

CLASSIC JOURNEYS

THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS

Peru

Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley & Cusco



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*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-tinged 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.



DAY 1 »

Cusco

- Enjoy guided exploration of the historic center
- Relaxing at your perfectly-sited hotel

You meet in Cusco, a sort of "Zorro-meets-Raiders-of-the-Lost Ark" city and the ceremonial heart of the Inca empire. In the company of your expert local guide, you'll explore the Temple of the Sun, built as a sacred place by the Incas to honor their Sun God. 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 will too as you walk to the Plaza de Armas for a visit to the Cathedral, marveling at the impressive Baroque reminder of Spanish colonization.

Dinner tonight offers your first taste of excellent Peruvian cooking, which is reminiscent of Spanish food with plenty of beef and seafood, all prepared with special local flavors. 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

- A countryside walk to four impressive Inca ruins
- Scenic drive to our hotel at the foot of the Andes

As you continue into the Sacred Valley, you'll visit the remote village, Viacha, to learn about their traditional Peruvian Andes houses made with adobe walls and tiled roofs. Stroll through the village's narrow paths and meet with the locals, hearing first-hand stories about life in rural Peru. Continue on foot along scenic countryside trails to the ruins of Pisac. This unique archaeological site features temples, ceremonial altars, water channels and wells, and you'll wonder, 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. As you wind your way along the footpaths, soak in the incredible views of the Sacred Valley and take an up-close look at Inca terraces, which are still in use by local farmers centuries after they were built.

Make your way through farmland that is tended by ox-led plows where you'll be welcomed into a gracious hacienda nestled among the mountains. Visit with the family who has occupied this estate for over 300 years and enjoy 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'll 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 »

Chinchero / Salineras Salt Mines

- Traditional lunch at a 300-year-old hacienda
- Private demonstration of Inca weaving techniques

Start your explorations today in the mountain village of Chinchero, a 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. You'll be welcomed into the home and studio of a local artist and master weaver, seeing up close the ancient Inca weaving techniques passed down over centuries. Get the 'only with Classic Journeys' access to witness wool spinning and weaving techniques used in this region of the Andes and learn all about natural dyes and traditional patterns. Learn first-hand about the importance of sustainability by supporting cultural education and women-owned local businesses, resulting in regenerative travel that ensures the long-term prosperity of the people in the Sacred Valley. Your explorations with Classic Journeys help to preserve the cultural heritage of the Peruvian Andes.

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 Urubamba mountain range and its snow-capped peaks provide a spectacular background as you make your way across the Chinchorro pampa (flat land) to the archaeological complex of Moray. Explore this fascinating man-made site and marvel at the three groups of circular terraces, each with 12 levels. With your expert guide, learn how this was created by the Incas between the 12th and 14th centuries and how these levels facilitated the adaptation of plant species for a deep dive into their agricultural history.

Savor a picnic lunch of local specialties with spectacular views of the Sacred Valley. Fueled up, continue on foot to explore the salt mines of Salineras in Maras that were mentioned in the chronicles of the conquering Spanish. Known as the 'white gold of the Andes', the origin of these 3,000 natural salt wells goes back thousands of years and is still being actively excavated and unbundled today.

MEALS: B, L, D OVERNIGHT: SACRED VALLEY

DAY 4 »

Ollantaytambo / Urubamba

- Visit with locals in a remote highland village
- Mingle with vendors in a local market

A morning walk leads you 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 the largest known Inca cemetery, getting up close to ancient ceremonial baths, and visiting with the colorfully dressed townspeople, you'll 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'll be welcomed either into a local school—when classes are in session—or into a family's home during village holidays, with a special opportunity to spend quality time with the children and their teacher or parents. (Consider packing pens, pencils and notebooks from home for the children.) No Duo Lingo, Babel or Rosetta Stone needed here! You'll be able to communicate with the children using Quechua words and phrases that you've learned from your guides.

Continue to the Pumamarca ruins and on foot into Ollantaytambo town, sharing the trail with llamas and alpacas. Get your camera ready as you pass by small waterfalls, cross over wooden bridges, and soak in the view from several lookout points. Later in the day, return to the Sacred Valley for a private lesson with a local chef as he welcomes you into his kitchen to cook an Andean-style meal together. (Hot chocolate truffles, anyone?)

MEALS: B OVERNIGHT: SACRED VALLEY

DAY 5 »

Inca Trail / Machu Picchu

- Ride the scenic Inca Rail train to Machu Picchu
- OR hike along the famous Inca Trail
- Enjoy jaw-dropping views of Machu Picchu from the Sun Gate

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 iconic view of Machu Picchu. 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 Incanruins. Late in the morning, you arrive in Aguas Calientes. 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 on Inca Trail Regulations: Created to minimize the impact on the fragile environment of the Machu Picchu Sanctuary, these regulations allow only 500 people daily to hike 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.

MEALS: B, L, D OVERNIGHT: AGUAS CALIENTES

DAY 6 »

Machu Picchu

- Leisurely visit to Machu Picchu and the Temple of the Sun
- Cloud forest walks past waterfalls, hot springs, petroglyphs, orchids and hummingbirds

You don't have to rise with the tree frogs in order to arrive before the 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 opportunity 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

- Inca Rail train along the spectacular Urubamba River
- Part company in Cusco

This morning you'll return to Cusco to explore the artisan quarter of the San Blas neighborhood. Begin with a visit to Hilario Mendivil's impressive gallery, which houses his vast collection of original works from his lifetime. In his former home and workshop, you'll learn first-hand about his techniques as a Cusqueñan craftsman and see his sculptures up close. Get the opportunity to meet with his family members and other local artists who continue his artistic legacy. Then stroll through the charming neighborhood, making your way through whitewashed buildings, galleries and studios, as well as small shops filled with weavings, alpaca sweaters, and ceramics.

Late afternoon, you'll be transferred to Cusco airport where you can fly to Lima for returning flights home that night or extend your stay in Peru.

MEALS: B

Tour Hotels



[Palacio Del Inka](#)

A Luxury Collection Hotel, Palacio del Inka is a historic 500-year-old mansion in the heart of Cusco. Enjoy the historic charm, modern amenities, relaxing spa, and local artwork that is featured on the property.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



[Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba](#)

This contemporary hotel with colonial inspiration is located in the heart of Urubamba Valley. From the comfort of this luxurious Andean property, you can discover the history, nature and charm of the Sacred Valley.

NIGHTS: 3 nights



[Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#)

Set among 13 acres of tropical gardens with over 140 species of orchids, this hotel is proudly 100% carbon neutral. Immersed in nature, the spacious rooms are situated in unique hillside casitas and feature carved wood furniture and luxurious bathrooms.

NIGHTS: 2 nights

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

LOCATION: Lobby of Palacio Del Inka
CITY: Cusco, Peru
TIME: 1:30 PM

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

LOCATION: Airport
CITY: Cusco, Peru
TIME: 3:30 PM

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ▶ CURATED WALKS THAT LEAD TO 'ONLY WITH CLASSIC JOURNEYS' EXPERIENCES
 - Immerse and connect you across cultures as you explore on foot
- ▶ EXCEPTIONAL LOCAL GUIDES
 - Bring authentic experiences to life
- ▶ ENCHANTING ACCOMMODATIONS
 - Where luxury and local mean you feel at home
- ▶ EAT LIKE (& WITH) THE LOCALS
 - Local flavors and time to savor the moments together
- ▶ SMALL GROUPS, GUARANTEED
 - Mean deeper, richer experiences while making friends along the way
- ▶ REGENERATIVE TRAVEL
 - We take strides to preserve cultures, traditions, and nature

What's Included

- Accommodations for 6 nights
 - All breakfasts, 3 lunches and 4 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.

▶ PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

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

Enhancing Your Journey

We're constantly seeking ways to improve your experience. Count on us to update you with any significant changes before departure. Minor adjustments may be communicated by your guides during the trip to ensure you have the best possible journey.