

CULTURAL WALKING ADVENTURE

# Peru

## Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley & Cusco



CLASSIC JOURNEYS  
THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS





“

*Classic Journeys  
provides unbeatable  
access to experiences  
around the globe.”*

TRAVEL + LEISURE

## Land of the Incas, Past & Present

Machu Picchu is actually in a jungle. If you take the Inca Trail to the lost city, you approach from above. And the stupendous blocks of stone in its walls are so finely carved that you could barely slip a piece of paper between them. Believe us, Machu Picchu retains the ability to startle and inspire you no matter how many years you've thought about visiting. You will get the shivers the first time you see it, spending all or part of three days at the site (unlike the brief in-and-out visits many tours make). Plus we give you immersive exposure to the rest of Peru with its conquistador-tinted history, indestructible Inca architecture and spectacular geography. You're in the Andes, so there are incredibly scenic trails, and your guide is a native Quechua who'll make you as comfortable in Cusco as you'll be among mountain villagers and llama herders.

## The Classic Journeys Difference

- ACTIVE HIKING & WALKING
- LOCAL WELL-CONNECTED GUIDES
- PREMIERE HOTELS
- FOODIE FOCUSED
- HANDCRAFTED TRIP DESIGN
- MORE IS INCLUDED

## What's Included

- All breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

## Above & Beyond Benefits

### → INVISIBLE CHECK-IN

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately. No waiting – no tipping.

### → PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

## Terrain

Easy to moderate countryside trails with option to do several more difficult walks.

DAY 1 »

## Cusco

You meet in Cusco, a sort of “Zorro-meets-Raiders-of-the-Lost Ark” city and the ceremonial heart of the Inca empire. Where you’ll spend the first afternoon exploring the highlights such as the Temple of the Sun. Once, its walls were covered with over 700 sheets of gold studded with emeralds and turquoise.

It’s hard to believe that people in the 21st Century still walk through narrow cobblestone streets flanked by Incan stone walls every day. But they do, and you join them as you walk to the Plaza de Armas for a visit to the Cathedral. It’s an impressive Baroque reminder of Spanish colonization. Then join your guide for a walk to the artists' quarter of San Blas. Whitewashed buildings with bright blue doorways house galleries, studios, and small shops filled with weavings, alpaca sweaters, and ceramics.

Dinner tonight offers your first taste of excellent Peruvian cooking –reminiscent of Spanish food with plenty of beef and seafood, all prepared with a special local accent. By the way, Cusco is your highest point during the week. If you’ve skied at any of the resorts in the western US, you’ll find it to be very similar. So today’s walks should more than acclimate you for the rest of the week.

MEALS: D

OVERNIGHT: CUSCO

DAY 2 »

## Sacred Valley

As you continue our way into the Sacred Valley, you depart for the mountaintop ruins of Pisac. How did ancient people without machines build these cities? It’s a question you’ll all ask again and again - especially when you see these fortified ruins on foot at eye level, clinging to a rocky spur high above the Urubamba Valley. It’s a real act of imagination to grasp how the Incas built aqueducts that fed the public baths here. The views are spectacular, but that can’t have been the only reason. As you wind our way along the footpaths, you get a closer look at Inca terraces, which are still in use by local farmers centuries after they were built.

After visiting this amazing place, you arrive at a gracious hacienda nestled among the mountains. Here you’re welcomed by the family that has occupied this property for over 300 years as you are invited to a lunch of traditional Peruvian specialties. Join your hosts for a pisco sour (a popular Peruvian drink, similar to a margarita) in their peaceful garden overlooking the Sacred Valley. After lunch, you have time to wander around the property, enjoying the family’s renowned collection of art and artifacts.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: SACRED VALLEY

DAY 3 »

## Chincheró / Salineras Salt Mines

Start your explorations today in the mountain village of Chincheró, a charming community known as the "town of the rainbow." The town was built as a resting place for the traveling Inca royalty in the 1400s and today is known for its excellent weaving. We've arranged a special weaving demonstration at a women's crafts cooperative, seeing firsthand the famous Inca weaving techniques passed down for centuries. It's also an example of how our guests are leaders in what travel can do positively. It used to be the best travel anyone could contemplate was 'leave no footprints'. Now, that goal has been replaced and elevated to 'plant a seed'. We approach that goal of sustainability by supporting children's education and women-owned local businesses to ensure the long-term prosperity of the places you visit with us in developing nations. That includes village schools and women's craft cooperatives in regions like the Peruvian Andes. Your explorations with Classic Journeys help to preserve cultures and positively shape the future of developing countries.

Next, you're off on a series of scenic trails and tracks, passing through the Sacred Valley's fertile patchwork of fields. (The ones where the ancient grain quinoa is grown are actually red!) The Andes are the backdrop. You'll walk through red-roofed villages, under the shade of palm trees, stopping only if the path is blocked by a flock of sheep.

Midday, enjoy a picnic lunch with spectacular views of the Sacred Valley. Fueled up, you continue on foot to explore the salt mines of Salineras in Maras that were mentioned in the chronicles of the conquering Spanish. Return to the Sacred Valley in time for a local chef to welcome us into his kitchen to cook an Andean- style meal together. (Hot chocolate truffles, anyone?)

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: SACRED VALLEY

DAY 4 »

## Ollantaytambo / Urubamba

A morning walk leads to Ollantaytambo, a still-thriving Inca village set below ancient ruins that retain the stonework, narrow streets, and family courtyards of pre-Columbian times. Much of the Inca history in Peru was destroyed by the Spanish, but Ollantaytambo is an important ceremonial site and scene of one of the only major Inca victories against the invading Spaniards. As you explore and visit with the colorfully dressed townspeople, you have the feeling of stepping back into the 15th century. Not far away, we've coordinated a special visit to a Quechua mountain village unchanged for hundreds of years. Just past flocks of sheep, you're welcomed into a local school with a special opportunity to spend quality time with the kids and their teacher. (Consider packing pens, pencils and notebooks from home for the village children. Kids may also want to bring some of their spare clothes to share.) Everyone has an opportunity to try out the Quechua words they've learned from our guides.

Later in the day, wander through the town of Urubamba for a visit to a pottery workshop to meet our friend Pablo Seminario in his studio. (One of Peru's most renowned ceramists, Pablo has a permanent exhibition at Chicago's Field Museum.) A walk leads to the busy Urubamba market, where street vendors still sell livestock, produce, crafts and chicha, a thick white fermented corn drink that was prepared by the Chosen Women in the Inca court, and is still consumed throughout Peru.

MEALS: B

OVERNIGHT: SACRED VALLEY

DAY 5 »

## Inca Trail / Machu Picchu

If you travel until you're 100, you'll have a few days when you can choose between two more wonderful alternatives: trail or train. Either way, you start the day with a scenic chug out of the Sacred Valley on the Inca Rail train. Then, at a brief stop by the train, you can choose your adventure for the day.

Will you tackle the Inca Trail? It's legendary, spectacular, and not for the faint of heart. (It also requires an advance reservation, so you have time to prepare physically and mentally. See the note below.) As the train makes its brief stop, you and one of our guides leave the train to follow the incredibly scenic trail that rises in elevation by 1,500 feet over 5-6 hours of sometimes strenuous walking. You'll have unforgettable views of the Vilcabamba mountain range as you ascend through the cloud forest that encircles Machu Picchu. The effort pays off when you reach the Sun Gate – at a point that's actually higher than the site itself. This is the famed view of Machu Picchu you've seen so often. You'll be tired, but you'll have bragging rights forever! From here you descend through the site to reach your hotel. We save the detailed guided tour of Machu Picchu for tomorrow. Or will you opt for the luxurious train ride? You get breathtaking views without ever getting out of breath. As the valley narrows, the river tumbles through dramatic rapids. Through the picture windows and panoramic roof, you'll see a succession of Incan ruins. Late in the morning, you arrive in Aguas Calientes and check into our over-the-top hotel. The afternoon is yours. You can shuttle up to Machu Picchu for your own personal visit to the site in advance of our guided exploration tomorrow or stay at the hotel to enjoy some relaxation. (You'll also have a chance to feel sorry for the many day-trippers who do their entire Machu Picchu visits in one day from Cusco. You, on the other hand, spend two leisurely nights!)

**Note: Inca Trail Regulations:** Regulations created to minimize the impact on the fragile environment of the Machu Picchu Sanctuary allow only 500 people daily hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. One of the memorable included options that we provide you on this trip is the opportunity to walk a section of the Inca Trail. We advise you to reserve early to secure your spot. You'll be pleased you did!

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: AGUAS CALIENTES

DAY 6 »

## Machu Picchu

Your hotel is just a brief shuttle to Machu Picchu. You don't have to rise with the tree frogs in order to arrive before the onslaught of day-trippers. The explorer Hiram Bingham re-discovered Machu Picchu hidden in the cloud forest in 1911. The task of revealing the site is almost as hard to fathom as the original process of constructing it. You have plenty of time to explore on your own and with your guide, listening to the stories your guide has to tell.

The Incas worshipped nature, and built many of their structures in harmony with the dramatic landscape. Your guide leads you through the mazes of plazas, chambers and dwellings, explaining the different theories surrounding the city. (Some think it was the home of an Inca ruler, Pachakutek; others speculate that its function was to maintain a reliable supply of coca leaves for the priests and royals of Cusco. And some think that Machu Picchu was a university where the children of the leaders conquered by the Incas were taken to be taught and brainwashed.!) A highlight is the round Temple of the Sun. An astronomical observatory; the windows are perfectly aligned to catch the first rays of the sun on the mornings of winter and summer solstices. Since these ruins remained hidden during the Spanish conquest, they were spared from destruction.

After lunch, you have a number of options. Several scenic trails begin right at your hotel. It's also a great chance to do some birding with a chance of spotting 16 types of hummingbirds, the unmistakable crimson silhouette of the gallito de las rocas, or maybe even a Technicolor quetzal. You can also take advantage of the exceptional spa services available on the property, take a walk into town, or relax with a cocktail before dinner.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: AGUAS CALIENTES

DAY 7 »

## Cusco

Your last morning, you return to Cusco by train, arriving midday. From here, you can fly to Lima for flights home that night, or extend your stay in Peru exploring the famous rainforest or the National Museum and lovely neighborhoods in Lima.

MEALS: B



## Tour Hotels



### [Belmond Monasterio](#)

Located in Cusco's historic center, this former 17th-century monastery is now a 5-star hotel. The rooms, furnished in a combination of colonial and modern styles, overlook a garden courtyard surrounded by the original stone arches of the monastery.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



### [Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado](#)

On the banks of the Urubamba in the Sacred Valley, this luxury hotel is built to resemble an Andean village. Serene rooms offer stunning views of the valley. Quiet gardens are perfect for exploring, taking a dip in the pool, or sipping a pisco sour.

NIGHTS: 3 nights



### [Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#)

Set among 13 acres of tropical gardens featuring over 140 species of orchids, this hotel proudly 100% carbon neutral. Spacious rooms are situated in unique hillside casitas and feature lovely tile floors, carved wood furniture and luxurious bathrooms.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



# Arrival & Departure

## → ARRIVAL DETAILS

START LOCATION: **Lobby of Belmond Hotel Monasterio**  
START CITY: **Cusco**  
START TIME: **1:30 PM**

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## → DEPARTURE DETAILS

END LOCATION: **Airport**  
END CITY: **Cusco**  
END TIME: **2:00 PM**