

On the Trail of the Incas

Tour Style: Guided Walking Holidays

Destination: Peru

Trip code: LPWHW-14

Trip Walking Grade: 2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

When it comes to unforgettable attractions and unique experiences, this trip to Peru ticks all the boxes. Venture into the Andean Mountains for a boat trip across Lake Titicaca, spend time in Peru's culture-rich capital, Lima, and visit the Spanish-Inca city of Cusco, one of South America's most eye-catching spots. You'll also get to eat typical Peruvian food and learn about ancient weaving techniques on an Andean farm. The real showstopper though is a trek along the Inca Trail to the spectacular archaeological site in the sky, Machu Picchu. Best of all, you'll be led by a local expert like Wanderlust Guide of the Year, Efrain Valles, who's been sharing his passion for Peru's wonders for over 15 years.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Heathrow including baggage and transfers (flights available from other airports - price may vary)
- Guided walks with local leaders
- 14 nights' touring accommodation across Peru
- 14 breakfasts, 7 lunches & 9 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- All in-destination transport and internal flights

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Journeying to Machu Picchu, one of the seven wonders of the world
- A private boat trip across Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake
- Exploring Peru's vibrant capital city, Lima
- Cusco's mix of Spanish and ancient Inca architecture
- Trekking along the breathtaking Rainbow Mountain
- Celebrating Peruvian culture at a folklore dinner

TRIP SUITABILITY

This trip is graded Walking Level 2.

A mixture of part day walks and full day hikes ranging from 2-8 miles (3-13km), mostly on historic trails past Inca ruins, small villages and in timeless valleys.

ITINERARY

Day 1: LIMA

Arrive in Lima where a transfer will take you to the hotel. You'll have time to relax and settle in, before an included welcome dinner at the hotel this evening.

Day 2: LIMA CITY TOUR

Known as The City of Kings, Lima is packed with stunning colonial architecture and religious buildings. We'll tour some of the most important sites, including Huaca Pucllana, the Plaza de Armas, Lima Cathedral, and the Santo Domingo Convent. Afterwards, we'll head to the Larco Museum to marvel at a wide range of pre-Columbian art and artefacts. We'll round off in the Cafe del Museo to sample a local dessert made with an endemic Peruvian fruit known as "lucuma".

Day 3: LIMA - SACRED VALLEY VIA CUSCO

After our flight to Cusco, we'll travel to Yucay in the Sacred Valley - our base for the next four nights. On the way, we'll visit the Alpacas and Llamas at Awana Kanca farm to learn about local weaving techniques before lunch at a local restaurant.

Day 4: PISAC MARKET & RUINS

Distance: 2.5 miles (4 km)

Ascent: 1400ft (430m)

Descent: 1400ft (430m)

Altitude: 2970m - 3400m

Journey through the Andes and the famous Taray viewpoint to take in the Sacred Valley. On arrival at Pisac Inca complex, we'll explore the extensive ruins on a guided tour, passing through structures that served as homes, storage rooms, and temples. We'll also admire Inca altars, carvings, tunnels, caves, and the famous Intihuatana (sundial). Next, we'll follow a section of the Inca trail, circling a mountain to the religious part of Pisac, Intiwatana. We'll enjoy a picnic lunch before continuing to the town of Pisac via a tall waterfall. After

visiting the market, we'll transfer back. During our tour we'll also visit a traditional bakery to try freshly-baked bread or empanadas and learn about the guinea pigs of Peru.

Day 5: CUSCO AND THE SACRED VALLEY GASTRONOMY

Today we'll learn about the gastronomy of Cusco and the Sacred Valley by discovering the amazing variety of local crops including potatoes, tarwi, quinoa, beans, and more. Driving to the community of Huayllafara in Lamay, we'll be welcomed by the people who live and work on the land and taken to their Interpretation Centre. Here, we'll learn about Andean agricultural methods and traditional farming techniques as we taste a variety of fantastic homegrown produce. Our hosts will share traditional recipes and we'll sit down to lunch together. This is an amazing opportunity to become immersed in Andean life and culture. In the afternoon, we'll return to our hotel.

Day 6: CHINCHERO TO HUAYLLABAMBA

Distance: 5 miles (8 km)

Ascent: Negligible

Descent: 2132ft (650m)

Altitude: 3500m - 2850m

This morning we'll visit Chinchero, a town famous for its textiles made on backstrap looms. We'll join a local family of weavers in their courtyard to learn about this ancient Andean craft. We'll watch as wool is carded, spun, and dyed. We'll also learn about the different techniques used to create belts, ponchos, and shawls. We'll then trek down into the Sacred Valley of the Incas to the town of Huayllabamba. This route follows an original and rarely-used Inca trail still at many points in pristine condition. Here we meet our vehicle and continue to our hotel for our final night in Yucay.

Day 7: MORAY AND MARAS SALT PANS

Distance: 6.83 miles (11km) approx

Ascent: 165 ft (50m)

Descent: 2401ft (732m)

Maximum altitude: 3532m

Maras and Moray are two amazing attractions located within a short distance of each other in the Sacred Valley. Firstly, we'll visit Moray, an Inca archaeological site where several large terraced circular depressions were used to test crop production in various microclimates.

After visiting the ruins, we follow an ancient mule trail with spectacular views of the snow-capped Cordillera Vilcanota. We'll also see examples of the finest Andean farming on our way before heading back across the plains to the interesting town of Maras for lunch.

We'll then descend to the famous Salinas, 3,000 salt evaporation ponds that have been in use since Inca times. We'll explore this amazing site, then descend to the Urubamba River before transferring to our hotel in Ollantaytambo where we'll stay for the next 2 nights.

Day 8: INCA TRAIL: PUMAMARCA TO OLLANTAYTAMBO

Distance: 3.72 miles (6km)

Ascent: 164ft (50m)

Descent: 1968ft (600m)

Maximum altitude: 3400m

We'll start our day with a short drive north to the ruins of Pumamarca, 30 minutes above Ollantaytambo. Learn about the history and purpose of this less visited site with your guide and enjoy wonderful views. We'll then follow an old Inca Trail down the steeply terraced valley towards Ollantaytambo. We may see people ploughing with oxen or the colourfully-dressed locals walking down to town from the communities above. We'll then explore the old streets of Ollantaytambo.

This remarkably well-preserved fortress town was the site of the last big battle between the Incas and the Spanish before the remaining Inca rebels fled into the jungles of Vilcabamba. The short but steep climb up to the ruins is well worth the effort and its Inca sun temple displays some of the finest stonework in the area, as well as providing spectacular views along the Sacred Valley. The site was unfinished, and some magnificent stones still lie un-erected, providing important clues to the building methods. We'll stay in Ollantaytambo for the night.

Day 9: INCA TRAIL TOWARDS MACHU PICCHU

Distance: 6.83 miles (11km) approx

Ascent: 168ft (550m)

Descent: 76ft (250m)

Maximum altitude: 2650m

Today we'll embark on a shorter two-day version of the full Inca Trail hike to Machu Picchu. We'll transfer to Ollantaytambo station to board the train for a 1.5-hour scenic ride to a point known as Kilometre 104. From here, we'll begin walking. It's around four hours to the archaeological site of Wiñay Wayna and we'll stop en route at the recently restored ruins of Chachabamba. Wiñay Wayna is a great spot to take lunch amid a spectacular series of agricultural terraces and water features.

As we continue towards Inti Punku (the Puerta del Sol), lush vegetation flanks us on either side. We'll enjoy the scent of wild orchids and the sounds of brightly-coloured tropical songbirds. We'll then have our first spectacular view of Machu Picchu with plenty of time for photos. Before actually reaching Machu Picchu, we'll take a side road and head by bus down to the lively town of Machu Picchu Pueblo to check into our hotel.

Day 10: MACHU PICCHU: LOST CITY OF THE INCAS

We'll walk to the starting point of the bus for the short, zigzagging ascent up the road to Machu Picchu – the engineering marvel that was lost to the jungle for years. Rediscovered in 1911 by Yale professor, Hiram Bingham, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 and one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007.

A guided walking tour (around two hours) takes us to the most spectacular parts of the extensive archaeological complex. Afterwards, we'll have free time to explore and enjoy the views of the agricultural terraces, surrounding mountains, and deep gorges.

In the afternoon, we'll board the train for an interesting ride along the Sacred Valley of the Incas. The scenery is beautiful and the train jolts softly along, allowing you to sit, stare out the window and reflect on all you have seen before our waiting bus whisks us back to our Machu Picchu Pueblo.

Day 11: CUSCO

Located at an altitude of 3,399m above sea level, Cusco is considered the oldest city on the entire American continent. Our half-day city walking tour starts with visiting Plaza de Armas and its impressive cathedral. Admire

historic pieces from the Cusqueña School of Art, including the Macaw-winged cherubs and the guinea pig served at The Last Supper. Another highlight is Qoricancha temple, once home to the centre of the Inca Sun worship with its life-sized statues in solid gold.

You'll have time to visit San Pedro Market to buy tropical fruits fresh from the Amazon. Or, venture through the impressive Inca-walled streets up through the San Blas artisan district to San Cristobal church with your guide – the view over the red-tiled rooftops of Cusco is spectacular. Our hotel for the next two nights is located close to the centre of the city. There is also an optional visit to Chicuchas Wasi, a local school project that gives some of the poorest young girls in Cusco access to education.

Day 12: SACSAYHUAMAN & SECRET RUINS OF CUSCO

Distance: 3.1 miles (5km) approx

Ascent: 325ft (100m)

Descent: 650ft (200m)

Maximum altitude: 3750m

We'll enjoy a walking tour to explore the gorgeous countryside surrounding Cusco, firstly visiting the impressive site of Sacsayhuaman where huge stone ramparts surround a grass amphitheatre. Once the scene of fierce battles, it now hosts the recreation of traditional Inca ceremonies such as Inti Raymi and Warachikuy. Starting from the outskirts of Cusco, we pass the Temple of the Moon Inca ruins before joining Antisuyo - a recently restored Qapaq nañ (Inca road).

We'll continue to hike through an impressive eucalyptus forest before reaching the Inkilltambo ruins and stopping for a snack. After spending time exploring, we'll continue along an Inca trail passing some interesting remains of colonial kilns and looking out for Inca Burial chambers. We'll then meet our transport for a short drive back to central Cusco. Tonight, we'll enjoy a special dinner of Peruvian delicacies along with traditional music, dancing, and a folklore show.

Day 13: TO PUNO VIA RAINBOW MOUNTAIN

Distance: 2.48 miles (4km) approx

Ascent: 492ft (150m)

Descent: 492ft (150m)

Maximum altitude: 4,970m

We'll leave Cusco and travel towards Puno by bus, stopping en route at Palccoyo Rainbow Mountain. Located in the heart of the Vilcanota Mountain range, centuries of mineral deposits have caused the spectacular formation of this multi-coloured mountain landscape – a real sight to behold. We'll then take a short trail where, on a clear day, you can see the snow-capped peaks of Ausangate, Mariposa and Nevado del Inca. At the peak of our trail. We'll explore the Bosque de Piedras (Rock Forest) with its unique formations. We'll then continue to Puno and our hotel.

Day 14: LAKE TITICACA

Today we'll venture to the shores of Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable body of water. We'll cruise out to two of Titicaca's islands: the floating islands of the Uros (one of the world's most innovative feats of human engineering) and the natural island of Taquile. On both, you'll witness traditional ways of life, including the skills of the master weavers and boat makers who live on the lake. On Taquile, we'll visit the small and rarely visited rural community of Luquina, where we'll enjoy a buffet lunch at the local fisherman's house.

The floating islands of Uros were originally built for defence and made from the totora reeds that grow around the lake. We'll explore the main island and see the houses and watchtowers built of reeds. You'll enjoy a short presentation by a local resident about how the islands are made and also meet one of the local families to see how they live.

Day 15: DEPARTURE DAY

After breakfast enjoy your last day at leisure before transferring to the airport for your return flight home via Lima.

Day 16: ARRIVE UK

We arrive back in the UK.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Crowne Plaza – Lima

Discover the perfect blend of comfort and sophistication at Crowne Plaza Lima. Located in the vibrant Miraflores district, the hotel offers stylish rooms with modern amenities, plus easy access to the city's top attractions. After a long day of exploring, relax by the spacious pool and enjoy gourmet dining at the on-site restaurant. The hotel also has a fitness suite for morning workouts.

La Casona De Yucay

Nestled in the heart of the Sacred Valley, the Hotel Casona Yucay is where history meets nature. Surrounded by spectacular landscapes, this 19th century Spanish manor house turned hotel offers modern, clean rooms, that stay true to the building's character. Outside, you'll find lush gardens for relaxing in, plus a stylish bar perfect for pre-dinner drinks. When it's time to eat, you can look forward to delicious meals made with fresh organic ingredients from the hotel's own garden, plus breathtaking views of the Andes as you dine.

Hotel Sol Natura, Ollantaytambo

With easy access to Machu Picchu and other historic sites, Sol Natura Hotel is the perfect base for your Peruvian adventure. Blending modern comfort with natural beauty, this small and friendly hotel offers weary travellers the chance to relax in spacious, well-appointed rooms with stunning views of the Andean Mountains and the Sacred Valley. Though it's light on facilities, you'll find authentic local cuisine in the restaurant plus a peaceful garden area where you can soak up some sunshine.

Hotel Hatun Inti Classic

The Hatun Inti Classic offers cozy, rustic-style rooms just steps from the gateway to Machu Picchu. Unwind in comfortable rooms with all modern amenities and start your day with a complimentary breakfast to set you up for exploring the wonders of the ancient Inca citadel in the sky.

Hotel Xima - Cusco

Located close to the Plaza de Armas Square in the historic centre of the city, the Hotel Xima provides an unforgettable stay. Guests can enjoy the hotel's restaurant, bar, and spa as well as its relaxing outdoor patio area. The hotel is fitted with over 200 solar panels and proudly boasts itself as the first environmentally friendly hotel in Cusco. Rooms feature Wi-Fi, minibar, hairdryer and a safe.

Hotel Hacienda Plaza De Armas Puno

Experience the charm of Puno from the comfort of the Hotel Hacienda Plaza de Armas. The hotel is uniquely located in the city's main plaza, so you can start your day with a buffet breakfast served with a side of stunning views of the cathedral and historic centre. Simple rooms come in a traditional style with all mod cons, and you'll be in easy reach of the city's vibrant shops, bars, and restaurants.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Weather & Seasonality

Peru has very distinct climate zones between the coastal plain, the highlands and the Amazon basin. The holiday departures are planned for when the weather is generally at its best in the mountains, generally from March/April to October when the days are usually dry, clear and warm, with perhaps the occasional cloudy and rainy day. Temperatures drop considerably in the evenings and at night due to the altitude, so taking layered clothing is essential. During this season Lima and the coastal plain, where we spend a short amount of time, is often enveloped in a fine mist.

Joining Instructions (With Flights)

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

If you prefer to book the holiday without flights and make your own travel arrangements you will still be able to make use of the return group transfers between the airport and hotel, which are included in the cost of your holiday. You must contact us on [+44 \(0\)20 3974 8865](tel:+44(0)2039748865) or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk at least 8 weeks before your holiday start date to provide your flight details if you wish to join the transfers. If you do not contact us, we will assume you are making independent travel arrangements.

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives. If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group.

Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)

- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

Safety On Your Holiday

Please inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders have to consider both group and individual safety at all times.

Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you abide by certain basic safety rules:

- Please listen to any safety instructions from the guide
- Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor
- Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you
- Respect the guide's decisions
- Keeping covered to avoid sun exposure and insect bites
- Drinking plenty of water to avoid sunstroke and dehydration
- Understanding that you are entering National parks and there are certain rules concerning litter, restricted areas, waste and wildlife that you must abide by
- Being honest with yourself concerning how comfortable you are and if your limits are being pushed
- Advising your guide if any medical emergency arises that if left untreated, could jeopardize the safety of the entire group
- Seat-belts are a legal requirement in all transport in Peru. Clients should ensure they use them or let the guide know if they do not function

Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List).

In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services on 911. Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

Dietary Requirements

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs.

If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

Vaccinations & Health

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see if any health precautions are needed. The following websites provide a wealth of information on travelling and health:

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk

Vaccines: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Typhoid & Tetanus vaccinations are recommended. Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever are sometimes recommended too. Please take precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. Altitude sickness is also a risk, our itinerary is planned to help reduce this.

Travelling in Peru does not carry major health risks, provided simple precautions are followed.

Medical treatment is not easily available and can be more difficult to access outside of Lima. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

Passports & Visas

Passports

A full passport valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of entry will be required to enter Peru.

As part of the booking process, we will require advance passport information from you. This should be completed in your My Booking area online.

Regulations for Inca Trail permits requires this information to make bookings. Without your passport information, including its late submission to HF Holidays, no booking for this element of the holiday can be made for you.

We will also require a colour copy of the photo page of your passport a minimum of 90 days prior to the departure of your holiday. Please ensure the copy sent to us is of the passport you will travel on to Peru. This copy can be:

- A scanned copy, emailed to touradmin@hfholidays.co.uk – this method is preferred, where possible.
- A colour photocopy posted to Tour Admin Team, HF Holidays Ltd, Unit 1, 1st Floor, Imperial Place, Maxwell Road, Borehamwood, WD6 1JN.

Visas

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.

British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Useful Information

Altitude sickness is also a risk. Our itinerary is planned to help reduce this. The tour has been devised to ensure that acclimatisation to altitude takes place gradually, so that by the time you go on your hikes in the Cusco region you should be well acclimatised. To reduce any symptoms of altitude sickness, you should drink at least

2 litres of water per day

You cannot use tap water for drinking water or to clean your teeth.

You cannot use tap water for drinking water but you can clean your teeth with the tap water

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote: <https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

If you are arranging your own travel insurance, please ensure it is adequate for your specific itinerary. Generally, this should include cover for walking at altitudes over 4,000m.

Luggage

Luggage Allowance

Please check the details of your airline's baggage allowance, as shown on your e-ticket. Remember to also check any connecting flights you may have booked.

On the km104 Royal Inca trek, we ask for your luggage to be split into three parts.

i) Your **day-pack** with your personal items: Rain-coat, sun-block, camera, water, insect repellent, fleece, snacks, passport, vaccine certificate, money, sun-hat, sunglasses etc

You will carry this whilst trekking.

ii) Your **overnight bag**. This has a change of clothes, shoes, and toiletries.

Your guide will hand out a soft zip-up bag at the brief to facilitate this.

This is picked up from Ollantaytambo and dropped off by a porter at your Machu Picchu Hotel.

This is limited to 5kg per person in-line with Peru rail baggage rules.

iii) Your **extra luggage** and/or large suitcases.

This can be left with your transport in Ollantaytambo to be relocated to your Cusco hotel.

Lost/Damaged Luggage

If your bag or its contents are damaged or lost while in the airline's care, this should be reported to the baggage service agents at the airport on arrival. They will assess the damage; in some cases, the airline may decide to settle your claim immediately.

You will be given a reference to quote to your insurance company if an immediate settlement is not possible - in many cases, baggage claims can only be accepted in writing. A baggage claim form must be obtained from the airport.

Local Currency

The unit of currency in Peru is the Nuevo Sol (S/). US Dollars are the easiest currency to change and usually offer the best rate. Please ensure that you have access to emergency funds, a credit card being the most convenient. Traveller's cheques are not advised.

Visa cards are the most widely accepted by ATM's

Your budget will depend on your own spending habits – you will need some money for drinks and any souvenirs you may wish to buy, but US\$ 200 may be enough.

Local Time

GMT/UTC -5 hours

Electricity

220V, 2 pin plugs, either flat or round pins

ATM Availability

Visa cards are the most widely accepted by ATM's

Suggested Reading & Maps

Suggested reading

- Lonely Planet, Peru, 2016 Hiram Bingham,
- Lost City of the Incas, 1950 Trailblazer Guides- The Inca Trail Cusco & Machu Picchu www.trailblazer-guides.com

Maps

Although you won't need them, if you'd like any maps of the destination, you can obtain some in advance from The Map Shop: www.themapshop.co.uk

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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