



PRIVATE GROUPS ITINERARY

Inca Magic - 11 Days

Peru has fuelled the imagination of adventure travellers from all over the world. It offers immense natural and cultural variety and affords a fascinating glimpse into the ancient Inca Empire. From Lima we fly to Cusco, the imperial Inca capital, with many enticing sights within easy reach. In today's Cusco we meet Quechua Indians with their colourful hats and costumes, who make up the bulk of the population. After visiting the Sacred Valley we set out on a camping trek to Machu Picchu following along old Inca pathways.



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Days 1-2 / 19-20 October

Lima

On arrival at Lima Airport you are transferred to our hotel in the well-known coastal district of Miraflores. In the evening you meet your tour leader and the other members of your group for a pre-tour briefing. Please check the notice board at the hotel reception for confirmation of the exact time and place of the meeting. This meeting is generally followed by an optional group dinner at a nearby restaurant. Lima has some of the most superb cuisine on the continent and is especially renowned for its exceptional seafood. Ceviche, Peru's national dish is raw fish marinated in lime juice and often served with hot peppers. This culinary delight is a must for seafood buffs.

On the morning of Day 2 we start our exploration of the Peruvian capital. Founded in 1535 by the Spanish conquistador, Francisco Pizarro, it was from Lima that all Spanish territories in South America were governed. Few cities at that time could rival Lima's power, wealth and opulence. However its glory days ended in 1746, when the city was virtually destroyed by an earthquake. Many of the colonial buildings were rebuilt and we get a first-hand look at several of them on our city tour. The striking Plaza de Armas, flanked by some of the most important buildings in town such as the cathedral, the huge Government Palace and the Archbishop's Palace, constitutes the heart of the city. We visit the cathedral and the Government Palace, as well as the nearby San Francisco Monastery with its catacombs containing some 70,000 human remains. We also visit the impressive Archaeological Museum, which is home to a wonderful collection of cultural exhibits tracing the history, arts and accomplishments of the people of Peru, ranging from the original inhabitants of the land through to the Inca Empire and the Spanish conquerors.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

Days 3-4 / 21-22 October

Cusco - The Sacred Valley

Today we fly to the ancient Inca capital of Cusco, where we take an afternoon walking tour to explore this fascinating city. This place is a favourite destination of many visitors to Peru. Cusco's main sites radiate outwards from the main Plaza de Armas, which is dominated by the 17th century Baroque cathedral. It was in this very plaza that the Spanish conquistadors put to death the last Inca king, Tupac Amaru. As we wander the streets and side alleys of the city we witness the perfect tapering Inca stonework that provided the foundations for many of Cusco's colonial and modern buildings. Our comprehensive sightseeing tour of the city's main sights includes the Cathedral of Cusco and Koricancha Temple. In our free time, it is also possible to visit the Religious Art Museum, Church of San Blas and Santa Catalina Museum. We then take to the surrounding hills and visit the impressive ceremonial ruins of Sacsayhuaman, where massive stone blocks that form the walls of this site give us an awesome picture of the highly developed and skilled Inca civilisation. The Sacred Valley, located between the towns of Pisac and Ollantaytambo, was greatly treasured because of its climate, fertile land and the presence of the Urubamba (Sacred) River. Today we still see evidence of the Inca's engineering skills in the ruins of ancient aqueducts, irrigation canals, dams on the Urubamba River, imposing sets of terraces and centres of worship dedicated to Pachamama (Mother Earth). On our full day tour of the Sacred Valley we visit the ruins of Qenko, Puka Pukara, Tambo Machay and Ollantaytambo, as well as the colourful market in Pisac village.

Meals included: 2 breakfasts

Day 5 / 23 October

Peru's Challenge - Pumamarca Ruins - Cusco

Today we enjoy a morning visit to the Peru's Challenge Community Project at Pumamarca, located in a beautiful valley just ten kilometres from the centre of Cusco.

The Peru's Challenge Program works to create opportunities for children living in the Andes region. The program was started by Australian, Jane Gavel, and Selvy Ugaz from Peru. Since October 2003 Peru's Challenge has helped nearly 1000 families and started to educate over 500 children in numerous communities. Peregrine Adventures is a sponsor of the Peru's Challenge program at Pumamarca, providing support through the 'Small Loans for Community Development' scheme and through the Peregrine Community Trust.

The visit offers a rare look at the challenges faced by many small farming communities around Peru. It is both educational and inspirational. During our visit we wander through the fields and watch the locals tend their crops, whilst in the village we visit the local school and also see the women working in the handicraft centre.

If you wish to make a donation to the Peru's Challenge program, the recently launched Peregrine Community Trust is the easiest and most convenient way to do so. The Trust operates on a not-for-profit basis with funds donated by Peregrine, our staff and Peregrine travellers. Every dollar donated to the Peru's Challenge project via the Peregrine Community Trust will go to Peru's Challenge. Visit our website at www.peregrineadventures.com/trust or ask your Peregrine tour leader for a pledge card that contains details for making a donation to the Trust.

In the early afternoon we return to Cusco, where the rest of our time is free to make our own discoveries. We can relax and unwind or perhaps go shopping in some of the town's great markets and souvenir stores. Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 6 / 24 October

'Lares' Trail Trek - Cusco - Calca - Lares Hot Springs – Concany

Following breakfast we leave the cobble stone streets of Cusco behind us. Our bus crosses the mountain range that backdrops Cusco and descends to the spectacular Sacred Valley. Here we follow the banks of the Urubamba River as it winds its way through the valley on its journey past Machu Picchu before joining the Apurimac River, one of the upper tributaries of the mighty Amazon. The Sacred Valley is the breadbasket of the region with its rich soil providing the necessary nutrients for the various crops that grow both along the valley and on the spectacular terraces, stranded precariously on the sides of the surrounding mountains. Turning northward again, the road climbs steeply until we arrive at the Lares hot springs, situated some 65km to the north of Cusco and 56km to the east of Machu Picchu. We have our lunch here and for a small charge (approx \$3.50), you can enter the hot thermal pools to enjoy a soak in the medicinal springs. After lunch we embark on the start of our trek. It is an easy trek to our first campsite at Concany. Along the way, we will reach a height of 3940m, before descending to the Queullacocha lagoons. Here there are opportunities to spot some of the Andean wildlife of the region and from Concany you will have magnificent views of Colque Cruz.

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

Day 7 / 25 October

'Lares' Trail Trek - Concany – Epsaycocha Lake

There are great photo opportunities today so keep your camera handy. Having finished breakfast we climb steeply up the valley, through ancient farmlands, arriving at the community of Huacawasi where some of the finest weavings in Peru are made. We can observe the skills and brilliant techniques of the weavers as they make their ponchos and other garments. Passing through the village we begin climbing up to Ipsayqocha, the highest pass on our trek at a height of 4350m. From here, we have a stunning view of the renowned Mount Veronica (5750m.) Descending gently we come to the beautiful turquoise Epsaycocha Lake, where we set up camp for the night.

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

Day 8 / 26 October

'Lares' Trail Trek - Epsaycocha - Willoc - Pumamarca - Ollantaytambo - Aguas Calientes

Today our trail leads downhill to the valley below and to the village of Willoc where we have lunch. From here it's another two hours to arrive at Pumamarca where we enjoy the Inca terraces before finally arriving at the ancient town of Ollantaytambo. Situated in a fertile river valley and sheltered by mammoth mountains, this ancient Inca village is considered one of the most important living museums in the world and displays the sophisticated urban planning and engineering of the Incas. This is also a great place to appreciate the vast archaeological remains of the massive fortress. There is also a wide variety of flowers and birds species to be enjoyed this day. In the late afternoon we board the train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes at the base of Machu Picchu. Here we spend the night in a comfortable hotel. Make sure during your stay in this 'town at the end of the railway' that you take a dip in the hot thermal springs that give the town its name. The springs are open from 5.00am to 10.00pm. Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

Day 9 / 27 October

Aguas Calientes - Machu Picchu – Cusco

After an early breakfast, we take the first bus up the steep zig zagging road to the entrance of the ruins of Machu Picchu. By leaving early we avoid the large crowds that arrive from Cusco later in the morning. Entering into the archaeological sight we now have a fully guided tour of this ancient and mystical Inca city. Before taking the bus back down to Aguas Calientes, there is free time to explore the ruins at your own pace, soaking in the atmosphere. For the adventurous, you can climb to the top of Huayna Picchu, where you have the opportunity to see Machu Picchu from a unique vantage point. You can also make the short hike up to the Sun Gate for that classic photo of Machu Picchu. In the afternoon we descend once again to Aguas Calientes where we can take our lunch before catching the late afternoon train back to Cusco.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 10 / 28 October

Cusco

Today is a free day to spend in Cusco. The oldest continuously inhabited city in the western hemisphere, Cusco is a wonderful place in which to stroll aimlessly or be entertained by participating in an outdoor activity. If you are feeling energetic there are a myriad of adventures available in and around town, such as cycling and horse riding. There are plenty of opportunities to shop for handicrafts or wander around the cobbled streets and visit museums, churches and colonial sites. You may just wish to relax with a 'cerveza' or a 'pisco sour' in one of the restaurants and penas surrounding the Plaza de Armas.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

Day 11 / 29 October

Cusco – Tour ends

Your tour ends today after breakfast. You will be transferred to the airport to meet your ongoing flight.

Meals included: 1 breakfast
