# MACHU PICCHU EXPLORER

## OR TRAIN TRAVEL ALTERNATIVE

## *SEPTEMBER 4-12, 2009*

*A Custom Global Adrenaline Trip Designed for the Arizona State University Alumni Association.*

Global Adrenaline, Inc.
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Chicago, Illinois 60602
USA

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ASU ALUMNI
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

# MACHU PICCHU EXPLORER: HIKE THE INCA TRAIL OR TAKE THE TRAIN

**Rating:** Inca Trail: Challenging
Train Travel Alternative: Easy

**Length:** 9 days

**Dates:** September 4-12, 2009

**Itinerary:**

*Day 1* *Arrive in Peru. Explore Cusco.*
*Day 2* *Sacred Valley of the Incas – Awanacancha, Ceramic Artist Studio and Ollantaytambo.*
*Day 3* *Sacred Valley of the Incas. Horseback Riding. Inca Sites of Maras and Moray. Pisaq Market and Ruins.*
*Day 4* *Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu or Chinchero, Moray and Maras.*
*Day 5* *Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu or Patakancha Village and Optional Hike to Pumamarca Ruins.*
*Day 6* *Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu or Train. Hike to Inti Punku (Gate of the Sun). Optional One Day Inca Trail Hike.*
*Day 7* *Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu or Machu Picchu visit.*
*Day 8* *Machu Picchu in the morning and afternoon train to Cusco.*
*Day 9* *Free Morning in Cusco. Depart for Home.*

**Cost:**

| Room Type | Check Payment | Credit Card Payment |
|---|---|---|
| Double | $3,540 per person | $3,695 per person |
| Single | $4,940 per person | $5,095 per person |

**Includes:**

Global Adrenaline tour leader
local Peruvian guides
airport transfers
accommodation, Inca Trail option: 5 nights in hotels, 3 nights camping
accommodation, Train Travel option: 8 nights in hotels
local porters for transportation of camping gear and packs
meals as indicated (B=breakfast is included; L=lunch is included; D=dinner is included)
activities as indicated
transportation as indicated
welcome cocktails
farewell dinner
tips and gratuities
entrance fees to national parks, historical sites and museums

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| | |
|---|---|
| **Does Not Include:** | international flights (approximately $900 to $1,200 for USA – Lima – USA flights)<br>international airport departure tax ($28)<br>meals not included (approximately $95)<br>beverages (discretionary)<br>optional Cusco City Tour on September 4 ($50)<br>optional Sacred Valley Horseback Riding or Historical Inca Sites Tour on September 6 ($100)<br>optional Inca Trail Day Hike to Machu Picchu on September 9 (Train Travel Alternative - $400)<br>optional Lima City Tour on September 12 ($100)<br>travel insurance (discretionary)<br>phone calls, laundry and other items of a purely personal nature (discretionary) |

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## *Expedition Summary*

Immerse yourself in the myths, legends and history of the Incas on our 9-day "Machu Picchu Explorer" trip. Start with a day in Cusco, one of the most beautiful towns in Peru and the southern capital of the Inca Empire. Explore the Sacred Valley of the Incas, a lovely fertile valley lined with picturesque Andean markets, impressive churches and remarkable Inca ruins. Bargain with local craftsmen in the Andean textile markets at Pisaq and visit the archaeological complex of Ollantaytambo. Trek for 4 days along the Inca Trail pilgrimage to the "Lost City of the Incas." Walk in the footsteps of the Incas -- hike across high mountain passes, descend through verdant valleys and explore Inca ruins along the way. Arrive in awe at the perfectly preserved Inca citadel of Machu Picchu that was lost in the dense jungle for hundreds of years. If you're not up to hiking the Inca Trail, continue your journey with a breathtaking train ride to Machu Picchu. Return to Cusco for one more day of exploration and shopping before returning home. Don't miss this chance to visit the magical country of Peru, full of mystery, intrigue and the rich, ancient culture of the Incas. Hike the Inca Trail or take the train to Machu Picchu… the choice is yours!

## *The Sun Devil Destinations Travel Difference*

Sun Devil Destinations takes you to places you've never been and gives you access to people and places you might not encounter on your own. In addition to lectures with local guides and historians, our group will enjoy the splendor of cultures lost and found making this a trip that will have added value and includes special activities planned exclusively for our travelers. Special activities include:

- Visit Awanacancha in the Sacred Valley of the Incas to learn about the four types of Andean camelids and to observe artisans demonstrating traditional Andean weaving.
- Hike the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu on a fully-supported trek with top quality guides, porters, cooks and assistants.
- Enjoy planned and impromptu lectures on Incan sites and history throughout the trip.
- Experience Machu Picchu, the legendary lost city of the Incas.
- Learn where to find the best local handicrafts, weavings and fine arts from our experienced tour leaders.
- Bid Peru farewell over dinner in Cusco, the charming colonial capital of the Inca Empire with its cobbled narrow streets, lovely buildings, plazas and churches detailed with intricate Inca stonemasonry work.

## *Experience Required*

The Inca Trail Trek is a challenging hike across high altitude passes in the Peruvian Andes. For non-trekkers, alternative train travel to Machu Picchu can be arranged.

While no previous trekking or technical climbing experience is required, all trekkers must be in excellent physical condition for this trip. We also suggest that you have some experience with exercise at altitude. You will be hiking 5-8 hours each day, up and down mountain trails that are steep and rocky, and mostly at elevations over 10,000 feet. Porters will carry the bulk of the supplies, but even if you are just carrying a day pack, hiking at high altitudes is extremely demanding and can compound physiologic stress. You need to be in excellent health and top physical condition to enjoy such an experience, with adequate cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength and excellent balance. The minimum age for participation on this trip is 15.

The level of fitness needed requires regular aerobic exercise at least one hour 4-5 times each week. This should include aerobic activity (preferably hiking and running) and stair climbing and you must be able to sustain exercise for prolonged periods. We recommend that you start a moderate training program several months prior to departure, then slowly build up to a more strenuous level. Please consult your physician if you have questions concerning your underlying health. We can help answer questions for you and your physician concerning required levels of fitness and health conditions at altitude. If you have concerns about your ability to trek the Inca Trail, we recommend that you take the train to Machu Picchu, enjoying additional sights in the Sacred Valley along the way.

## *Inca Trail Trek - Trekking and Camping*

The average trekking day starts with tea or coffee brought to you in your tent, followed by a basin of hot water for washing. After repacking your duffel bag, breakfast is served. We usually start trekking by 8:00am. Porters will carry our bags and each trip participant is only responsible for carrying a "day pack" to carry water, a camera and any extra clothing needed during the day of hiking. We will walk at our own pace with a lead guide at the front and another guide at the back of the group. We stop for a hot lunch mid-day, prepared by our kitchen staff who will have trekked quickly ahead of us. We will reach our camp in the late afternoon – all the tents are usually set up by the time we arrive and hot tea or coffee and an afternoon snack is waiting! Dinner is served in the evening before we all retire for a good night's sleep.

Top quality staff including a team of trained and experienced guides, cooks, assistants and porters will accompany our group along the trail to ensure the most pleasant trekking experience possible. All camping equipment except sleeping bags will be provided: tents, sleeping mats, chairs, tables, kitchen supplies, first-aid kit, toilet tent, dining tent, etc. Showers are not available at any of the camps along the Inca Trail, however washing water is provided in a basin in the morning and evening and toilet tents are provided. There is also an enclosed dining tent for meals. All of the group camping and cooking gear must be carried by porters (there is no vehicle support) and personal luxuries are few, but we think you will be surprised by the level of comfort and service we provide on this camping experience.

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## *Inca Trail Trek - Trekking at High Altitude*

There are also inherent dangers in any expedition to high altitude. These dangers include everything from rock falls to the possibility of a serious fall, accident or sickness without access to a means of rapid evacuation or adequate medical supplies or adequate medical attention. High altitude may create discomfort and symptoms of illness that you do not experience while exercising at low elevations. Anyone planning a difficult mountain trek must be aware of the demands and risks imposed by very high altitude, be assured of excellent underlying health and prepare with rigorous training.

The body cannot fully acclimatize to altitudes above 17,000 feet and, as a result, the more time one spends at such altitudes, generally the worse one feels. At 18,000 feet, there is only half the amount of oxygen in the air, which imposes considerable physical stresses on the body. As a result, most trekkers at high altitude feel physical discomfort of shortness of breath, headaches, nausea, insomnia and exhaustion. Individuals vary widely in their ability to acclimatize to altitude and not everyone should go to very high altitude. Because physical fitness does not confer any protection or facilitate acclimatization, it is impossible to predict how you will adapt to the altitude. The greatest protection is avoiding rapid ascents and allowing time for your body to acclimatize to the altitude. You must individually pace yourself to go slowly and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. You must not push too hard no matter how physically fit you may be or feel.

Early symptoms of high altitude sickness include headache, nausea, loss of appetite, insomnia, vomiting, dry cough, irregular breathing, shortness of breath, fatigue and swelling of the ankles and eyelids. It is not uncommon to experience some of these symptoms when you first arrive at high altitude and then to have them decrease in severity within a few days. It is important that you inform your trip leader immediately of any symptoms or discomfort, however minor, so that he/she can help you monitor the situation. Please be aware that carrying on with the climb in spite of alarm signals from your body may result in serious illness and even death. Medical conditions that are aggravated or complicated by high altitude include heart diseases, lung diseases, pregnancy, anemia and sickle cell disease. It is imperative that anyone with these conditions consult his or her physician in detail before attempting this climbing expedition.

**Inca Trail Trek Altitudes:** On the Inca Trail, you will be hiking at altitudes ranging from approximately 9,000-14,500 ft. The highest camping spot is at approximately 12,000 ft. We will spend a few days at altitudes of between approximately 9,500 and 11,000 feet to acclimate before hiking the Inca Trail. Please review the day-by-day itinerary for more details on the altitudes we will be reaching each day.

For more detailed information on altitude illness and medications that can be taken for the prevention of and treatment of altitude illness, please consult the Centers for Disease Control (CDC): http://www2.ncid.cdc.gov/travel/yb/utils/ybGet.asp?section=NIR&obj=altitude.htm.

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## *Day by Day Itinerary*

### *September 4: Arrive in Peru, Explore Cusco, Optional City Tour*

Today, we will arrive into Cusco (11,150 feet, 3,400 meters). We will meet our guide and driver at the Cusco Airport. They will be just outside the baggage collection area holding a sign with "ASU Alumni" and your name on it.

Cusco was the southern capital of the Inca Empire and is one of the most beautiful towns in Peru. At its peak this empire stretched north to the south of Colombia, south to northern Chile and Argentina, and west across the Andes to the Amazon Basin. We may notice the skill and exquisiteness of the intricate Inca stonemasonry work on the many walls that serve as foundations to colonial buildings. The crisp air, surrounding mountains and Andean sky provide the perfect backdrop to Cusco's cobbled narrow streets, lovely buildings and plazas and its many hidden treasures and churches. Cusco is not only culturally fascinating and beautiful to look at, it is also an extremely pleasant city to wander around and enjoy.

We may choose to spend the afternoon exploring Cusco on our own or taking an optional guided tour of the main sites of Cusco and the surrounding area. We will spend the night at our Cusco hotel.

***Hotel Tupac Yupanqui***
*This charming small hotel located in the center of the Cusco is said to have the most beautiful Inca walls in town, as it was built on the foundations of the Tupac Inca Yupanqui palaces. This beautiful restored house converted into a hotel boasts both Inca and Colonial architecture in a dynamic way classic of Cusco. The rooms are comfortable and all have ensuite bathrooms, a safe box, heaters, and cable TV. The hotel also features a beautiful courtyard at its center, wooden carved balconies and 18th century style furniture. The best feature of the Tupac Yupanqui Hotel is its personalized and elegant service.*

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***OPTIONAL ACTIVITY***
***Cusco City Tour (Additional $50):*** *Spend the afternoon exploring the cobblestone streets, churches and ancient Inca history of Cusco. Our tour will last 3-4 hours. Be sure to wear sunscreen as the sun is quite strong at 11,150 feet!*

- *Santo Domingo: This church is built over what once was the most magnificent temple in the Americas, Coricancha or Temple of the Sun. Its courtyards were filled with life-sized gold and silver representations of all the flora and fauna of the empire. Pizarro's men looted the temple as part of the royal ransom of Inca Atahualpa, who was held prisoner in Cajamarca by the Spaniards and later killed. An earthquake destroyed the Santo Domingo church in 1950 revealing the Inca walls that were hidden or plastered over. These walls of the Temple of the Sun are the finest example of Inca stonework in existence.*

- *La Cathedral: Located on the northeast side of the Plaza de Armas, construction on the cathedral began in 1559 and was completed in 1669. The Cusco cathedral houses over 400 16th and 17th century paintings done by members of the renowned Cusco School. The European style with an Andean Indian influence is best seen in the painting "The Last Supper" by Marcos Zapata, which shows the apostles dining on guinea pig. Also of note is the main altar, covered with sheets of silver.*

- *Plaza de Armas: The Plaza de Armas is called Huacaypata by the Quechuas, which means cry or moan. This name originated in the expressions of reverence and submission with which the religious or military ceremonies were carried out here. Colonial arcades and the remains of ancient Inca temples and churches surround the plaza.*

- *Sacsayhuaman: Located two kilometers from the city of Cusco, the immense walls of the Sacsayhuaman archaeological complex are made up of huge stones distributed in a zigzag pattern in three platforms with an average of 1,181ft in length. These platforms are connected by flights of stairs and doorways made of stone. One of these is 29 feet tall and 15 feet wide and weighs more than 100 tons. The largest stone block found in Sacsayhuaman stands 27.88 feet high and weighs 361 tons. Inca Pachacuti employed 20,000 men for the construction of this complex and it took approximately 50 years to complete.*

- *Other Nearby Ruins: Other nearby ruins we may visit include: Qenko, Tambo Machay and Puca Pucara. Qenko is a rock sanctuary whose main attraction is a monolithic altar representing a puma. Tambo Machay is a small ruin comprised of a beautifully wrought ceremonial stone bath and is therefore popularly called "El Baño del Inca." Puca Pucara is a red fort.*

## *September 5: Sacred Valley of the Incas – Awanacancha, Ceramic Artist Studio and Ollantaytambo*

Today we will visit the Sacred Valley of the Incas (9,500 feet, 2,900 meters), a lovely fertile valley that lies north of Cusco. The Sacred Valley is lined with picturesque Andean markets, impressive churches and remarkable Inca ruins. Our day will begin with a visit to Awanacancha to learn about the four types of Andean camelids and to observe artisans demonstrating traditional Andean weaving. Next, we will visit the studio of local ceramic artist Pablo Seminario and learn about ancient Peruvian ceramic techniques.

After a buffet lunch, we will drive to the charming town of Ollantaytambo which retains the same street plan of the original Inca town, making it the only surviving example of Inca urban planning. Here, we will visit a local family's home and tour the archaeological site of Ollantaytambo. There are several structures of importance to the Inca at this site. At the top of the sixteen massive terraces are the impressive ruins of Ollantaytambo Fortress where the Inca fought some of their strongest battles. Huge and precisely carved stones were somehow transported by hundreds of men down one mountain range to Ollantaytambo and fitted perfectly to support this strategic fortress that has stood the test of time. There are "silos" or grain mills directly across from the fortress that housed thousands of pounds of grain for the Incas. We will spend the evening at our hotel set at the foot of the Ollantaytambo ruins. (B, L, D)

***Pakaritampu Hotel***
*Pakaritampu Hotel is located in Ollantaytambo, 56 miles (90 kilometers) away from Cusco, in the heart of the Inca's Sacred Valley. It is considered an ideal starting point for tourism in the Sacred Valley, as it is located at a lower altitude than Cusco or Machu Picchu. It is situated just a short distance away from the train station that will take you, in only one and a half hours, to Machu Picchu, and it is near the starting point of the Inca Trail. From the hotel, you can enjoy a beautiful view of the Ollantaytambo archaeological complex. The hotel was built according to the architectural style of Cusco and its facilities are formed by four independent buildings. One building is for receiving guests, enjoying a delicious mate de coca, and using the internet, fax or telephone for international calls. Another building is for general services; there is a dining room, cozy living room with a fireplace, T.V. room, reading room, bar and gift shop. The two remaining buildings offer comfortable rooms with warm, wood finishes and picturesque balconies from which you can enjoy an extraordinary view of the Ollantaytambo ruins.*

## September 6: Sacred Valley of the Incas – Horseback Riding, Inca Sites of Maras and Moray and Pisaq Market and Ruins

This morning, we will explore the Sacred Valley by horseback or visiting the historical Inca sites of Moray and Maras.

***OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES***
***Horseback Riding (Additional $100):*** *Experience the Peruvian Paso horses. Our tour starts with a coffee or tea while we receive a briefing about horses, safety and riding instructions. We have horses for all abilities. Please indicate your horseback riding experience when you book this optional activity so we can prepare the right horse for you. During our 2-3 hour ride, we will visit the old village of Pichingote, local farmlands and Quechua communities. The price includes snacks, soft-drinks and a professional guide. There is a weight limit of 220 lbs (100 kg) on this tour. Minimum Number of Participants Required = 4.*

***Historical Inca Sites of Moray and Maras (Additional $100):*** *Visit the agricultural terraces of Moray that were used by the Incas as open-air crop laboratories or greenhouses. Each terrace level is believed to have a different microclimate, enabling the growth of a wide variety of plants in the same area. We will finish our tour with a visit to the pre-Columbian salt mines of Maras that are still active today. These white salt terraces on overhanging cliffs are a true paradise and a must for photography. Minimum Number of Participants Required = 4.*

We will have lunch on our own in a local Ollantaytambo restaurant or back at the hotel. After lunch, we will have the option to explore the ruins of Pisaq or visit its famous produce, textile and handicraft market. Villagers from miles around gather to barter and sell their produce and local handicrafts. We will spend the night at our Sacred Valley hotel. (B, D)

## September 7: Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu

This morning we begin the famous 4-day pilgrimage trek to Machu Picchu. We will hike 6-8 hours each day across mountain passes and through verdant valleys. In the early morning, we will be picked up from our hotel and transferred by private motor coach 1 ½ hours to Km. 82. Once we arrive, we will meet our porters and begin our trek along the left bank of the Urubamba River. After a couple hours of gentle hiking we visit the Inca ruins of Llactapata. We continue hiking away from the Urubamba River ascending and following the Qusichaca River towards the village of Huayllabamba, a small agricultural settlement, stopping along the way for a picnic lunch. After lunch, we will continue on to our private campsite near Huayllabamba (9,800 feet, 3,000 meters), enjoying our first night of camping in the Andes. City life will be left behind as we marvel at the sparkling night sky of the Southern Hemisphere. Today we will walk approximately 6.2 miles (10 kilometers) or 6 hours. (B, L, D)

## *September 8: Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu*

An early nourishing breakfast will bolster our energy for our short, but strenuous hike to the Machu Picchu Sanctuary control station, just above the village of Huayllabamba as we return to the main trail. Once we register at the control station, we will continue on a tough, ascending trail to the first pass. This is a challenging morning hike with fantastic views and a very clear change of vegetation as we gain altitude. We will pass through an interesting protected cloud forest of native trees before reaching our lunch spot at 12,150 feet (3,700 meters), right below the first pass. After lunch, we will continue the tough ascent toward the highest pass on the trail Warmiwañusqa or "Dead Woman's Pass" (13,800 feet, 4,200 meters). Our efforts will be rewarded with unparalleled views of the snow covered peaks of the Cordillera Urubamba and the lush valley vegetation. From here we will begin to encounter Inca pavement. The trail descends to the Pacamayo River to our campsite at Pacaymayo (11,900 feet, 3,600 meters). Today we will walk approximately 10.5 miles (17 kilometers) or 8 hours.
(B, L, D)

## *September 9: Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu*

Today is a long, but very interesting and rewarding day since there will be many magnificent archaeological sites on the way. On a clear day, our efforts are rewarded with unparalleled views of the snow covered peaks of the Cordillera Vilcabamba and the lush valley vegetation. After breakfast, we will start our slow climb over the second pass of Runkuraqay (13,000 feet, 3,950 meters). Masterful Inca engineering is visible along the trail and at the Inca site Sayacmarca (12,000 feet, 3,640 meters) which is a true highlight along the trail. At the end of the day, we will reach a dry lake at Phuyupatamarca (12,000 feet, 3,650 meters) also known as "The Place Among the Clouds" where we will camp overnight while soaking up some of the magical charm of this marvelous site. Today we will walk approximately 13.6 miles (22 kilometers) or 8 hours.
(B, L, D)

## September 10: Inca Trail Trek to Machu Picchu

Sunrise at Phuyupatamarca is considered one of the highlights of the trek. After breakfast, it's a challenging downhill hike most of the way along the finest, intact Inca paved roads known. Pass the Phuyupatamarca ruins and follow the flagstone trail and Inca stairs down into the cloud forest, meeting our cooks for one last delicious lunch along the trail. After lunch, we'll visit the beautiful ruins of Wiñay Wayna. The final part of the trail has some incredible, steep stairways, some carved in stone, and several viewing terraces. In a short time we will arrive into Machu Picchu through the Inti Punku ("Gate of the Sun") and then follow the trail downhill to the lost citadel located right above the Urubamba River. When we arrive, we will stare in amazement, mouths agape, at this wonder of the ancient world. Our hike into Machu Picchu (8,000 feet, 2,400 meters) is 5 miles (8 kilometers) and will take approximately 7 hours.

> *"I suddenly found myself in a maze of beautiful granite houses! They were covered with trees and mosses and the growth of centuries, but in the dense shadow, hiding in bamboo thickets and tangled vines, could be seen, here and there, walls of white granite ashlars most carefully cut and exquisitely fitted together."*
>
> *Hiram Bingham, upon his discovery of Machu Picchu, 24 July 1911*

Machu Picchu is a perfectly preserved Inca city that was lost in the dense jungle for hundreds of years. Machu Picchu, whose name means "ancient peak," is perhaps the most famous and awe-inspiring of all of the ruins discovered during the 20th century. Machu Picchu was so well-hidden by the towering jungle-covered ramparts of the Cordillera Vilcabamba that it was never discovered by the Spaniards. Constructed on a high mountain overlooking the Urubamba River, Machu Picchu and Huayna Picchu were lost in time and the dense forest until they were brought to the attention of the outside world in July 1911 by the American historian and explorer Hiram Bingham. There are many speculations about the site's use, but its origins and purpose remain lost in time. After a brief visit to the ruins, we will transfer to our hotel in the village of Aguas Calientes, carefully set in a high, tropical cloud forest. (B, L, D)

***Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel***

*The Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel is a rustic boutique hotel and a comfortable base for a visit to Machu Picchu. Located in the village of Aguas Calientes, the hotel is only a short, twenty-minute bus ride from the ruins and is located right next to the train station. There are 83 twin-bedded, bungalow–style rooms and 9 junior suites and 2 suites. There are no televisions in the rooms and heaters are available upon request. Hot water supply during peak season can sometimes be a problem. Some of the hotel's most charming attractions include the library, the display wall of pre-Columbian artifacts in the Mikhuna Wasi dining room, and the lounge's cozy fireplaces, as well as the Andean sauna: an igloo made of indigenous bamboo and fresh eucalyptus leaves. Built with adobe bricks, eucalyptus, and stone, the facility boasts its own bar, restaurant, terrace, and lovely gardens. The bar, boutique and reception building are each decorated with Andean artifacts and fabrics. The hotel also has a business center with internet access. Accessibility to the main reception area is slightly difficult with a long flight of stone stairs. The hotel is also home to the world's largest collection of native orchids observable in their natural habitat (372 species), as well as a very large concentration of birds (162 species), wild hummingbirds (16 species), butterflies (111 species), and over 100 fern species.*

## *September 11: Machu Picchu*

Today, we will start early and watch the sun rise over Machu Picchu and take photographs of the area during this peaceful morning time. For those who are interested in a bit more hiking, we will arrange small groups to hike to the top of Huayna Picchu and walk through the lush cloud forest to the Temple of the Moon. For those who would like to sleep in, a later starting time and transfer will be available. Starting at 10:00am, our guide will escort us through the ruins, discussing the construction and probable usage of the buildings, reflecting on life in this spectacular setting. We will enjoy lunch on our own today. Options include the indoor buffet lunch or outdoor café at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge, the Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel or the many restaurants and cafés down in the town of Aguas Calientes. In the afternoon we will retrace our route through the Urubamba Valley and return to Cusco on the afternoon train. Upon arrival back in Cusco, we will check into our Cusco hotel. We will enjoy a farewell dinner and one last night at our Cusco hotel. (B, D)

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## September 12: Free Morning in Cusco, Optional Lima City Tour, Depart for Home

We will enjoy one last free morning in Cusco before departing for Lima and our international flights home in the late afternoon. If you would like to visit Lima, please book your flights from Cusco to Lima in the morning, and we can arrange for a guided city tour of Lima in the afternoon before your international flights home. (B)

***OPTIONAL ACTIVITY***
***Guided Tour of Lima (Additional $100)***
*We may choose to visit a few of the following Lima highlights before boarding our flights home that evening. Our optional guided tour of Lima includes tours of the Cathedral, the convent of San Francisco and the Plaza Mayor. The tour price includes a private driver and English-speaking tour guide, bottled water and entrance tickets to each historical site. The tour lasts 4 hours. Minimum Number of Participants Required = 4.*

- *Plaza Mayor: It was here, in 1535, that Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro founded Lima. All the important colonial institutions were established around the Plaza and remain today as part of the historic center.*
- *La Cathedral: The Cathedral was built in 1625 in the Spanish baroque style.*
- *Government Palace: The Government Palace has a traditional and colorful changing of the presidential guard, not to be missed.*
- *San Francisco Church and Catacombs: San Francisco Church and Catacombs is Lima's largest religious complex with a convent, museum of colonial art, cloisters and catacombs.*
- *Museo Nacional de Arquelogia y Antropologia: A museum tracing the prehistory of Peru chronology from the earliest archaeological sites to the arrival of the Spaniards. Here you can see original pieces from and scale models of Machu Picchu and Chavin.*
- *Museo Rafael Larco Herrera: This private museum has one of the most incredible ceramics collections in the world. It is said to include 55,000 pots.*
- *Collection Polli: We can also arrange a special visit to the Private Collection Polli for those who may be interested. This must be arranged in advance.*
- *San Isidro and Miraflores: The residential areas of San Isidro and Miraflores are worth exploring to admire the colonial architecture that pervades Lima's urban living.*
- *Pacific Ocean: Enjoy a magnificent view of the Pacific from the coast.*

## *Train Travel Alternative*

Those who prefer not to hike the Inca Trail will have the chance to spend several days visiting additional sights in the Sacred Valley before taking the train to Machu Picchu. We will reunite with the trekkers at Machu Picchu. Please indicate at the time of booking if you would like to travel to Machu Picchu by train or by trekking the Inca Trail.

### *September 7: Sacred Valley of the Incas – Chinchero, Moray and Maras*

Today we will spend the morning visiting the ruins and town of Chinchero. En route, we will see the magnificent snow capped peaks of the Cordillera Vilcabamba. This is by far the most scenically impressive route in all of the Sacred Valley. After lunch, we will visit the agricultural terraces of Moray that were used by the Incas as open-air crop laboratories or greenhouses. Each terrace level is believed to have a different microclimate, enabling the growth of a wide variety of plants in the same area. We will finish our tour with a visit to the pre-Columbian salt mines of Maras that are still active today. These white salt terraces on overhanging cliffs are a true paradise and a must for photography. As the day draws to a close we will return to Ollantaytambo for the night at our Sacred Valley hotel. (B, L)

### *September 8: Sacred Valley of the Incas – Patakancha Village and Optional Hike to Pumamarca Ruins*

Today, we will drive on an unpaved road up the Patakancha River Valley to visit the little known high Andean village community of Patakancha. There are some houses, including the school, which have been recently roofed with tiles. Electricity has just arrived in Patakancha modern day wares are more readily available. Experience the Sunday market, where the villagers from different traditional communities and hamlets come to exchange and sell their goods. However, local people still live off their llama and alpacas and supplement their income working as porters during the tourist season, and their living standards are very basic. The porters we use for our treks come from Patakancha, which is why several years ago we decided to create a community project at Patakancha which aims to provide the locals with much needed first aid medical assistance from our donations and those of our visitors. We believe in sustainable tourism and giving back to the people who support us with their work. Please inquire with your guide to visit the project or make donations.

After lunch, we will have the option to trek to one of the smaller and less well-known ruins of Pumamarca. We will stop in Pallata where we will start our hike. We will walk uphill (1 ½ hours) at a leisurely pace to reach the ruins. After we visit the ruins and enjoy the breathtaking views, we will hike downhill (45 minutes) back to our vehicle. We will then drive back to our hotel. (B, L)

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## September 9: Train to Machu Picchu, Visit Machu Picchu and Hike to Inti Punku (Gate of the Sun), Optional One Day Inca Trail Hike

After breakfast, we will take the train to Machu Picchu. As soon as our train journey starts, the valley becomes a canyon; the cloud forest begins to appear with a strong vegetation change as we reach the Machu Picchu Sanctuary. The tracks follow the mighty Urubamba River through spectacular scenery called "the eyebrow of the rainforest". The train passes through several small villages where local Indian farmers tend their crops and reside as they have for hundreds of years. We will arrive at Aguas Calientes, our base for the next three nights. Our luggage will go directly to the hotel and we will board a bus which will take us directly to Machu Picchu.

*"I suddenly found myself in a maze of beautiful granite houses! They were covered with trees and mosses and the growth of centuries, but in the dense shadow, hiding in bamboo thickets and tangled vines, could be seen, here and there, walls of white granite ashlars most carefully cut and exquisitely fitted together."*

*Hiram Bingham, upon his discovery of Machu Picchu, 24 July 1911*

Machu Picchu is a perfectly preserved Inca city that was lost in the dense jungle for hundreds of years. Machu Picchu, whose name means "ancient peak," is perhaps the most famous and awe-inspiring of all of the ruins discovered during the 20th century. Machu Picchu was so well-hidden by the towering jungle-covered ramparts of the Cordillera Vilcabamba that it was never discovered by the Spaniards. Constructed on a high mountain overlooking the Urubamba River, Machu Picchu and Huayna Picchu were lost in time and the dense forest until they were brought to the attention of the outside world in July 1911 by the American historian and explorer Hiram Bingham. There are many speculations about the site's use, but its origins and purpose remain lost in time.

We will enjoy a buffet lunch at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge and then the afternoon at leisure to explore the ruins on our own or take an optional hike up to Inti Punku (Gate of the Sun) to meet the group hiking in that day. At the end of the day, we will transfer to our hotel in the village of Aguas Calientes, carefully set in a high tropical cloud forest. (B, L, D)

***OPTIONAL ACTIVITY***
***Inca Trail Day Hike to Machu Picchu ($400):*** *Those who prefer to hike the Inca Trail for one day have the option to disembark the train at Km. 104 and spend the day with a private guide hiking up to the beautiful ruins of Wiñay Wayna (where you will enjoy a picnic lunch) and to the Inti Punku ("Gate of the Sun"). This group will then follow the trail downhill to the lost citadel. Please note that this option requires special Inca Trail trekking permits purchased at least 3-4 months in advance. Please book this optional tour as early as possible to secure the required permits.*

## *September 10: Machu Picchu*

Today, we will start early and watch the sun rise over Machu Picchu. Our guide will escort us through the ruins, discussing the construction and probable usage of the buildings, reflecting on life in this spectacular setting. Later, we can hike to the top of Huayna Picchu, walk through the lush cloud forest to the Temple of the Moon or take more photographs of the area. We will enjoy lunch on our own at the ruins before meeting up with the trekking group when they arrive at Machu Picchu that afternoon. We will spend the night at our Aguas Calientes hotel. (B, D)

## *September 11 and 12: Machu Picchu, Cusco, Depart for Home*

We will follow the same schedule listed for September 11 and 12 on the Day by Day Itinerary, with the entire group traveling together.


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