. Your guide will take you into Machu Picchu for a morning visit before you check into your hotel. Check-in at the inn is not until 1:00 p.m. In the afternoon, you may wish to take advantage of the spa, or admire the incredible orchid gardens at the inn. You will be given the same box lunch provided to the guests on the Inca Trail walk so that you may enjoy lunch at your leisure today.

This evening, regroup and enjoy dinner at your lovely resort's restaurant.

Accommodation: Inkaterra Machu Picchu
Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7

Machu Picchu

Shuttle to Machu Picchu. Guided walking tour of Machu Picchu; 3 miles, easy. Transfer to hotel

Enjoy a leisurely morning at the hotel. Options include birding on the hotel grounds, visiting the spa and pool, or exploring the city of Aguas Calientes. This afternoon shuttle to Machu Picchu. Follow your guides on a walk around Machu Picchu, as well as in the surrounding area, including a roundtrip walk to Inca Bridge (1.8 miles).

You may wish to continue your exploration of the ruins on your own before returning to the hotel by shuttle bus.. Enjoy recounting the day over an included dinner tonight.

Please note: The Peruvian Government regulates Machu Picchu's historical site and the visit restrictions periodically change. Visit times may vary depending upon government restrictions for the day of your visit. Your guides will confirm your exact visit times to Machu Picchu once you are in Peru.

Accommodation: Inkaterra Machu Picchu
Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 8

Cusco

Various morning walking options from the hotel; 2-4 miles, easy. Vistadome train and shuttle to Cusco. Cusco Walking Tour; 1.5 miles, easy

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast. Several walking trails begin right at the hotel, or you may wish to visit the tea plantation located within the hotel grounds. Later this morning, return to Cusco through the Sacred Valley by train. Upon your arrival in Cusco this afternoon, put on your walking shoes and discover this ancient Incan capital on a walking tour. Evidence of both the original Inca city and the Spanish colonial city established in 1533 will be pointed out as you explore Koricancha ("Temple of the Sun"), Cusco Cathedral, and the San Blas district. In Incan times, San Blas was a settlement for ancient craftsmen who saw yachay—Quechua for "teach and learn"—as their special calling. Today the area is famous for the unusual Baroque-style pulpit in the San Blas Church and for its artists and artisans.

Cusco and its many dining options are at your doorstep tonight.

Accommodation: Casa Andina PC Cusco.
Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9

Tambomachay / Puka Pukara / Sacsayhuaman

Shuttle to Tambomachay. Tambomachay to Sacsayhuaman; 4 miles, easy. Transfer to Cusco

After breakfast, transfer six miles (25 minutes) north of Cusco to begin your day. Trace your way on foot back in the direction of the city, visiting the most important Incan monuments. This is a spectacular area for walks, with Andean mountain views, colorful villages and impressive remains of the Inca Empire.

First, visit Tambomachay (the highest elevation of the day at 12,500 feet), which may have fulfilled an important religious function linked to water and the regeneration of the land. Walking down a gentle slope, stop to explore the complexes of Puka Pukara, Qenqo, and Laqo. Your guides can explain more about historic religious ceremonies held here.

Next, visit Sacsayhuaman. Though only a fraction of its original size and scope, this fortress will astound and baffle you. Take a moment to look back over the orange tile rooftops of Cusco before your short transfer into the city.

Enjoy lunch at your leisure and spend time to soak in some last bits of Andean culture in the colorful plazas of Cusco. Tonight, head out on the town for a festive farewell dinner.

Accommodation: Casa Andina PC Cusco
Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 10

Your *Peru: Cusco, Machu Picchu & The Sacred Valley* tour concludes

Depart for home, continue with onward travels, or begin your optional Peruvian Amazon Extension

There is a mid-morning transfer to the Cusco Airport for the flight to Lima. Upon arrival, check-in to comfortable rooms for day use. Tonight, dinner is at your leisure before returning to the airport for flights departing in the late evening.

Accommodation: Wyndham Costa del Sol Lima

DAY 11

Arrive home

Flights arrive home this morning, depending on connections.

What's Included	Air Package	Tour Only
Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓	✓
16 on-tour meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 dinners	✓	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓	✓
Emergency travel assistance hotline available 24/7	✓	✓
Roundtrip airfare	✓	
One extra night in Cusco and dayroom at airport hotel in Lima	✓	
Airport car service for arrival & departure	✓	
Pre- and post-tour breakfasts	✓	
Business-class upgrades available	✓	