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services

Local experts for



Ultimate Peru.

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PERU | 13DAYS / 12NIGHTS

Route: Round-trip from and to Lima

Type of tour: Culture and nature


Departure days: Daily

TOUR OVERVIEW

Experience the ultimate Peruvian journey, visiting beautiful colonial cities, the ruins of ancient civilisations and exploring some of the most spellbinding scenery anywhere in the planet. Meet the descendants of the Inca and learn all about the three indigenous camelid species. Behold the vast Colca Canyon and the condors that patrol the sky above it, and travel through the ages in the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Observe how time has stood still on the islands of Lake Titicaca and make the pilgrimage to the peaks of the Andes to discover the magnificent Machu Picchu. Groups vary in size but are typically made up of about 6-10 travellers.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

DURATION: 13 days / 12 nights



Start & finish destination
Lima

Destinations

1. Arequipa	3. Puno	5. Urubamba
2. Colca Valley	4. Cusco	6. Aguas Calientes

Arequipa: Explore the small walled town within a town that is the colourful Santa Catalina convent as well as the Jesuit church and enjoy awesome views of Mt Misti volcano

Pampa Cañahuas Reserve: Journey through extensive plains populated by vicuña camelids

Colca Valley: Enjoy the stunning views of the 4,000-metre-deep canyon from Condor Cross lookout, see condors in flight and visit a number of historic villages and ancient ruins

Lake Titicaca: A boat ride takes you to Taquile island and the artificial floating Uros Islands

Cusco: The Inca capital is a mix of ruins and Spanish colonial architecture. Visit the Santo Domingo monastery, the cathedral and the ruins of Sacsayhuaman and Tambomachay

Awana Kancha: Learn all about llamas, alpacas and vicuñas at this farm and observe how their wool is woven

Sacred Valley: Discover the ancient town of Pisac and the Inca fortress of Ollantaytambo among other sights

Machu Picchu: The lost city of the Incas sits atop an Andean peak offering a unique insight into this once-mighty empire

DON'T MISS

Chullo: The ubiquitous Andean hats made from the wool of llamas, alpacas and vicuñas, they are warm and colourful, and often have symbols, which serve to identify the owner's origin or married status

Ceviche: Unfairly labelled as 'Peruvian sushi', the national dish is raw fish marinated in citrus and chili, served with sides such as corn on the cob and sweet potatoes

Love is in the air: Head to Parque del Amor in Lima's Miraflores district, the scenic spot facing the Pacific Ocean where lovers go to embrace and kiss

DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 | LIMA

Arrive at Jorge Chávez International Airport, where you are met by a representative and transferred to your selected hotel in Lima. Rest of the day free at leisure.

- Overnight in Lima hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.

DAY 2 | LIMA – AREQUIPA (90 mins flight time)

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before transfer to the airport to catch a flight to Arequipa in the south of the country. On arrival in Arequipa, you are met by a representative and transferred to your selected hotel in the city. In the afternoon, head for a tour of Peru's third-biggest city, which is popularly known as the 'White City' because of the sillar volcanic rock used in many of the buildings. Visit the sensational **Santa Catalina convent**, which for centuries was a forbidden city within a city, closed off from prying eyes and the influences of the outside world. This convent, founded in the 16th century, was an almost self-sustained village, made up of houses for the nuns and their servants, cloisters, plazas and narrow streets, kitchens, refectories and more. The nuns' families paid vast dowries for their daughters to be admitted, which added to the convent's wealth and prestige. Nowadays, to wander through its brightly coloured alleys is to step back centuries in time to colonial Peru. Continue to the **Church of the Company**, perhaps the greatest masterpiece of Peruvian baroque, to study its fascinating façade. The vestry is particularly beautiful with its cupola and walls covered in murals representing the jungle while the Jesuit seminary is famous for its beautiful principal cloister. Explore the city's main square, Plaza de Armas, admiring its elegant colonial buildings such as the cathedral before heading to the residential districts of **Yanahuara** and **Chilina**, where you can enjoy a magnificent view of Mount Misti volcano rising above the city in the horizon.

- **Overnight in Arequipa hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**



DAY 3 | AREQUIPA – COLCA VALLEY (180km – 3.5 hrs)

Depart Arequipa after breakfast at the hotel, driving through the **Yura district** en route to the Colca Valley. Yura is characterised by a number of dramatic geographical features such as gullies, mountain ranges and canyons. Continue through the **Pampa Cañahuas Reserve**, an extensive plain populated by vicuñas, one of the four indigenous Andean camelids found all over Peru. Cross through the **pampas of Viscachani and Toccra**, skirting the crater of the **Chucura Volcano** to reach the Los Andes scenic lookout in **Patapampa**, which is 4,800 metres above sea level. From here, you can see the various volcanoes that surround Arequipa. Lunch is in the picturesque town of **Chivay** with transfer in the afternoon to the hotel of your choice in the Colca Valley. Rest of the day at leisure or you may visit the local hot springs.

- **Lunch included. Overnight in Colca Valley hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 4 | COLCA VALLEY

After breakfast at the hotel, prepare for a day of high drama with a trip to the breathtaking **Condor Cross lookout**. Take a deep breath and appreciate the sheer vastness of the Colca Valley, which is one of the world's deepest canyons with a maximum depth of more than 4,160 metres – twice that of the Grand Canyon. The thrill of the experience is enhanced by the natural spectacle of huge condors flying over the canyon and before your very eyes. Watch in awe as these graceful birds of prey glide over the canyon, patrolling it with military discipline. Descend to the valley floor to discover some of the rustic towns on the banks of the River Colca such as **Chivay, Pinchollo, Maca, Achoma and Yanque**, where quaint colonial churches are as much a part of the scenery as the peaks of the Andes. There are also stops at the scenic lookouts of **Antahuilque and Choquetico**, where you can admire majestic views of the valley. After lunch (included), visit the village of **Coporaque**, which is famed for its whitewashed Renaissance church dating from the late 16th century, and **Chininia Colcas** to admire the pre-Inca constructions on vertical natural walls. Continue to **Ocolle**, an artificial amphitheatre formed by agricultural terraces built by the pre-Inca Kallawayaya culture. Finally, there's an optional hike to the little-explored archaeological site of Uyo Uyo.

- **Lunch included. Overnight in the Colca Valley hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 5 | COLCA VALLEY – PUNO (LAKE TITICACA) (770km – 7 hrs)

Today you have a morning of leisure following breakfast at the hotel. After lunch, which is also at the hotel, take to the road for **Puno** on the western shore of **Lake Titicaca**. The route cuts through the **Salinas and Aguada Blanca National Reserve** and takes in the stunning 'stone forests' of **Patahuasi**. The landscapes and scenery could not be more forbidding yet enchanting, with a combination high plains, unusual rock formations and lagoons populated by cranes drying their wings in the icy wind above the water. On arrival in Puno, transfer to your selected accommodation for check-in, with the rest of the day free at leisure.

- **Lunch included. Overnight in Puno hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 6 | LAKE TITICACA

Transfer to the shore of Lake Titicaca after breakfast to enjoy a motor boat cruise, alighting at a number of the islands in the lake. The first stop is at timeless Taquile island, where the native Quechua-speaking residents have maintained their ancient social system and earned a reputation for their fine hand-weaving technique. The island's history is also as fascinating as people, having been a penal colony during Spanish colonial times. Board the boat again to continue the voyage of discovery at the unique Uros Islands. There are more than 40 of these floating islets, which are made entirely from totora reeds plucked from the lake. Learn all about the making of the islands, their lifespan and upkeep while exploring these marvels of engineering made using only primitive materials and methods. Return to Puno with rest of the day at leisure.

- **Lunch included. Overnight in Puno hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 7 | PUNO – CUSCO (390km – 10 hrs)

Savour breakfast at the hotel before taking to road for Cusco. Transfer from your hotel to the station to take the bus to the former Inca capital. Travel through the jaw-dropping landscapes of the highland plateau, which are dotted by Andean hamlets and herds of grazing llamas and vicuñas. Stop en route at the archaeological site of **Pukara**, which dates from 200BC to 300AD, as well as in **Raqchi** to admire the ruins of an Inca temple built to worship Wiracocha, one of the most important Inca gods. There is one more stop before Cusco at **Andahuaylillas**, a picturesque town famed for the beautiful 16th century Church of St Peter the Apostle. It boasts a gilded baroque interior and frescoes so delicate that it is known as the 'Sistine Chapel of America'. Upon arrival in Cusco, you are met by a representative and transferred to your selected hotel in the city.

- **Lunch in a restaurant en route included. Overnight in Cusco hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**



DAY 8 | CUSCO

Morning at leisure in Cusco after breakfast. In the afternoon, enjoy a guided tour of this charming city, which was the capital of the Inca Empire. The tour starts with a visit to **Santo Domingo Convent**, a large Renaissance-baroque complex, which was built over the Inca **Koricancha temple**. It was one of the most important temples dedicated to the worship of the sun and its foundations are still prominent at the base of the convent. Ancient chronicles say the temple was covered in gold leaf and filled with golden representations of nature. Head towards the elevated neighbourhood of **San Cristobal** and pause to take in the magnificent views of the city, before proceeding to explore a series of Inca ruins in the outskirts of Cusco. Visit the remains of the fortress of **Sacsayhuaman**, whose imposing ramparts offer a stunning panoramic view of Cusco, the ruins of **temple and amphitheatre of Qenqo**, and the archaeological site of **Tambomachay**, where the god of water was worshipped. Return to Cusco and pause at the pretty **Plaza Regocijo** before continuing to **Plaza de Armas** to visit the **cathedral**. It features an elaborate Renaissance façade and, like other important monuments in the city, was built over a demolished Inca temple. At the end of the tour, transfer to the hotel with the rest of the day free.

- **Overnight in Cusco hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 9 | CUSCO – SACRED VALLEY (75km – 8 hrs)

Relax over breakfast at the hotel before departing to explore the River Urubamba valley, which is popularly known as the **Sacred Valley of the Incas**. The first stop is at **Awana Kancha**, a farm-cum-zoo, where indigenous South American camelids are bred. Learn all about the friendly and adorable llamas, alpacas and vicuñas. Their wools produce superb fibres, which are woven using ancient techniques into items such as ponchos and the ubiquitous chullo hats. Proceed to **Pisac**, a historic town situated on the floor of the valley, where you can browse the local handicrafts market and bargain with vendors. Break for lunch at a pleasant hostelry in the countryside and continue to the ruins of the Inca fortress of **Ollantaytambo**, which protected access to the Sacred Valley. The site appears to have been built just before the Spaniards arrived and evidence of how it looked in its prime is still appreciable. Continue to Urubamba town for check-in at your selected accommodation.

- **Lunch included. Overnight in Sacred Valley hotel on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 10 | SACRED VALLEY – MACHU PICCHU – AGUAS CALIENTES (115km – 4 hrs by train)

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before transferring to Ollantaytambo station to catch the **train to Machu Picchu**. After a scenic journey through the dramatic Andean landscape, arrive at the station in **Aguas Calientes**. Here you board a coach for a 25-minute ride to Machu Picchu itself. The 'Lost City of the Incas' had lain abandoned in the heavens for four centuries until American explorer Hiram Bingham happened upon it in 1911. Machu Picchu is believed to have been built in the 1450s by Inca emperor Pachacuti as a holiday retreat yet within a century the city would be abandoned following the Spanish conquest. The Spaniards never found it so it was spared the destruction they wrought on other Inca sites. Instead, it was slowly swallowed up by the jungle and hidden from harm. A guided tour explains the origins behind this awe-inspiring citadel and the most prominent landmarks among the 200 or so buildings such as the monumental Main Square, the Royal Quarters, the Temple of the Three Windows, the Circular Towers, the Sacred Sun Dial and the Burial Grounds. Return to Aguas Calientes for lunch at the famous Café Inkaterra, a beautiful thatched-roof restaurant hemmed in between the railway and a mountain.

- **Lunch and dinner included. Overnight in Aguas Calientes hotel on a half-board basis.**

DAY 11 | AGUAS CALIENTES – CUSCO (110km – 4 hrs)

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by a free morning. We strongly recommend that you wake early today and make your way to see the sunrise over Machu Picchu. This is a genuine once-in-a-lifetime experience. The best views are from Huayna Picchu, which is about 360 metres above Machu Picchu, and Inti Punku, which offers even better views from some 390 metres above the citadel. In the afternoon, return by train to Ollantaytambo station and, on arrival, transfer to your selected hotel in Cusco.

- **Overnight in Cusco on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 12 | CUSCO

After breakfast at the hotel, enjoy all day free at leisure in Cusco.

- **Overnight in Cusco on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

DAY 13 | CUSCO – LIMA (75 mins flight time)

Transfer to the airport after breakfast at the hotel to catch your flight to Lima. Upon arrival at the capital's airport, we provide assistance on any requirements you may have for international departures.

END OF SERVICES

INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:

- Operated with bilingual English and Spanish-speaking guides

ACCOMMODATION:

- Twelve nights as indicated on a bed-and-breakfast basis

MEALS:

- Daily breakfast, lunch on D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D9 and D10, and dinner on D10

TRANSPORT:

- Transfer from/ to hotel accommodation, between cities, during tours and return train tickets to Machu Picchu

ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:

- All monuments and visits as indicated: Santa Catalina convent and Jesuit Church in Arequipa; Pampa Cañahuas Reserve, Viscachani and Toccra pampas, Patapampa lookout, Condor Cross, Antahuilque, Choquetico and Ocolle lookouts, and Uyo Uyo hike in the Colca Valley; Salinas and Aguada Blanca National Reserve; Lake Titicaca cruise with visit to Taquile and Uros Islands; Pukara archaeological site; Wiracocha Temple in Raqchi, Andahuaylillas church; Santo Domingo Convent, ruins of Sacsayhuaman, Qenqo and Tambomachay as well as the cathedral in Cusco; Awana Kanca camelid farm, Ollantaytambo Inca fortress and Machu Picchu

OTHERS:

- Portage at airports, stations, hotels and during transfers

NOT INCLUDED

- Expenditures of a personal nature, drinks and meals if not stated explicitly in the programme
- International tickets to Peru
- Domestic tickets
- International and domestic airport departure taxes
- Second bus and second entrance to Machu Picchu (for the sunrise on D11): USD 84.00
- Entrance to Huayna Picchu for the sunrise: USD 96.00

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comfortable and light clothes are convenient when visiting coastal areas of Peru, while warmer clothes are required for stays in Andean mountain areas. Visitors should not wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts or skimpy clothing when visiting religious or official buildings. Sun protection, sun glasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay