

Peru: Cusco, Machu Picchu & the Sacred Valley

Tour-Only Itinerary

Morning light pierces the forest canopy, and your heart quickens. Another few steps up the centuries-old Inca stairway and...you're there! *Intipunku*—the Sun Gate. Far below, Machu Picchu's ruins lie across a knife-edge ridgeline of green. As you've discovered on this walking tour, Peru's culture stands the test of time. At Sacsayhuaman fortress, it's impossible to fit even a slip of paper between the massive stones that comprise its walls—mortarless craftsmanship so resilient it's survived wars and earthquakes. Outside Maras, survey the vast checkerboard of steeply terraced evaporation ponds, where locals still harvest salt as they did before the conquistadors. And in Pisac market, meet women resplendent in traditional embroidery busily working handheld spindles, while their children play among bags of multihued native potatoes. Here too, the ancient endures.



Highlights

Delight in a morning walk on ancient farm paths through the peaceful Andean Highlands

Enjoy the bustle and barter at a 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 Urubamba

Trek a scenic footpath through the lush Andean countryside to Maras village, where the locals still use traditional techniques to mine the terraced salt pans

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

Hike the stunning Inca Trail, with spectacular views of mountains and cloud forests

Hike the Inca Trail to the Sun Gate – the original entrance to Machu Picchu – taking in sweeping views of the ancient ruins from above

Encounter more of Machu Picchu on a guided walk with your guides

Discover the ancient Inca capital Cusco on a walking tour of the old city

Enjoy free time to shop for delightful Peruvian crafts, art, woolen textiles and silver jewelry

On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our 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 Guided tours, some days offer options for self-exploration, cultural visits, or free time to relax on your own.

DAY 1

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

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

Please contact our Peru partner – Coltur to advise them of any travel delays or changes so the staff can pass the message on to your Country Walkers guide(s). Coltur's Customer Service Department is available 24/7 with a bilingual staff to assist you. Coltur's main office phone number is +51 (1) 615 55 76 guest.relations@colturperu.com and the Coltur Cusco office emergency phone number is +51 984 765 336.

Important Note: The TAM (Andean Immigration Card) is now virtual—this means you will no longer be required to complete this form by hand as it is now automatically stored online once you pass through one of the airport's new biometric gates using your passport.

Depart Cusco and shuttle to the start of your morning walk, which will allow you to experience local life as it unfolds in the peaceful Andean Highlands. Begin your hike along 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 peruse shops of diverse handicrafts, 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 small 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 small bag, you are able to carry your daypack with you.

Accommodation: Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, Sacred Valley

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2

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

Visit the village of Chinchero, admiring the idyllic pastoral landscape as you descend to Urquillo. Enjoy a box lunch as you appreciate the town's Spanish colonial haciendas and stop to sample a tasty regional specialty – *chicha de jora*, corn beer.

This morning, you shuttle (40 minutes) to the typical Andean village of Chinchero, home to Incan ruins and

a colonial church. Here, your morning walk begins and passes through picturesque landscapes as you descend to the village of Urquillo, which was a significant community during the Incan era due to its location on the Inca Trail. Today the town is characterized by its haciendas dating from the Spanish colonial period. Savor a box lunch during your walk today. At the end of the trail, take 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 this unique beverage and learn about its brewing process.

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, a short shuttle ride takes you to a nearby restaurant for tonight's included dinner.

Accommodation: Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, Sacred Valley

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3

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 a chance to visit its authentic market where you will see sellers from surrounding regions offering their products. This particular market, held on Wednesdays, is vital for the local people. The varieties of potatoes, corn, and fruit 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, which are fed by underground saltwater springs, to Maras village. The terraced Incan salt pans 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, join your guides for an optional walk around Yucay, or enjoy any of the following activities before dinner on your own in the

hotel this evening.

Guided – Flex Options include:

Learn to cook traditional Peruvian dishes such as ceviche or *solterito*. Ingredients such as red quinoa and yellow aji are a distinct part of Peruvian culture. Start with a visit to the Muna Restaurant's organic gardens and then proceed to prepare a few dishes, perhaps while sipping a Pisco sour cocktail. (Cooking class fee not included.)

Embark on a horseback ride starting at a historic hacienda, passing small villages and local farmers working their terraced fields of corn. Along the way enjoy beautiful views of the Urubamba Valley. (Cost not included.)

Visit the ceramics workshop of renowned artist Pablo Seminario. Learn about the techniques he uses to create his large-format works of art, which are often inspired by pre-Colombian pottery. With the assistance of his wife Marilu, create your own individual piece. (Cost not included.)

Accommodation: Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4

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 traverses 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 hikes. The walk offers spectacular panoramas of the mountains and cloud forests, making for 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.

Your effort is rewarded when you arrive at Intipunku – the Sun Gate (8,954 feet) – the most impressive approach to Machu Picchu. This was the original entrance to the “Lost City.” Give yourself time to take it all in, perhaps perching 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 take lunch at your leisure today.

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

Accommodation: Inkaterra Machu Picchu, Aguas Calientes

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5

Machu Picchu. Independent exploration of Aguas Calientes

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

Enjoy a leisurely morning at the hotel. Feel free to go birding on the hotel grounds, visit the spa and pool, explore the city of Aguas Calientes, or partake in any of the options below. 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.

Guided – Flex Options include:

Stroll the Orchid Trail located on your hotel's grounds. With over 350 different native orchid species, this

garden holds the world record according to the American Orchid Society. Hosting the largest orchid in the world, the *Phragmipedium caudatum*, as well as tiny flowers barely visible to the human eye, the garden is sure to delight.

Indulge in a spa treatment and sauna at the UNU Spa at your hotel. Traditional Andean treatments using local botanical ingredients, such as coca and tea leaves, offer an array of options. After your week of walking, pamper your feet with a massage or de-stress with a hot stone treatment. (Spa treatment costs not included.)

Shop for some last-minute gifts at the open-air Machu Picchu market. While small in area, this market is crammed with stalls offering traditional products such as alpaca ponchos, Andean instruments, woven bags, and silver jewelry. Located in the village of Aguas Calientes, it is a short walk from your hotel.

Please note: The Peruvian Government regulates Machu Picchu's historical site and the visit restrictions periodically change. Visiting 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, Aguas Calientes

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6

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

Indulge in a relaxing breakfast. You may choose from several walking trails that 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, put on your walking shoes and discover this ancient Incan capital on a walking tour. Evidence of both the original Incan 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 many artists and artisans.

Cusco's many dining options are at your doorstep tonight.

Accommodation: Aranwa Cusco Boutique Hotel, Cusco

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7

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 towards the city, visiting important Incan monuments. This is a spectacular area for walks, with Andean mountain views, colorful villages, and impressive remains of the Incan 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 traditional religious ceremonies held here.

Next, visit Sacsayhuaman. Though this impressive fortress is only a fraction of its original size and scope, the intact walls and structure will astound 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 soaking in some last bits of Andean culture in Cusco's colorful plazas. Tonight, head out on the town for a festive farewell dinner.

Accommodation: Aranwa Cusco Boutique Hotel, Cusco

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 8

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

Your tour finishes in the hotel (Aranwa Cusco Boutique Hotel) after breakfast this morning. The hotel will

help you book a taxi at your own expense to the Cusco airport.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
All on-tour meals except 3 lunches and 2 dinners	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓