

# In the Footsteps of the Incas: The Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu

An Active Cultural Discovery Tour to Peru  
May 28- June 10, 2012

## Day 1 U.S / Lima

Arrive **Lima** where our local hosts greet us and assist us to our hotel conveniently located at the airport.  
**Costa Del Sol Ramada Lima**

## Day 2 Lima / Cuzco

The sunrise is spectacular over the magnificent peaks of the **Cordillera Blanca** as we fly to **Cusco** where we rest and adjust to the altitude at a colonial family residence. Later, we tour some of the important places and archaeological sites in and around **Cusco** including the **Plaza de Armas**, Cathedral, **Coricancha** Inca Palace, the megalithic fortress of **Sacsayhuaman**, and sacred fountain **Tambomachay** and the cave shrine at **Kenko**. We will celebrate our arrival in **Cuzco** this evening with a welcome dinner and retire early for more rest and acclimation.

**Overnight Los Portales Hotel** B, D

## Day 3 Cuzco / Sacred Valley of the Incas

Morning drive to the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Our exploration of the valley begins visiting the **Pucara** above **Pisac** and view agricultural terraces. We hike down to the quaint **Quechua** village and visit the colorful traditional market where locals display, trade and sell local produce and handicrafts. After lunch we visit **Ollantaytambo**, said to be the oldest continually inhabited village in South America, where we walk the cobblestone streets of this historic walled town and climb the hillside fortress to see the exquisite stone work at this strategic defensive position. Our family run inn is located in **Ollantaytambo** so we have plenty of time to absorb the ambiance of this special place.

**Overnight Pakaritampu Hotel** B, L

## Day 4 Moray and Maras

Our excursion across the **altiplano** today leads us first to **Moray** where huge concentric agricultural terraces built in a depression of a limestone plateau create an amphitheater effect complete with excellent acoustics. It also creates a unique microclimate within. Was this a site of special powers that invoked the mystical spirits of the earth where priests read the heavens and divined the future? Was it an agricultural experimental station and information recorded on a **quipu**? Was it an amphitheater for political and religious occasions where the **Inca** himself might have appeared? We will draw our own conclusions as we explore the site. We drive on across the **altiplano** to the colonial town of **Maras** perched above a valley eroded by the flow of mineral rich highly saline waters from springs deep underground. An interesting short takes us down among the evaporation ponds where the villagers collect the salt for export. A picnic lunch adds the perfect touch.

**Overnight Pakaritampu Hotel** B, L, D

## Day 5 Ollantaytambo / Inca Trail Trek

Drive to the trailhead in **Chilca** (8500'). Our Inca Trail Trek begins with views of with view of **La Veronica** Glacier as we cross the raging **Urubamba** River on a foot bridge and greet our **Inca** porters and camp staff on the other side. Our trail follows the river leading us to the first archaeological site, **Llactapata** where we enjoy a delicious picnic lunch. The trail turns in to a side valley and we ascend gradually along the bubbling Cusichaca River until we reach the village **Huayllabamba**, our camp for the night, is the last outpost of civilization until we reach **Machu Picchu**.

Total Distance: 12km (7, 47 miles)

Walking time approximated: 5-6 hours

Maximum altitude: 9,840ft

**Overnight Inca Trail Camp B, L, D**

**Day 6 Inca Trail Trek**

We wake to our porters placing a bowl of warm water in front of our tent for us to freshen up. The invigorating cool air stimulates our appetites and after a hearty breakfast we set off hiking. We reach the high plain *Llulluchapampa* where we rest and enjoy refreshments and the view of *Huayanay* peak. From here our trek continues steeply uphill to the first pass and highest point of the trail, *Warmiwanusca*, “Dead Woman’s pass” at 13,766’. As we summit the pass we are spell bound by the natural beauty of the Andean *Cordillera* as well as breathless from the ascent! Beyond, a change of climate and scenery awaits as we descend into the *Pacamayu* River valley with the sound of rushing water and our camp for the night. Our porters greet us with smiles and hot tea. The camp is set up and waiting. On the mountainside ahead sits *Runkuracay* (12,190’), the egg-shaped ruin of a former outpost station.

Total Distance: 11km (6, 84 miles)

Walking time approximated: 6-7 hours

Maximum altitude: 13,776ft

**Overnight Inca Trail Camp B, L, D**

**Day 7 Inca Trail Trek**

Today we will experience a variety of ecological zones including alpine, cloud forest and semi-tropical as we ascend from *Pacamayu* and trek over 2 passes before reaching our next camp. We hike towards *Runkuracay* where we explore this ruin on top of the world, then, crossing the pass at 12,696’, we descend into the valley beyond to the site of *Sayamarca*, “Inaccessible Town”. We will count each of the 98 steps leading up to the site from the trail, but once there, the view is spectacular into the lush green valley ahead. The trail continues among tropical flora and over the third and final pass to *Phuyupatamarca*, 11,585’. This “City above the Clouds” affords a fantastic view of *Mt. Salcantay*. From here, we descend past ancient terraces, ceremonial baths and fortifications on steep Inca staircases into the cloud forest and our camp at *Winaywayna*, one of the most beautiful and captivating of the sites on the trail.

Total Distance: 16km (9, 94 miles)

Walking time approximated: 8 hours

Maximum altitude: 11,585ft

**Overnight Inca Trail Camp B, L, D**

**Day 8 Inca Trail Trek / Machu Picchu**

Orchids and bromeliads grow here where the Amazon jungle meets the High *Sierras* of the *Andes*. We visit the ruins of *Winaywayna* and two hours later arrive at *Inti Punku*, the gate of the Sun- original *Inca* entrance to *Machu Picchu*. The breathtaking view seems ample reward for the trek. We will have a tour of the site before returning to 21<sup>st</sup> century comfort, a very long shower and dinner.

Total Distance: 4km (2, 49 miles)

Walking time approximated: 2 hours

Maximum altitude: 2,700m (8,829ft)

Machu Picchu altitude 7,872ft

**Overnight Hatchuay Tower Hotel BLD**

**Day 9 Machu Picchu / Cuzco**

An optional short, early morning climb of *Huayna Picchu* leads to the ultimate views of Machu Picchu, the *Urubamba* gorge and stunning Andean mountain panorama. There will be several hours to explore the sectors of the city. In the afternoon we take the tourist train along the *Urubamba* back to *Cuzco*.

**Overnight Los Portales Hotel B, L**

**OPTION Days 5-9:** Participants may elect to substitute, at additional expense, an Amazon Jungle experience near *Puerto Maldonado* for the trek. They will rejoin the group in Machu Picchu on day 9. Please request details.

### **Day 10 Cuzco Corpus Christi Celebration**

Today is a free day for independent exploration in *Cusco*. Tonight, in anticipation of the *Festival of Corpus Christi*, people gather for an overnight vigil and celebrate sharing typical dishes such as *chiriuchu* (spicy guinea pig), beer, *chicha* and cornbread.

**Overnight Los Portales Hotel B, D**

### **Day 11 Cuzco**

The *Festival of Corpus Christi* has been celebrated all over Peru since colonial times, but reaches a high point in *Cusco*. Fifteen saints and virgins from various districts in the region are borne in a procession to the Cathedral where they "greet" the body of Christ embodied in the Sacred Host, kept in a fabulous gold goblet weighing 26 kilos and standing 1.2 meters high. We will experience the pageantry and unique blend of indigenous and European traditions as we mingle with the locals and share the festivities. The afternoon will be free for personal pursuits. Let's gather for dinner this evening to compare our experiences.

### **Day 12 Cuzco / Lima**

We transfer to the airport for the one hour flight to *Lima*, the check into our hotel before our full day tour of the historical and modern parts of *Lima*.

We will stroll the *Plaza de Armas* where we can see the Presidential Palace, the Cathedral, the Archbishop's Palace and Metropolitan City Hall as we learn about the history and traditions of this important Spanish city. We will tour the *San Francisco* Monastery, probably the most spectacular church of colonial *Lima*, housing the catacombs and a very fine museum of religious art from the XVII century. Then it is on to the modern areas of *Miraflores* and *San Isidro* and the fabulous Larco Herrera Museum, one of the best in Latin America, housing an incomparable treasure collection from Old Peru that inspires to appreciate the more than 5000 years of history represented here. This private collection exhibits more than 45,000 pieces, most of them ceramic artifacts from the *Mochica* culture,

**Overnight at El Tambo Perú B, L**

### **Day 13 Lima**

This morning we will visit the pre-Inca archaeological site of *Pachacamac*. The afternoon will be free for personal exploration. We will gather tonight for dinner to celebrate the Inca Trail Trek and our amazing Peru experience.

**Overnight at El Tambo Perú B, L**

### **Day 14 Lima / U.S.**

Transfer to the airport for your flight back to the U.S. or join us on an extension to Nazca to view the enigmatic Nazca Lines. **B**

### **NAZCA EXTENSION Days 14-17**

Day 15 Head south through the *Atacama Desert* on the Pan American Hw. To *Ica*, for lunch, a tour of the excellent museum and *Pisco* Brandy. **Overnight at Hotel Nazca.**

Day 16: Rise early for an exciting single engine flight over the mysterious *Nazca Lines*, animal shapes and the space man. Afternoon drive to seaside Hotel Paracas.

Day 17: Cross the strait in a small yacht and cruise in the *Ballestas* Islands, Peru's mini "Galapagos" with sea lions, marine iguanas, and many colorful species of birds including small penguins. Return to Miraflores and **Overnight El Tambo Peru.**

Day 18: Morning transfer to airport for flight to US.

The cost of this extension includes all transportation, first class hotels, breakfasts, entry fees, baggage handling and taxes. Added cost of extension depends on number of travelers. Please inquire.