

THE BEST OF PERU – LUXURY TOUR:

LIMA, NAZCA, AREQUIPA, LAKE TITICACA, CUZCO, AMAZON JUNGLE, CHOQUEQUIRAO, SACRED VALLEY, MACHU PICCHU, PERU'S CHALLENGE COMMUNITY PROJECT



Duration: 27 days / 26 nights

Includes:

- Private sightseeing with English speaking guides
- Unless otherwise stated, all accommodation is of a 4* or 4* plus 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
- Traditional weaving class in Paracas
- Have lunch at a unique Peruvian Cevicheria
- Traditional ceramics class in Nazca
- 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 alpaca farm and factory
- Visit a local Chica factory in the Sacred Valley

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ITINERARY

DAY ONE: 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 large Central Park and numerous cosy restaurants, bars and pubs.

Overnight in Lima

Meals included: N/A

DAY TWO: Lima

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

This afternoon you will enjoy a city tour of Lima visiting various points of interest, including the Plaza San Martin, the Plaza de Armas and other parts of the Old Town area.

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

Overnight in Lima

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

DAY THREE: Lima - Paracas - Ballestas Islands

Today you will take a bus transfer from Lima to the city of Paracas.

On arrival in Paracas you will take a tour to the Ballestas Islands – known as the Galapagos Islands of Peru. Here you can view thousands of birds, sea lions and fur seals in their natural surroundings. The famous Candelabro (candlestick), a huge sand design on the hilly coast, can also be seen from the boat.

Overnight at the Paracas Hotel a charming hotel situated on the peaceful Paracas bay.

Overnight Paracas

Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY FOUR: Paracas – Ica - Nazca

This morning after your delicious breakfast you will travel from Paracas to the town of Ica.

On arrival in Ica, enjoy a guided city tour including a visit to the regional archaeological museum.

Afterwards you will stop in at the oasis of Huacachina for lunch. For the adventurous there is the opportunity to rent a sand-board and slide down the sand dunes.

Upon leaving Huacachina you will continue travelling onto Nazca, home of the magnificent Nazca Lines.

Overnight Nazca

Meals Included: Breakfast & lunch

DAY FIVE: Nazca - Arequipa

After your hearty breakfast you will transfer to Nazca airport to enjoy a 45 minute flight over the mysterious Nazca Lines.

The Nazca Lines are an enigma. No one has proof who built them or why. Since their discovery, the Nazca Lines have inspired fantastic explanations from ancient gods, a landing strip for returning aliens or a celestial calendar created by the ancient Nazca civilization - putting the creation of the lines between 200 BC and 600 AD.

After your flight enjoy an archaeological city tour of Nazca including the famous Chauchilla cemetery.

In the afternoon take an overnight bus service from Nazca to Arequipa

OVERNIGHT: BUS – ORMENO – BUS CAMA – PRIMERO CLASE

DAY SIX: Arequipa

On arrival we will transfer you to your accommodation in Arequipa.

In the afternoon, you will embark on an enjoyable guided city tour of Arequipa. This tour will allow you to explore Arequipa's Plaza de Armas (Main Square) – one of most beautiful in Perú, the Cathedral, the church and cloister of Jesus Company, the Church of San Francisco and the Convent of Santa Catalina. This Convent was closed to visitors and shrouded in secrecy for more than 400 years so we are very lucky to be able to visit this 16th century wonder. The Convent has a colourful history and is likened to stepping back in time to a forgotten world of narrow twisting streets, tiny plazas and beautiful courtyards.

Also included this afternoon you will discover the areas surrounding Arequipa city. Spend some time visiting the beautiful districts of Yanahuara, known as the "balcony of Arequipa"; Caima with its colonial church; and Sabandia known for its typical 18th century water mill.

We will then transfer you back to your hotel so that you can rest and freshen up before dinner.

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Overnight Arequipa

Meals included: Breakfast & DINNER

DAY SEVEN: 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

DAY EIGHT: 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 NINE: Arequipa – Lake Titicaca

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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

DAY 10: 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 11: 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 12: 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 13: 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 Centre 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

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southern Peru. It is also the home of the frequently found Howler and Dusky titi monkeys. As we bird watch 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

DAY 14: 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 macaw's 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 15: 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

DAY 16: 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 17: CUZCO

This morning after your hearty breakfast we will embark on a special private tour of a local Alpaca farm & factory. Here you will discover the many uses of Alpaca wool in the Cuzquenian lifestyle.

This afternoon is free for you to explore Cuzco. Use this time to also get ready for your Choquequirao trek.

Overnight Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast

DAY 18: CUZCO-CHIQUISCA (Approx 6 hours trekking)

We leave Cuzco very early in the morning (approx. 4.00am) to start our drive to Cachora. First, stop is at Tarawasi, where we visit the Inca Usno archaeological remains, a place where religious ceremonies and festivals were held in honour of Pacha Mama (Mother Earth).

After leaving Tarawasi we continue down through the Apurimac Canyon and cross the Apurimac River before heading up again through Curawasi towards Saywite, the second stop, an hour and a half later. Here we visit the famous Inca rock that was believed to be the construction plan for the Tahuantinsuyo Empire. You will see animal figures that were carved to represent the main deities.
(Depending on whether the trip is over four or five days, these stops may not be included).

From Saywite, we continue on to Cachora only 30 minutes away and at 2800m/9184ft. While our mules and horses are being packed up with all our gear we will enjoy a box lunch to gain energy for the trek ahead.

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In the afternoon we start our hike ascending and descending for two and a half hours towards Abra Capuliyoc at 2750m/9020ft. Here we will enjoy beautiful views of the surrounding mountains and of the Apurimac River canyon. After soaking up the views, we continue to descend in a zigzag pattern for two more hours towards Chiquisca where we will camp for the night.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

DAY 19: CHIQUISCA-CHOQUEQUIRAO (Approx 8.5 hours trekking)

Today is considered the hardest day. After an excellent breakfast we will leave Chiquisca (approx 5:00am) to walk down to the Apurimac River at 1550 metres above sea level (masl). We will cross a foot bridge and then start our steep zigzag ascent to the small village of Santa Rosa. Here we will have a well-deserved break. We then continue to ascend slowly for two hours until Marampata. Here we will stop for lunch and you can see the first views of Choquequirao.

After lunch, it is a nice two hour walk to the Choquequirao archaeological complex at 3,035 masl (10,107 feet). Camp will be set up near the ruins and you have free-time to explore and enjoy some of the eight different sections of the famous ruins. If you are lucky, condors may appear flying over the ruins before the sun starts to disappear.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

DAY 20: CHOQUEQUIRAO-ROSALINA BEACH (Approx. 4 hours trekking)

Today we will enjoy a complete guided tour of the incredible ruins of Choquequirao. Your tour guide will explain the history and importance of this pre-Columbian archaeological complex which first reports date back to 1710 when Juan Ariaz Diaz explored the area.

After the tour, we will start to walk back down to Santa Rosa, where lunch will be waiting. After lunch we will continue to walk down to Rosalina Beach where we will camp for the night. A refreshing dip into the Apurimac River is a great way to relax this afternoon.

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

DAY 21: ROSALINA BEACH-CACHORA-CUZCO (Approx. 6 hours trekking)

After an early breakfast, we will leave the campsite heading uphill to Coca Masana for lunch. In the afternoon, we will arrive back into Cachora where private transport will be waiting to take us back to Cuzco. We will arrive back into Cuzco at approx 7.00pm.

Overnight in Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast & lunch

DAY 22: Cuzco city

Today have breakfast in the hotel and enjoy a half-day city tour of Cuzco – the centre of the Inca Empire.

Visit the Main Square, the Cathedral and the Temple of the Sun or Korikancha. Then, we drive out of the City to visit the Inca sites of Kenko, Tambomachay, Puca Pucara and the impressive Fortress of Sacsayhuaman situated high on the hill looking over Cusco city.

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

Overnight in Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast & lunch

DAY 23: 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, you can try our bargaining skills with the savvy market venders in the ancient Inca village of Pisaq.

After all that shopping and bargaining, we will stop for lunch at a local restaurant in Urubamba. In the afternoon, we 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 in Urubamba

Meals included: Breakfast and lunch

DAY 24: Sacred Valley - Aguas Calientes

After your fulfilling breakfast we will transfer you to the train station for your train to Aguas Calientes. The train follows the Urubamba River as it tumbles its way towards the Amazon and the sacred city of Machu Picchu.

When you arrive at Aguas Calientes take a short walk to your hotel. The rest of the day, you can explore Aguas Calientes and soak in the hot springs.

Overnight Aguas Calientes

Meals included: Breakfast & LUNCH

DAY 25: Aguas Calientes – Machu Picchu

Today you can 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 cloud-forest on a recently discovered Inca pathway trail to the seldom visited Temple of the Moon. Later in the afternoon return to Cuzco by train.

Overnight in Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast & DINNER

DAY 26: Peru's Challenge community project

Today, we are going to visit the rural community of Pumamarca on the outskirts of Cuzco. Here you can 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 return to the school to observe the Parents Group as they learn new skills in weaving, ceramics, jewellery making and the making of cards. In the afternoon we return to Cuzco and transfer to the hotel.

Tonight is an evening of great food and dance with an entertaining folkloric show at one of Cuzco's great restaurants.

Overnight in Cuzco

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

DAY 27: Cuzco - Lima

Today it is time to say 'hasta luego' to Peru.

You will be transferred from the hotel to Cuzco airport to take your flight to Lima and will then meet your connecting international flight home.

Meals included: Breakfast

END OF OUR SERVICES

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