

PERU JOURNEYS: LUXURY TOUR

**LIMA, AREQUIPA, LAKE TITICACA, CUSCO, AMAZON,
MACHU PICCHU, PERU'S CHALLENGE PROJECT, LIMA**

Duration: 19 days / 18 nights



Includes:

- Private sightseeing with English speaking guides
- Unless otherwise stated, all accommodation is of a 4* or 4* superior rating with private bathroom and includes breakfast and service taxes
- Most meals as mentioned in the itinerary
- All internal land, water and air transport
- All entrance/park fees
- Passengers will be escorted throughout the whole tour by our experienced English-speaking tour leaders

Not Included:

- International airfares
- International and local departure taxes
- Visas
- Meals not included in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Laundry costs
- Tips and items of a personal nature

Your LUXURY tour BONUS inclusions:

- Salsa dancing class in Lima
- Have lunch at a unique Peruvian Cevicheria
- Dinner at the Santa Catalina Convent in Arequipa
- Traditional dance class in Puno – the Folkloric capital of Peru
- Reed weaving class in the Uros Islands
- Visit a local Chica factory in the Sacred Valley

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ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival into Lima

Arriving into Lima International Airport late in the evening, you will be met by our personalised tour leader. You will then be transferred to your hotel, conveniently located in the seaside suburb of Miraflores.

Miraflores takes its name from its many beautiful flower beds. The area has a big Central Park and numerous cosy restaurants, bars and pubs.

Overnight Lima

Meals included: n/a

DAY 2: Lima

Take the morning to sleep-in and relax and we will meet downstairs for a briefing on our exciting Peruvian Journey.

This afternoon you will experience a guided sightseeing tour to the most attractive and important sites in Lima, the "City of Kings".

Lima is a city of contrasts with remains of its Colonial past to the ultramodern, high-rise buildings of the financial centre. This tour offers you the possibility to see this eclectic mix for yourself. Our tour will include a visit to the Lima Monumental, passing by the historical squares of San Martin and Plaza de Armas; the City Hall and the Cathedral with its religious art museum.

We will also visit the Convent and Church of San Francisco - the greatest monumental complex of Colonial Art in America and with a Cultural World Heritage listing. During your visit you can admire the 21 Basilica, the Convent of Cloisters, the Capitulary and Clementine Rooms, the Chorus and Library of the monks and the underground Catacombs among other things.

Visit the residential districts of San Isidro and Miraflores, passing by Huaca Pucllana - a ceremonial scaled pyramid made of hand-made bricks which used to be the main administrative centre of the Lima Culture.

We will then visit El Olivar Park with olive trees brought from Spain in the XVth Century, the Central Park of Miraflores and Larcomar - a symbol of Lima's modernity. Here we will enjoy views of the Park of Love overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Tonight dinner has been arranged at a typical Peruvian restaurant close to the hotel.

Overnight Lima

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

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DAY 3: Lima - Arequipa

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight to Arequipa – the white city. We will be met by our transfer company and taken to our accommodation in Arequipa.

In the afternoon, we will enjoy a guided city tour of Arequipa. We will visit the Plaza de Armas (Main Square) – one of most beautiful within Perú, the Cathedral, the church and cloister of Jesus Company, the Church of San Francisco and the Convent of Santa Catalina. The Convent was built in the XVIth century and is an exclusive visit considering that it was closed to visitors for more than 400 years.

We will then visit the outskirts of Arequipa. Visits to the beautiful districts of Yanahuara, known as the "balcony of Arequipa"; Caima with its colonial church; and Sabandia with its typical XVIIth century water mill, are also included on this afternoon. We will then transfer back to our hotel.

Overnight Arequipa

Meals included: Breakfast & DINNER

DAY 4: Arequipa – Colca Canyon

After your fulfilling breakfast, we will pick you up from your hotel and begin our scenic drive to the Colca Canyon.

On route you will spot groups of vicuñas (wild South American camelids) in their natural habitat. We stop at Patapampa, also called *the window of the Andes*, and is situated at 4,820 metres above sea level (16,051 feet). From here experience magical views over the beautiful Valley of the Volcanoes as well as the Mismi Volcano.

After we have completed our spectacular descent into the Colca Canyon we will stop for a delicious lunch. This afternoon we will begin our travel through the majestic canyon making our way to Chivay to stop for the night at our hotel.

The people living in the Colca Canyon region are known for their traditional clothing, especially the women's clothes. Their dresses and jackets are beautifully embroidered, and their hats are distinctive. In the Chivay area their white hats are woven from straw and are embellished with lace, sequins and badges.

Upon arrival in Chivay enjoy free time to visit the La Calera Hot Springs.

Overnight Colca Canyon

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

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DAY 5: Colca Canyon - Arequipa

In order to maximise our chance of seeing condors on the journey today, we will depart very early and travel towards the "Cross of the Condor".

From the lookout, the view is impressive, with the river flowing 1200m below. After your breathtaking experience watching the condors fly through the canyon, you can choose to walk down into the Colca Canyon for a short trek. This enables you to see this magnificent canyon up close.

Driving a little further into the canyon there is the possibility see some pre-Inca ruins and watch the way of life in this remote land. The landscape throughout the canyon is remarkable for its Inca and pre-Inca terracing which goes on for many kilometres. There are several villages along the way who continue to use these terraces today.

From here we return to Chivay for lunch and continue our journey back to Arequipa. We will arrive back at Arequipa at approximately 5.00pm where we will transfer you to your hotel.

Overnight Arequipa

Meals included: Breakfast & lunch

DAY 6: Arequipa – Lake Titicaca

This morning you will be transferred to the Arequipa airport to take the flight to Juliaca. You will then meet our transfer and take a short bus ride to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca.

There is time for lunch before your afternoon visit to the famous Chullpas of Sillustani. These ancient funereal towers, dating back to pre-Inca times are examples of the most ancient cultures found on the altiplano. They were used by the Aymaras to bury their important leaders. Lake Umayo, located in front of the Chullpas, adds further beauty to this area.

Tonight we will enjoy a dinner at a typical Peruvian restaurant.

Overnight Puno

Meals included: Breakfast & dinner

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DAY 7: Lake Titicaca

After breakfast, we will head out on our boat tour across Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world. Legend has it that the first Inca rose out of its azure waters and today you will see how these island people live very similarly to the first Inca.

Just 45 minutes boat ride, we can visit the floating islands of the Uros people. You will have the opportunity to appreciate traditional aspects of their life, like fishing, hunting ducks, and constructing nearly everything out of reeds.

Then it is onto to the famous textile island of Taquile. On Taquile you will admire its terraces, a great variety of buildings and stunning textile works. This memorable visit allows you to view the local community during its different daily functions working in perfect harmony.

After our lunch on the island, we will walk down to the port and catch our boat back to Puno.

On arrival in Puno, you will be transferred to your hotel.

Overnight Puno

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

DAY 8: Lake Titicaca - Cuzco

Today will travel to Cuzco in style on what is said to be one of the ten most beautiful train rides in the world. Relax in the first class carriages as you wind your way through the high altiplano region of the majestic Andes Mountains.

On arrival in Cuzco this evening, you will be transferred to your hotel.

Overnight Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast & dinner

DAY 9: CUZCO - PUERTO MALDONADO - POSADA AMAZONAS

After breakfast in the hotel, you will be transferred to the airport for a flight to Tambopata, Puerto Maldonado deep in the lowlands of the Amazon Jungle.

On arrival in Puerto Maldonado you will receive a brief tour of the town. Puerto Maldonado is situated at the confluence of the mighty Madre de Dios and Tambopata Rivers and is a bustling, booming tropical frontier town. You will then drive thirty minutes to the Tambopata river port in the community of Infierno and board boats for a one hour trip by motorized canoe to Posada Amazonas.

During our voyage we may see bird species typical of the river or forest edge such as: Black Skimmer, Pied Lapwing, Capped Heron, Jabiru Stork, Roadside Hawk, and several species of kingfishers, swallows and flycatchers. When we arrive at Posada Amazonas we will unpack and unwind. We will then receive a short orientation and briefing on the lodge and the Ecotourism Project before our afternoon activity - the canopy tower. From the top of this 35 metre scaffolding tower experience the spectacular views of the river and the surrounding forest. There are also excellent opportunities to observe birds from the canopy including parrots, toucans and macaws.

Meals Included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 10: POSADA AMAZONAS-TAMBOPATA RESEARCH CENTER

Today you will be up at dawn for a visit to the Tres Chimbadas oxbow lake. Look for giant river otters, turtles, hoatzin, and wading birds on your canoe ride around the lake. The giant river otters that are seen in Tres Chimbadas belong to a resident family of nine.

As we approach noon, animal activity decreases, and we will continue travel up the Tambopata River for 5 to 6 hours into the pristine heart of the reserve. After the first hour we will leave the final traces of human habitation behind as we cross the northern boundary of the 700,000 hectare, completely uninhabited nucleus of the Tambopata National Reserve. Differences in wildlife abundance will be noted immediately: we will begin to sight macaws, herons, kingfishers and cormorants and improve our chances of encounters with capybaras, caiman, storks, ducks and other wildlife. We will have lunch on the boat.

We will arrive at Tambopata Research Center in the early afternoon, and we will be greeted by the Chicos, our flock of semi-wild, rescued macaws. After our orientation session we will hike the 1.5 mile Bamboo Trail, a trail that is famous for the abundance of rare birds that live exclusively in this habitat and are endemic to southern Peru. It is also the home of the frequently found Howler and Dusky titi monkeys. As we birdwatch our way through the trail we will end our hike at the overlooks which is a good place to observe canopy birds like tanagers, jacamars, elaenias, guans and oropendolas.

We will return to TRC for dinner. After dinner, to cap off a fulfilling day we can take a frog walk through the forest, allowing the photo lovers to take beautiful macro shoots of American bullfrogs, horned frogs, tree frogs and an incredible variety of colourful insects.

Meals Included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

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DAY 11: TAMBOPATA RESEARCH CENTER

At dawn we will cross the river and enjoy the world's largest macaw clay lick where hundreds of parrots and macaws of up to 15 species congregate daily. You can expect to see ten to twelve of the following members of the parrot family: Red-and-green, Blue-and-gold, Scarlet, Red-bellied, Chestnut-fronted and Blue-headed Macaws; Mealy and Yellow-crowned Amazons; Blue-headed, Orange-cheeked and White-bellied Parrots; Dusky-headed, White-eyed, Cobalt-winged and Tui Parakeets and Dusky-billed Parrotlets. This show will continue until the macaws sense danger, usually in the form of an eagle, and depart simultaneously in an explosion of sound and colour. Around mid-morning, when the most intense clay lick activity is over for the day, we will return to TRC for breakfast.

After breakfast we will hike the 1.5 mile Ocelot Trail, a trail which exemplifies the quintessential rainforest. Although at this time of day mammals and birds are not as active as in the early morning, we will concentrate on the forest itself and discuss general rainforest ecology. This forest, which is estimated to be 200 to 300 years old and includes truly huge Ceiba trees and Strangler figs is home to several mammals that are occasionally encountered: Saddleback tamarins, Squirrel and Brown Capuchin Monkeys and Collared peccary. This trail is the one which most often sports ocelot, puma and jaguar tracks, although any one of these three large cats is extremely difficult to spot.

We will return to TRC for lunch and then embark on a 2 mile hike to the palm swamp, a nesting colony and preferred roost for Blue and Gold and Red-bellied Macaws. Although there are different degrees of macaw activity at the swamp year round, the most exciting time to visit it is from October to March, during the nesting season, when macaws will land on the nests and stand there for several minutes, interacting with other individuals at less than 20 feet from our observation tower. The scenes at the swamp, especially with late afternoon sun in our backs, make prized photo opportunities. After a lazy afternoon with the macaws we will hike back to the lodge for dinner.

Meals Included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 12: TAMBOPATA RESEARCH CENTER - POSADA AMAZONAS

We will wake up at dawn once again to visit the macaw clay lick and then return for breakfast. After breakfast we will take a short five minute boat ride to a small, drying oxbow lake where we will spend the morning on a platform in the middle of the pond observing some of its birdlife, which may include hoatzin, duck, ibis, woodpeckers, chachalaca, parakeets, oropendolas and numerous flycatcher species. We will return to TRC and embark to Posada Amazonas, arriving at mid-afternoon. We will spend our last night in the rainforest in this wonderfully designed lodge enjoying its happy hour as we ponder over the exciting happenings of the past few days.

Meals Included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

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DAY 13: POSADA AMAZONAS-PUERTO MALDONADO - CUZCO

After an early breakfast we will return to Puerto Maldonado for our flight to Cuzco

We will be met at Cuzco airport and transferred to your hotel.

This afternoon you can relax and enjoy the beauty of the city of Cuzco.

Overnight Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast & dinner

DAY 14: Cuzco City

Today we will have breakfast in the hotel and enjoy a half-day city tour of Cuzco – the centre of the Inca Empire. First, we will visit the main Cathedral on Plaza de Armas. It was built over the Inca palace of Suntur Wasi, its construction took almost one century (94 years) artists from Cuzco and Europe worked in its design. The most important sites inside are the chapel of Virgin of the Remedies and Inmaculada Concepción. "El Señor de los Temblores", Saint of this city, keeps this name since 1650 of March 31, the date when he was taken out of the Cathedral to calm the earthquake.

Then we will visit the Sun Temple of Qorikancha. Its construction took place when Pachakutec governed and it was one of the most important temples built by the Incas. It was the house of the bishop who taught the worship of the Sun, where the chosen virgins were sacrificed to the main God.

The ruins of Saqsayhuaman will be our last stop. These are located 2kms to the north of Cuzco. In the Inca times the city of Cuzco had the shape of Puma and its head was the Saqsayhuaman site. However this was destroyed by the Spanish, but still today we can see fabulous cyclopean walls, where some of the rocks used are five metres high and weigh more than 350 tonnes. The ruins were constructed with the help of thousands of workers lead by the Inca king - Pachakutec.

This afternoon is yours to wander Cuzco's narrow cobblestone streets, museums, churches and experience its terrific atmosphere.

Overnight Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast & lunch

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DAY 15: Cuzco - Sacred Valley

After breakfast at the hotel, we will travel through the famous Sacred Valley of the Incas. First stop is a tour of the agricultural Inca ruins of Pisaq. Next, we can try our bargaining skills with the savvy market vendors in the ancient Inca village of Pisaq. (held on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays)

After all that shopping and bargaining, we will stop for lunch at a local restaurant in Urubamba (not included). In the afternoon, we will travel through the Valley to the small village of Ollantaytambo, the only Inca town that was not defeated by the Spanish, and explore the mighty ruins.

Then we will transfer to our hotel for a well-deserved overnight stay.

Overnight Urubamba

Meals included: Breakfast and lunch

DAY 16: Sacred Valley - Aguas Calientes

After breakfast we hop on a train and follow the Urubamba River as it tumbles its way towards the Amazon and the sacred city of Machu Picchu.

Disembark the train at Aguas Calientes and take a short walk to our hotel.

The rest of the day, we can explore Aguas Calientes and soak in the hot springs.

Overnight Aguas Calientes

Meals included: Breakfast & LUNCH

DAY 17: Aguas Calientes – Machu Picchu - Cuzco

Today we will rise early and take advantage of viewing Machu Picchu under early morning light. This is the best time to view the 'Lost City of the Incas,' as our local guide can provide an in-depth interpretation of the various buildings and history without the pressure of the many tour groups arriving at midday.

You can climb the pinnacle mountain of Huayna Picchu for one of the most spectacular views of Machu Picchu or wander through the cloudforest on a recently discovered Inca pathway trail to the seldom visited Temple of the Moon.

Later in the afternoon we return to Cuzco by train.

Overnight Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast & DINNER

DAY 18: Peru's Challenge

Today, we will visit the rural community of Pumamarca on the outskirts of Cuzco. Here we will help the Peru's Challenge volunteers at the school and have the opportunity to meet the kids and some of the families of the communities.

We will then take a short walk through the fields to the Inca ruins within the Pumamarca community to enjoy a picnic lunch. After lunch, we will return to the school to observe the Parents Group as they learn new skills in weaving, ceramics, jewellery making and the making of cards.

We will then return to Cuzco and transfer to your hotel.

Tonight we will have dinner at a traditional Peruvian restaurant.

Overnight Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

DAY 19: Cuzco – Lima

Today it is time to say 'hasta luego' to Peru, catch a flight to Lima and meet our connecting flight back to Australia.

Meals included: Breakfast

END OF OUR SERVICES

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