

Machu Picchu, Peru



Itinerary

Day One

Today you will be catching your trans-Atlantic flight to Peru. You can fly with KLM via Amsterdam or with Iberia via Madrid. Early this evening you will be landing in Lima, Peru where you will be spending the first night of your holiday.



Day Two

This morning after a night's rest you will be flying to Cusco – the ancient capital city of The Inca Empire. This city was the political and religious centre of the Incan civilisation and it is now the cultural capital of Peru. Here you will find a mixture of ancient and colonial history combined in a multicultural m el e. The colonial buildings have been constructed upon the ancient Inca foundations. The Empire of the Sun revolved around this town and this is where 'the children of the sun' lived and worshipped. The Incas were the royal class of this civilisation – the legend originally says that the Incas came from The Titicaca Lake, a man and a woman were born from the sun and the man was given a golden stick, the sun told him that where the stick sunk into the earth, this was where he should build his empire and this place was Cusco. Today this vibrant city offers visitors a mixture of art, culture and history. This evening you will be staying in the splendid Casa Andina Hotel.



Day Three

After an early breakfast, guests will be picked up at 7:00 am at their hotel in Cusco, this morning you will be heading for the Inca ruins of Tarawasi near the town of Limatambo (approx. 1.5 hrs from Cusco). These ruins were formally an Inca Temple and were an important resting place for Inca travellers heading from the coast to Cusco. After leaving Limatambo, we pass through the mountain village of Mollepata where there will be a short coffee break, before ascending a winding mountain road to the Coronilla Ranch where you will meet the horses. Here, after period of familiarisation, we will begin our ride to Soraypampa. This is a good opportunity for guests to acclimatise and to enjoy a beautiful 3-4 hour trek on their first day of riding. Soraypampa is located in between two sacred Inca mountains, as you ride along you pass from a river valley into a glacier valley and you will be able to look across the valley and see the ancient Inca irrigation channels cut into the side of the mountain. You will also see an ancient forest of polylepis trees (queunas) native to this region. Tonight you majestic peak at the head of the valley – the "Salkantay", the 2nd most sacred peak in Inca mythology and, at 20,600 ft (6,270 m), the highest in the region. The lodge is designed to resemble an Inca Palace with all the luxury and elegance that this period of history evokes. After a warm welcome by our friendly staff, guests will be shown to their rooms and have time to freshen-up. The first afternoon is spent at





leisure to adjust to the altitude, taking advantage of the outdoor jacuzzi or just walking in the beautiful surroundings. An evening briefing by the fireplace is followed by aperitifs and dinner.

Day Four

Today you ride out for three hours in the surrounding area of Soraypampa to visit the Humantay Lake which is fed by the glacier far above on the slopes of Humantay Mountain. The Inca's considered glacial lakes to be the 'eyes' of the mountain and to show respect to the mountain Gods they would build apachetas (stone piles) and today walkers carry on with this tradition. A short walk of about thirty minutes is necessary in order to reach the lake, but the view is well worth it and those brave enough can even go for a swim. We return to the lodge for lunch, after which there is the option to ride out again for around two hours in the surrounding area, or guests may choose to trade the glacial swim for a relaxing soak in the outdoor jacuzzi. We spend the night at the Salkantay Lodge and Adventure Resort with gourmet food and warm, comfortable beds. In the evening, the guide will brief the party on gear and the itinerary for the next four days. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are taken at the Lodge.



Day Five

Today we continue our ride (about five hours) towards Machu Picchu, riding up the Salkantay River and passing between Salkantay and Humantay Mountains. The mountain pass is 4800 metres (14,800 ft) above sea level and this is the highest you will be during the trip. Today you will have the opportunity to make your own offering to the mountain. Your cultural guide will instruct you in the manner that you should make your offering (of coca leaves) and as you let your leaves fly into the wind you can ask the mountain for a wish. Throughout the ride keep your eyes open for Andean condors, common to this area. From the pass you can see our destination of the Wayra Lodge ("Wayra": wind; 'the place where the wind lives'), but before we reach the lodge lunch will be served in a spectacular glacial valley with an amazing view of Vilcabamba Snow Mountain Range. The Wayra Lodge has been built to resemble an Inca religious shelter. The decoration inside the lodge is representative of the Inca's religious beliefs. You will find pictures and artifacts relating to ancient pilgrimages and Chaman rituals. Dinner and overnight at the Lodge.



Day Six

Today we leave the high pampas and head for the river valley that is known as the cloud forest. The scenery changes dramatically as the temperature rises becoming hot and humid. Bamboo trees, orchids and hummingbirds appear in the increasingly verdant scenery. You will pass through small family communities who eek out their living by farming and fishing. Inquisitive children come to see the horses and are happy to wave you on your way. The ride today is three hours long, you may need to get off and walk in some areas as the trail can be quite narrow. Upon arrival at Collpa Lodge we are greeted with a Pachamanca (traditional underground stone cooking). This traditional meal is famous for its cooking method which consists of layering meat with hot stones and then covering the whole thing up with earth to bake. After observing the uncovering of the Pachamanca, which consists of a variety of meats (chicken, lamb, beef, pork) and vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes and yucca) we enjoy our meal. Collpa Lodge is built at the conjunction of three rivers, one of which flows to Machu Picchu. As with all the lodges it is built in a unique style, this time to





commemorate the art and music of both the Inca and the colonial times. Brightly coloured masks and traditional hand woven ponchos adorn the walls. The outdoor jacuzzi has panoramic views of the lush green mountains. We spend the afternoon relaxing or walking in the surrounding area. Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

Day Seven

Today we head down the Santa Teresa river valley, through banana and passion fruit orchards and coffee plantations. This area is rich in minerals and hot springs bubble up from deep underground. Flocks of paroquets squawk noisily in the tree canopy that rises up from the mountain side. The coffee grown here is said to be one of the best organic coffees in the world. You will also notice a change in the appearance of the local people as you ride closer to the jungle. Along the way we stop for lunch, the chef from the lodges will appear as if by magic to prepare food to the usual excellent standard. Afterwards, we continue our ride (a total of around five hours) to the beginning of the Llactapata Inca Trail, the second most famous Inca Trail which is where we say goodbye to our horses. A short thirty-minute walk through an avocado orchard brings us to Lucma Lodge. Lucma Lodge celebrates the nature of the area, inside there are many plants and beautiful pictures of butterflies and orchids which you will have seen at first hand along the route today.



Day Eight

Today our destination is the bustling town of Aguas Calientes, also known as Machu Picchu town. Those who wish to can hike this distance but others may catch a bus instead. The hikers will leave the lodge after breakfast and head uphill for around two hours towards Llactapata pass (2600 metres/8500 feet). After heading downhill for about ten minutes you will come upon the recently restored Llactapata Ruins from where you will catch your first glimpse of Machu Picchu across the river valley. This perspective is one that few tourists get to enjoy. We walk another ten minutes or so to our lunch spot where we enjoy a picnic lunch with the same view of Machu Picchu. After lunch we will then descend to the Vilcanota River through bamboo forests, orchards and coffee plantations, a descent of between two and three hours. Aguas Calientes, the town of Machu Picchu, is a short train ride away and here we check into the beautiful Inkaterra Hotel for dinner and a well-earned rest. The whole group spends the night together in Aguas Calientes.



Day Nine

Today there will be an early start in order to make the thirty-minute bus ride up to Machu Picchu to arrive before sunrise. You will then enjoy a private guided tour of the city, followed by several hours in which you are free to explore the ruins by yourselves. Afterwards you will return to Aguas Calientes by bus for lunch and then take the afternoon Vistadome train to Ollantaytambo (about an hour and a half), where you are transferred by car to Cusco (about one hour) and our splendid hotel, The Casa Andina, we spend the night here.



Day Ten

This is the last day of your trip. After lunch you will be transferred to Cusco airport for the flight back to Lima. Transatlantic flights depart in the early evening and you will be back in England by mid afternoon of the following day.

This Riding Holiday is of a First Class Standard

All of the accommodation (hotel's and lodges) used throughout your stay are of a first class standard. All meals are included except for dinner on the first night in Lima and on the last night in Cusco.

The riding is challenging in places although the horses, who are mainly American Quarter Horses with some Arab crosses and thoroughbreds are well trained and are more than able to cope with the difficult terrain. Throughout the tour you will have a cultural guide (on horseback where necessary) and a horse trekking guide. A doctor will accompany the group throughout the trekking part of this holiday. There is a maximum of 6 – 8 guests and in addition to the staff already mentioned, two wranglers will also assist the group.



Prices

This ride runs from May to October. 2010 departure dates are;

May 9th and 21st

June 15th

July 6th and 27th

August 17th

September 7th and 28th

October 18th

Cost per person in a shared twin (excluding flights) £1995

Single room supplement only applicable if not prepared to share

Transatlantic flights from UK to Lima cost from £800 - £1000 depending on your dates of travel. You will also have to buy a short internal flight from Lima to Cusco with LAN airlines (50 minutes) which start at around £50 each way.




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