

Inca Trail



Tour Overview

Travel into the heart of the Andes to participate in one of the most coveted journeys on Earth - the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu! This eight day tour provides all the essential arrangements for a successful venture from Cusco to Machu Picchu, in the shadow of these mighty mountains.

We begin our journey early in Cusco, the gateway to these legendary ruins. Allowing time to acclimate to the high altitude (3,360 metres), you may wander the narrow, cobblestone streets of this dynamic and astonishing former capital city of one of the greatest pre-Columbian societies. Cusco and the surrounding area is full of museums, markets, artisans, shrines and entertainers.

The morning of the hike we travel through the Sacred Valley to reach our starting point and to prepare for our journey on this mythical trail. Hike over three different passes on this four day trip before reaching our ultimate goal, Machu Picchu.

Climb up the steps to Intipunku (the Sun Gate) in the afternoon of the final hiking day before pausing to behold this ancient treasure. Spend the night at the base of the ruins and enjoy a refreshing hot spring, anticipating a magical sunrise over the ruins of Machu Picchu. Watch the light fill the dawn as you try to make out the shapes of this city in the clouds. Enjoy a guided tour of the ruins to fully experience this fabled setting before returning to Cusco on a leisurely train, savouring the sublime sights of the past few days in the heart of the Inca world.

Tour Itinerary

- 1 Cusco (HP)
- 2 Cusco (HP)
- 3 Inca Trail
- 4 Inca Trail
- 5 Inca Trail
- 6 Inca Trail/Machu Picchu (HP)
- 7 Cusco (HP)
- 8 End Cusco

HP = Hotel night included in the price

Tour Essentials

Duration:	8 days
When to go:	March - December
Accommodation:	3 camping nights 4 hotel nights
Meals:	Included on trail walk, other meals paid locally
Start/Finish:	Tour starts on morning of day 1 in the hotel lobby & finishes on day 8 at our Cusco hotel

Is This Tour For Me?

This Inca Trail package tour is for trekkers who have a deep desire to hike the 45 km of trail leading to Machu Picchu. There will be elevation changes of more than 7,000 feet reaching altitudes of nearly 14,000 feet while on the trail. Inclement weather may be a factor and accommodation while on tour is in a spacious 3-4 person tent with only 2 people per tent. While you do not need to be an Olympic athlete to enjoy this trek, a moderate-level of fitness and enjoyment of the outdoors is essential.

Please note:

Inca Trail permits are limited and we strongly recommend booking your tour at least 120-180 days in advance.

Included Highlights

- ✓ Services of a local English/Spanish speaking tour leader.
- ✓ The Inca Trail is unique among our tours in that it has little need of private transport due to the walking nature of the trek. We will use a mix of train and automobile to ensure your comfort at every stage of transfer.
- ✓ Four day Inca Trail hike with local guide, cook & porters and all meals.
- ✓ All camping fees & equipment on the Inca Trail (except sleeping bag)
- ✓ Train ride from Machu Picchu to Cuzco

Inca Trail Tour Information

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Cusco

The city of Cusco is situated in a fertile valley with a patchwork of fields surrounded by mountains. Here the timeless methods of agriculture prove the value of the knowledge of long ago and the rhythm of the year is still very much dictated by the annual cycles of sowing and harvesting. Cusco, once the imperial capital, was laid out in the rough shape of a puma. Today, its orderly streets bear witness to the extraordinary skill of Inca stonemasons; many are still lined with precisely interlocked stonework, which serve as the foundation for later buildings from the colonial era, creating an atmospheric pastiche of contrasting architectural styles. In the afternoon you have the option of visiting the fortress of Sacsayhuaman lying just outside Cusco city (additional charge). The skilfully constructed outer walls consist of massive blocks of stone (the largest weighing over 350 tonnes) which must have been difficult to manoeuvre, let alone to cut and dress with such precision. The tour continues on foot in the city centre and reveals more of Cusco's historical and archaeological treasures. Hotel - 2 nights (B)

Day 2: Cusco

Today is free to wander around this fantastic city, relax or to visit some of the sites in the nearby Sacred Valley. You may wish to try your hand at white water rafting in the Urubamba River (grade III), horse riding, mountain biking or walking in the surrounding hills (all optional). (B)

Day 3: Inca Trail

You wake up early and make your way by bus to Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley (approx. 1 ½ hours). This is a traditional Inca village laid out on a grid plan (one of only 4 surviving examples) overlooked by the magnificent fortress of Ollantay, the only Inca stronghold ever to have resisted persistent Spanish attacks. On arrival you will look around the town and visit the impressive ruins before setting off to the trailhead. At Chilca, where the gorge narrows, you meet your guide and crew and start the trek. Stretching your legs you follow the Urubamba riverbank below the snow-capped peak of Mt Veronica. After lunch you head away from the river; a gentle climb soon brings you to a pleasant campsite at Lactapata (2850m). You carry only a daypack as a team of porters carries all other equipment. You camp in tents and your porters take care of all camp chores with the assistance of a cook and helper. A mess tent and a toilet tent are provided at camp. Approximately 4/5 hours easy walking today. Camp - 1 night (BLD)

Day 4: Inca Trail

You are woken with a hot drink and a bowl of warm water at your tent before you get ready for the day's trek. Getting into a good walking rhythm, you follow the course of the Cusichaca River, ascending a broad valley to the village of Wayllabamba ('Grassy Plain' - 3000m), the last human habitation on the trail. Here you can have a glass of fortifying Chicha or maize beer to help you up the hill. Your porters go ahead and prepare your lunch. After pausing to rest, you climb steadily and steeply to Llulluchupampa (3680m) - a beautiful flat area of pasture. Approximately 5/6 hours moderate uphill walking. Camp - 1 night (BLD)

Day 5: Inca Trail

The tough day! An initial steep climb takes you across the highest point on the trail at Warmiwāñusca (Dead Woman's Pass - 4200m); the views back along the valley certainly make the climb worthwhile. You descend to the Pacamayo River and a second ascent leads to Runkuracay Pass (3998m); from here on the trail is largely downhill and you encounter the first long stretches of original Inca paving which makes for easier going. You cross the

Aobamba River below Sayacmarca ruins, high on a rocky spur. After a final easy ascent, with spectacular views over the Urubamba Valley far below, you emerge above Phuyupatamarca ruins. Approximately 7/8 hours moderate and demanding walking Camp - 1 night (BLD)

Day 6: Machu Picchu

You awake to a spectacular vista and set off this morning on one of the most beautiful parts of the trail. A steep downhill section of some 2000 Inca steps brings you to your lunch stop at the picturesque ruins of Winay Wayna; meaning 'forever young' it is considered by many to be their favourite ruins. Excitement mounts as you conquer a steep flight of steps and arrive at Inti Punku, the Sun Gate. The toil of the day is forgotten at a stroke as you are treated to a spectacular view of Machu Picchu below. After lingering to admire the panorama, you walk through the site and catch a bus down the narrow access road to rejoin the Urubamba River in the village of Aguas Calientes where you check in to your accommodation and enjoy a well-earned long shower. Approximately 4/5 hours walking today, mostly downhill. Basic Hotel (BL)

Day 7: Machu Picchu & Cusco

Rising early this morning your group has Machu Picchu ruins largely to itself before the train brings in day visitors from Cusco. The magnificent lost city, discovered by American archaeologist Hiram Bingham in 1911, stands on a high saddle dominated by the jungle-clad peak of Wayna Picchu. You have time to make the vertiginous climb to its summit for dramatic views of the city spread out below or simply just wander the myriad of steps and stairways of the site, revealing as they do a vast complex of immense structural, historical and archaeological worth. Later in the day you catch the train back to Cusco (approx. 40 minutes). Hotel - 1 night (B)

Day 8: Cusco

Time to savour the sublime sights of the past few days in the heart of the Inca world. Check out of our tour and the end of your adventure.

ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE HOTELS

Our hotels are conveniently located and serve as your tour's arrival and departure points. Rooms are comfortable and spacious, with two double beds and en-suite facilities. They make good bases for sightseeing and offer an opportunity to informally meet with your fellow trekkers.

The first day of the tour you may check into the hotel after 3pm at your leisure. If you are travelling on your own, you will share the twin room with one other passenger of the same sex.

You will then meet the group and tour guide on the morning of day 1 at 09:00hrs in the lobby. You should have your bags packed and eaten breakfast so that you are fresh and ready to start the journey. The tour ends on the morning of the final day.

If you would like to reserve additional nights in our hotel before or after the holiday, or if you would prefer to have your own room throughout, please contact our sales team for additional information and associated costs.



Inca Trail Tour Information

CAMPING ACCOMMODATION

Camping allows us to stay in the heart of the most breathtaking natural scenery, away from fast food outlets and the encroaching development; and Grand American Adventures' experienced tour leaders and top quality equipment will surely enhance your experience.

Your comfort is important to us and we know that starts with using high quality camping gear. We only use top of the range, spacious two-person tents and thick (air/foam-filled) sleeping pads to ensure your evenings are comfortable and restful. Your cooks and guides prepare delicious meals (using state of the art camping stoves). All you need to bring is a sleeping bag and a sense of adventure and you will be sure to enjoy the trip of a lifetime!

A sleeping bag is required for this tour. We recommend you take at least a 4-season sleeping bag (-5°C).

If you would like to rent one of our comfortable sleeping bags for the trek, please advise your Grand American Adventures sales agent at the time of booking for more information.

CLOTHING/BAGGAGE

Expect a wide range of temperature and precipitation on your program. In high mountain environments, you must be prepared for inclement weather at any time. Even at midday, if clouds obscure the sun, the apparent temperature cools dramatically. By packing a system of thin, independent layers of clothing, you can easily add or remove layers to remain comfortable as conditions change throughout the day. Most trekkers leave camp in the morning wearing a cold-weather layer over T-shirt and shorts. At the first rest stop, after you have warmed up a bit, remove a layer and continue in hot-weather clothing until the temperature cools off later in the day. At all times, carry rain gear in your daypack.

Basic clothing: underwear, socks, light hiking boots, sneakers for around camp, loose-fitting long pants or wind pants, shorts, T-shirts, long-sleeved shirt, Polar fleece jacket, full rain gear, sun hat, bathing suit, gloves and skitopy hat.

Essential: Day pack, winter-weight sleeping bag, 1-litre water bottle (Nalgene or similar), flashlight, sunglasses, sunscreen, toilet kit, insect repellent.

Optional: pocket knife, sewing kit, iodine-type water purification pills, camera and film, binoculars, paperback book, snacks and/or energy bars.

Grand American Adventures provides: a heavy-duty, 4,100-cubic-inch trail duffel, Thermarest sleeping pad, tents and communal camping gear. The guide carries a hand-pump water filter; all drinking water is filtered and treated with iodine.

Weight Restriction: Porters carry up to 10 kg (22 lb.) of your personal gear. If your packed duffel exceeds 10 kg. in weight (including sleeping bag and pad) at the trailhead, you will have to transfer excess weight from your duffel to your daypack.

Apart from climatic extremes, you must plan your clothing for cultural extremes ranging from reasonably civilized city dining to knocking about on muddy trails and clambering on Inca ruins. You'll find the equipment we recommend here sufficient for a comfortable and casual trip. Please don't hesitate to contact us about the practicality of any item on this list or one you have added.

LOCAL COSTS

7 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 3 evening meals are included. You must pay for all other meals yourself (you can eat quite well for US\$15-20 per day). Approximate costs are given for guidance only, and may vary widely according to location and type of establishment.

Coffee/tea	US\$1.00
Soft drink	US\$1.00
Medium beer	US\$2.00
Local snack lunch	US\$8.00
3-course dinner*	US\$18.00

*reasonable mid-range tourist class restaurant

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES/SPENDING MONEY

Some or all of the excursions detailed below may be available. Approximate costs are given for guidance only and may depend on the number of participants. Your Group Leader should be able to assist you in arranging them.

- ★ Urubamba River rafting US\$30.00
- ★ Sacred Valley - mountain biking. \$35.00

Local Currency

The most prevalent local currency is the Nuevo Sol. As in most countries in Latin America, the economy is based on the US dollar, so you should take US dollars (not sterling), which can be changed with ease in any major town or tourist centre. Do not bring \$100 dollar bills, as they are difficult to change, \$20 or \$50 bills are easier to convert. There are approximately 4.8 Sol to one British pound and 3.1 Nuevo Sol to one US dollar (as of January 2009).

ATM/Cash points are widely available in all major cities. Please ensure that your credit or debit cards have international access and a PIN number to access your funds. (You should also bring USD travellers cheques as a back-up.)

We recommend you take at least US \$35 dollars per day to cover local expenses, but it's better to bring more than you need rather than run short on tour. Your spending money needs to cover optional activities, film, souvenirs and snacks along the way. Please note - Dollar bills should be in good condition, without blemishes/rips, or they may not be accepted.

Additionally, tipping is a way of life in South America and, whilst not compulsory, it is expected. We recommend a tip of approximately US \$2-3 per day/per person to be given in cash to your tour leader at the end of your holiday.

DEPARTURE TAX: Allow US\$30 on leaving Lima.

GROUPS

Average group size is 16 passengers. Please note: This trip is operated in conjunction with our sister company, The Adventure Company.

Passengers come from a range of countries worldwide (average of 4 nationalities per group) and many will be solo travellers. You will find you have many things in common with your fellow trekkers, including a passion for adventure and a strong interest in trekking to Machu Picchu.

Grand American Adventures tours are designed for adults over 18 years old. While most passengers are aged 25-55, every year we get many people both above and below this age range. All travellers over the age of 55 will be requested to complete a self-declaration of fitness. Please note, Grand American Adventures clients will join our local partner's groups on the trail and there may be clients of all ages.



Inca Trail Tour Information

TRANSPORTATION

The Inca Trail is unique among our tours in that it has little need of private transport due to the walking nature of the trek. We will use a mix of train, and automobile and ensure your comfort at every stage of transfer.

INSURANCE

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs, air ambulance, and helicopter rescue service). Our insurance policy is designed specifically to cover the potential risks on our holidays-particularly the many optional activities offered.

If you do not take our policy, you must ensure that the policy you do take offers an equivalent level of protection. Any claims concerning matters for which you are insured must be directed to your insurers.

VISAS AND PASSPORTS

Holders of UK & IRL passports do not require a visa to enter Peru, but if travelling via the United States must have a machine-readable passport or a visa will be required for transiting the US. Usual U.S. immigration restrictions apply. Other EU nationals should contact us for information. Nationals of all other countries should contact their local embassy or consulate. Passports must be valid for at least six months after the end date of the trip. Information can also be found on www.travcour.com.

If you are travelling to the USA after 1st September 2008, the US authorities have introduced a requirement for passengers travelling under the Visa Waiver Programme to register for Electronic Travel Authority NO LATER THAN 72 HOURS BEFORE TRAVEL. The on line application is available at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>

This information is given in good faith, but may be subject to change without warning. Please note that, where appropriate, obtaining a valid visa is ultimately your responsibility. Please consult a visa agency or the consular authorities 4-6 weeks before departure for the most up-to-date information.

LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Should you encounter any problems while in Peru before the tour, please feel free to contact our local representative. Any queries generated at home should be directed to either our USA or UK sales offices. Those numbers are below in the footer of this page.

BASE CAMP PERU
MATEO PUMACHUA B2A (2do piso)
Wanchaq
Cusco, Peru
telephone +51 (84) 243-856/223-260

Our office staff speak English and Spanish and are here to assist you with your inquiries. If you miss a flight, are going to be late for the morning departure or are having other difficulties, give our office a call.

COMMUNICATIONS

While much of this trek will lead you to far-off places beyond the main tourist routes, communications to the outside world will be possible via telephone or internet. But it should be realized that this may not be possible on all days on tour and some flexibility needs to be understood.

In case of emergency, speak with your tour leader at once to allow him or her time to deal with the situation.

INOCULATIONS/HEALTH

The following vaccinations are recommended:

Hepatitis A
Polio
Typhoid
Tetanus

Yellow Fever vaccination is compulsory if continuing on to the Amazon or if coming from an infected country, and you must take your certificate with you. Malaria Prophylactics are also required for the Amazon extension.

For detailed information and advice concerning vaccinations go to: www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk

Vaccination requirements change periodically so we advise that you check with your nearest specialist travel clinic 4-6 weeks before departure to get up-to-date information.

We also recommend:

- That you know your blood type (or group)
- That you communicate any pre-existing health conditions to both your travel agent and Grand American Adventures tour leader.

WALKING AT ALTITUDE

Is this trek suitable for you? Please look through the below questions and if you answer 'no' to any of the altitude questions, or 'yes' to the Walking question, then please consider whether you are fit enough to do this trek.

Altitude:

Have you previously walked at altitudes above 3000m?

If yes:

Did you encounter any problems with the altitude?

What was the maximum altitude gain in one day?

How many days did you spend above 3000m?

What was the maximum altitude you reached?

If no:

What walking have you done in the past six months?

Have you done any specific training for this trek?

Have you done sufficient training to be able to cover an equivalent trekking route at sea level (this should be in terms of distance)?

Walking:

Have you previously encountered any physical (not altitude) problems trekking?



Inca Trail Tour Information

HOW TO BOOK YOUR TOUR

Contact Grand American Adventures by telephone, email or via our website to check availability on the tour you want to join. We can normally hold you a seat on 'option' for up to 3 days to allow you time to finalise your flight arrangements and send us your booking form with a deposit payment.

If you are ready to book and pay your deposit, we have a secure, online booking facility where you can pay in most major currencies with a credit or debit card. Check availability early to avoid disappointment.

Check Availability at:
<http://www.trekamerica.com/grandamericanadventures.html>

ALTERNATIVE TOURS

If you would prefer to join a different Grand American Adventures tour, we have several other camping tours and a variety of lodging, walking and specialty tours as well as family adventures for you to choose from. Click on the link below for more information.

<http://www.trekamerica.com/grandamericanadventures.html>

ADVENTURE TRAVEL

All details are provided in good faith. Due to the nature of travel, this information can change and should therefore be taken as an indication only and not as a contractual obligation on the part of Grand American Adventures. If you have any questions, please contact us.

CLIMATE

Cusco has well-defined seasons. From June to August, while Andean winter days are typically sunny and warm, the temperature can drop to below freezing (27°F/-3°C) at night in our high camps. Rain seldom falls during winter. From January to March, the Andean summer months offer daytime temperatures to 85°F/30°C, milder nights (typically to 45°F/8°C) and plenty of rain. Despite some rain, December and April are among our favorite months for trekking, since the mountains are lush with summer flowers and you enjoy plenty of sunshine. Departures during Andean spring (September through December) and autumn (April and May) offer weather patterns intermediate between these seasonal extremes.

Approximate year-round temperatures are listed below.

Average High / Low Temperatures in Celcius (°C)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lima	26/20	27/21	27/21	24/19	22/17	21/16	19/16	19/16	19/15	21/16	22/17	24/19
Cusco	18/6	18/6	19/6	19/5	19/2	19/0	19/0	19/2	20/4	21/5	21/6	21/6

Celsius / Fahrenheit Conversions: -10°C = 14°F 0°C = 32°F 10°C = 50°F 20°C = 68°F 30°C = 86°F 40°C = 104°F

SUPPLEMENTAL READING

These are just a few books enjoyed by our knowledgeable staff and should help you to flesh out your imaginations with lots of worthwhile information. Their bibliographies will lead you further in your reading if you wish. There is a vast amount of material out there, so have fun in your search for the books that will help bring your trip (and mind) to life.

History:

- John Hemming, **The Conquest of the Incas**. A riveting account full of detail and vivid narrative of the dynamic period known as the Conquest.
- John Hemming, **The Search for El Dorado**. This interesting book traces the origin of the myth of El Dorado.
- Hiram Bingham, **Lost City of the Incas**. An interesting account of the finding of Machu Picchu by its discoverer.
- Johan Reinhard, **Nazca Lines: A New Perspective on Their Origin and Meaning**. An interesting book that delves into the enigma of these famous effigies.

Memoirs and Travel Logs:

- Ronald Wright, **Cut Stones and Crossroads: A Journey in the Two Worlds of Peru**. Considered one of the best travelogues on Peru; the author writes with great depth and talent.
- Peter Mathiessen, **The Cloud Forest**. A travelogue across much of South America with some of its best reads taking place in Peru. A true travel classic for the region.
- Che Guevara, **The Motorcycle Diaries**. A chronicle of this Latin American counter-culture icon's 8-month journey on a Norton motorcycle across South America. This is a very revealing journal by a young man destined for infamy and full of dreams in the years before meeting Fidel Castro in Mexico. Also, a critically-acclaimed film of the same name.

Nature:

- Richard E. Schultes and Robert E. Rauffman, **The Healing Forest**. A large paperback with descriptive text and colourful photographs of the Amazon's varied plant life.

Fiction:

- Gabriel García Márquez, **One Hundred Years of Solitude**. While not about Peru specifically, it chronicles the birth and demise of an ambiguously-placed town and family in South America. Arguably, the greatest Latin America novel. What is most relevant to Peru is the sense of magical realism that pervades both the novel and real-life in this country's varied regions.

