



Classic Inca Trail

There's something about the Inca Trail that has drawn people to it for decades. Maybe it's the stunning scenery and the pure mountain air; maybe it's the wildlife or the chance to walk the same paths as the Incas themselves. Or maybe, just maybe, it's because after four days trekking, you come over the last mountain pass and get to see the sun rise over Machu Picchu - the lost city of the Incas.

As well as the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu itself, this classic Peru holiday package manages to fit in all the great Inca sites in Cusco and the Sacred Valley of the Urubamba as well. Even better, this holiday means you can see them all in 10 days so if time's tight you still don't need to have any worries about missing out on top sites like Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo and Pisac. If you think this sounds like the Peru holiday for you then read on below and see if you like the sound of following in the footsteps of the Incas...



Day One - Your Peru Holiday Begins!

Arrive in Lima on an evening flight as you begin your holiday in Peru! You will be met at the airport and driven to your hotel in the trendy Miraflores area of the city in time to take a walk around the elegant Parque Kennedy and perhaps to take in an evening meal on your first night in Peru. Of course, since this is your first night on holiday in Peru, then if you're feeling up to it then Miraflores is a great place for a night out...



Day Two - Travel to Cusco

Today you will catch a lunchtime flight to Cusco - the ancient Inca capital. You will be taken to your hotel and then we have left the rest of the afternoon free for you to have a bit of an explore. Cusco is an incredible city with modern life existing side-by-side with centuries of history. You will be having a full city tour tomorrow but it's still a good idea to have a walk around the town as you get used to the altitude. In the evening it's worth trying out one of the restaurants around the buzzing Plaza de Armas as Cusco has probably the best cuisine and nightlife outside Lima!



Day Three - Free day in Cusco

A holiday isn't a holiday if you don't have a chance to relax so today is all yours - you can have a wander around the local markets, stroll through the bohemian San Blas district and check out the art and jewellery, or just sit back with a few coca teas and get those postcards written.



Day Four - City tour of Cusco

Today will be spent on a tour of the main sites in the city itself, and also in the surrounding hills. You will visit the fortress of Sacsayhuaman, the temple complex at Kenko, Tambomachay and many other unique and beautiful locations. You will have the evening free to relax and enjoy a meal overlooking the lively central square



Day Five - The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu

A spectacular early morning drive back through the Sacred Valley takes us to our trailhead at Km. 82 of the Machu Picchu railway. After getting acquainted with our porters you will set out, crossing a footbridge to hike a gentle two hours down the Urubamba canyon, and then visit imposing sculpted Inca farming terraces and the settlement of Llaqtapata on the banks of the Cusichaca side river. We then climb a short way up the Cusichaca valley to Huayllabamba, the last inhabited village on the trail, where we camp. We include all your meals and equipment while you're on the trail as well, so you don't need to worry about a thing!



Day Six - The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu

We climb the steep-sided Llullucha valley past a rushing stream and through enchanting subtropical woodland. Crossing the rim of a small plateau, we find ourselves in the puna, the treeless grasslands of the high Andes. The trail traverses an open slope opposite mighty mountain crags as we ascend to the first and highest pass, Warmiwāñusca (4,200m). Here we encounter spectacular views of the trail ahead to the second pass, and look back to the sweeping snowpeaks and valleys of the Huayanay massif. We then follow the trail to the floor of the Pacaymayo valley, where we camp for the night.



Day Seven - The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu

This morning, we pick up an Inca stairway and ascend again past the small Inca site of Runkuracay. As we reach the second pass, the landscape opens onto spectacular new views to the snowpeaks of the Pumasillo range. We descend to the ruins of Sayacmarca (Inaccessible Town), an intricate labyrinth of houses, plazas and water channels, perched precariously on a rocky spur overlooking the Aobamba valley. The Inca trail, now a massive buttressed structure of granite paving stones, continues along the steep upper fringes of the cloud forest through a colourful riot of orchids, bromeliads, mosses and ferns. At the third pass pinnacles topped with Inca viewing platforms overlook the archaeological complex of Phuyupatamarca (Cloud-level Town).

Pausing to explore the maze of Inca stone towers, fountains and stairways that spills down the mountainside here, we begin a long descent through ever-changing layers of cloud forest. An Inca stairway partly cut from living granite leads us finally to our camp by the ruins of Wiñay Wayna (Forever Young), the largest and most exquisite of the Inca Trail sites.



Day Eight - The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu

An early morning hike takes us across a steep mountainside through lush, humid cloud-forest of giant ferns and broad-leaf vegetation. Suddenly we cross the stone threshold of Intipunku (Sun Gate) and encounter an unforgettable sweep of natural beauty and human artistry – a backdrop of twisting gorge and forested peaks framing the magical city of Machu Picchu.

We complete the final leg down the royal flagstone walkway, past outlying shrines and buildings and into the heart of Machu Picchu, where we spend the rest of the morning with a guided tour of the highlights and some individual exploring among Machu Picchu's multitude of hidden nooks and corners. In the early afternoon a bus takes us down to the foot of the mountain to the small town of Aguas Calientes, where you will be staying overnight.



Day Nine - Back to Machu Picchu

Today you will have the opportunity to revisit Machu Picchu, and to make sure you explored every corner of this unique site. Perhaps today might be a good opportunity to climb up to the sun-gate, or to visit the watch-tower on Wayna Picchu from where you will get an unparalleled view of the site. You will return by train to Cusco in the evening.



Day Ten - Last day on holiday in Peru

Sadly, today will be your last day in Peru! You will catch a lunchtime flight from Cusco back to Lima so you will have a full afternoon to explore the capital and enjoy its superb colonial architecture (or its shops!) before being picked up from your hotel and taken to the airport for your international flight back to the UK.

Easy upgrades

As we've said, we can tailormake your itinerary to your exact specifications, and you can have a look at our Peru Guide or some of our other Peru Holidays for ideas about how to add to this holiday, but we can also offer you some easy optional extras which fit into this exact itinerary:



An Amazon Jungle Adventure - from £300pp

Take a walk on the wild side and add a few days in Peru's Amazon rainforest. You can stay in a range of excellent jungle lodges which allow you to see a truly incredible range and variety of wildlife, all within a short flight from Cusco...



Colca Canyon - from £280pp

More acclimatisation time ahead of your Inca Trail trek is always a good idea, and Arequipa and Colca Canyon offer an ideal halfway-house between sea-level and the height of the trail. They're well worth seeing in their own right as well, so why not add a few days and treat yourself!



Visit to Lake Titicaca - from £140pp

Another option for increased acclimatisation is a trip to Lake Titicaca, which would give you the chance to see this amazing site and really build up your tolerance to the altitude. Or you could opt to see this after your trek and fly back to Lima from here.

Tailormade for you

Of course, what we want you to remember is that we're here to offer you any guidance and advice you need. We're not about trying to sell you more than you want - we want you to have the holiday that's right for you, so give us a call or send us an email and we can start to find out what sort of Peru holiday is right for you!