

Machu Picchu Trek, Peru **An Incan Cultural Adventure!**

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Trip Overview

Join us for a fun filled adventure starting in Cusco, Peru. We'll acclimate, explore local ruins and tour the "Sacred Valley of the Incas." Afterwards, we'll trek for several days to Machu Picchu, a nearly indescribable sight of early Incan architecture and ingenuity. We hope you can join us trekking to this awesome cultural and adventure experience!

Trip Highlights

- Early morning arrival at Machu Picchu with plenty of time to explore and sightsee during a tour of the area with your guides. On the classic Inca Trail trek, there is an option for revisiting Machu Picchu the next morning and hiking up Huayna Picchu Peak for a spectacular viewpoint.
- A local guide and expert will supplement our own IMG lead guide to lend insight into the area's culture and history
- Porters will transport a large part of your gear during the trekking portion of our trip to make the hike more enjoyable. A cook staff accompanies the trek. Horses are used to pack the gear in place of porters on the Salkantay trek.
- 3 star hotels (or better) with great accommodations
- Private vehicle with driver for all transfers
- Most meals throughout the trip, both on the trek and in town
- Trekking at high altitude must be taken seriously. IMG carries a pulse oximeter and supplemental oxygen on every trip, along with a First Aid trained and altitude experienced IMG lead guide



Location: Southern Peru

Rendezvous Point: Lima, Peru, then an in country flight on to Cusco.

Team Size: Up to 15 Trekkers with 1 Senior IMG Leader and 1 local cultural expert **plus** a staff of Quechuan porters, cook and cook staff. On the Salkantay route horses are used to pack gear in place of the porters.

Prerequisites: Good all around fitness. Previous multi day hiking or trekking experience is strongly recommended. The pace is slow and steady but the days can be long (up to 10 hours) and the Inca Trail has lots of stone steps that go steeply up and down hill. Both treks put in long days on the trail with lots of climbing up to high elevation and descent back down again.

About Machu Picchu and Inca Culture

Machu Picchu, once the citadel of the Inca culture in Peru, sits atop a mountain in a jungle of green landscape in the steep rugged mountains of southern Peru. A mystery for over 400 years, it was left undiscovered during the Spanish Conquest, although the Spaniards searched in vain for the gold that was believed to have been there. The idea of a "lost city" of the Incas faded in credibility over time, as it sat disguised in the jungle overgrowth. Then, after years of searching, Yale archaeologist Hiram Bingham found it in 1911. The rediscovery of the ancient city made worldwide news, as the citadel was slowly unearthed from its hiding place.

Today, the Inca trail is an extraordinary journey leading into a mysterious city built by remarkable craftsmen. The hidden secrets of this lost city are yours to explore with us, as we venture to the ruins on a spectacular four-day trek. We'll have ample opportunity to explore and photograph the breath-taking architecture; enjoy the beautiful scenery along the way; and learn about the Incan culture that fostered the growth of this extraordinary creation—the "Eighth Wonder of the World."

2016 Machu Picchu Dates:

Classic Machu Picchu Trek ("Inca Trail")

July 19-28, 2016

Group maximum: 15 trekkers

Landcost: \$2,950

Single supplement if available, \$300

Salkantay Trek

July 10-19, 2016

September 1-10, 2016

Group maximum: 15 trekkers

Landcost: \$2,850

Cost includes: IMG leader and local staff including local lead guide/cultural expert, cook, cook staff, porters (or horse packing); private tours as described in itinerary; transfers to/from Cusco airport and return; entrance fees for all cultural touring sites; hotel accommodations in three-star hotels (or better) with continental breakfast; most meals including three meals a day during the trek except as noted on the itinerary; group camping gear (tents, inflatable sleeping pads, cooking gear, porter gear, stoves and group dining tent with table and camp chairs).

Cost does not include: airline tickets of any kind; airport taxes if required; trail snacks, bottled water, beverages or alcoholic drinks. **REQUIRED Insurance:** IMG requires that all* trip participants purchase [Travel Insurance](#) that includes coverage for medical evacuation, repatriation and medical expenses for the duration of their IMG program. Trip Cancellation Insurance is strongly recommended. Trekking and mountaineering programs are true "adventure travel." **The insurance requirement does not apply to IMG customers on programs within the continental USA, but is strongly encouraged.*

The Salkantay Trek Variation

At 6271 meters (20574'), Nevado de Salkantay is the tallest and most majestic mountain in the Cordillera Vilcabamba range and the backdrop for an alternate trek to Machu Picchu. This journey travels off the beaten track, far from the classic and better known Inca Trail. It offers a true view of the Peruvian mountains with spectacular vistas and provides a feeling of adventure and remoteness. Salkantay means "Savage Mountain" in the Quechua language.

The trek takes us up over a high mountain pass gaining a maximum elevation of 4600 meters (15,180 feet), past the massive snow clad peaks of Tucarhuay, Salkantay and Huamantay. The trek then descends from the region of high peaks down river drainages and multiple ecological zones, ending in lush forested terrain, the "cloud forest" with wild orchids, banana plantations and exotic birds. The total trek distance is approximately 30+ miles yet experiences the breadth

and depth of the Peruvian mountainous region. This trek is slightly more arduous than the Inca Trail, but requires no load carrying other than a day pack. On the Salkantay we pack personal (a limit of 7 Kilos/15 pounds per person) and group gear on horses led by wranglers in addition to the normal trek leaders, kitchen and camp staff. This route is less traveled than the Inca Trail and there is no limit on the number of permits for the trek. You do not need to apply by the first of the year in order to guarantee participation on the program.

In general, the Salkantay trek hikes on wider, dirt trails as opposed to the stone steps of the Inca Trail trek. The altitude gain is greater on the Salkantay, up over 15,000 feet and the day hiking over Salkantay Pass is a long one. During the first two days if any members are struggling or ill, it is possible to take a rest for part of the journey and ride horseback.

The Classic Inca Trail, in contrast, has several days which climb stone steps steeply up and back down again over mountain passes rising up to a maximum of 13,000 feet in altitude. There are archaeological sites to observe and visit along the way and more reminders of the past Inca civilization. The final pre-dawn hike to the Sun Gate for a first view of Machu Picchu in early morning light is one of those experiences to last a lifetime. Whichever trek you choose, the experience will be truly memorable.

The Inca Trail Trek with IMG

Our program begins in the 12th century colonial town of Cusco, once the Incan capital and home of Manco Capac, one of the early rulers. Today, Cusco retains a history which is a mix of tradition and legend. We'll spend a day here, acclimating to an altitude of 10,900 feet, with time to stroll the downtown area, sight see and shop for local artifacts. The following day we will depart for the "Sacred Valley." We'll visit the local ruins of Sacsayhuaman, travel to the famous Pisak market, a good place to purchase local crafts and goods, and on to Ollantaytambo, a spectacular site perched high above the town below. We'll overnight in a hotel here, close to our departure point for the Machu Picchu trek. Many people find the local cultural tours to be nearly as impressive as Machu Picchu itself.

Throughout our small expedition the team staff will include at least one local resident and guide who is an expert of the local history and legends that surround the sights we will explore. This cultural expert will accompany the group throughout the trek and visit of Machu Picchu.

During the trek portion of our program, we will use local porters to transport our gear and supplies. This permits us to enjoy the walk each day, as we move along unencumbered, free to take photos and investigate our surroundings. Meals will be served by our cook staff in a dining tent set up for your comfort during breakfast, dinner and even some lunches.

Signup Early (Inca Trail only)

The Peruvian government has placed a daily limit on the number of trekkers allowed to walk the Inca trail to Machu Picchu each day. It is imperative that we submit actual requests for trekking permits for each person as close to the first of the year as possible in order to guarantee permits for each member of the group. This means you will need to submit your application prior to the first of the year in order to confirm a place on the Inca Trail trek. For the Salkantay trek, signups can occur up to 90 days in advance of the trek departure, but permits for the optional hike up Huayna (Wayna) Picchu may not be available after the first of the year.

The Machu Picchu Experience

Machu Picchu itself is nearly beyond words—a place so immense and so precisely built by the Incans, it is hard to imagine reproducing it nowadays. There are quiet courts and walkways, fountains, and other constructions created by the Inca people for both practical and astrological applications. Archeologists have explained many of these things, and others have yet to be deciphered—or discovered.

Our Machu Picchu adventure explores the area thoroughly, with plenty of time devoted to the area. You'll be armed with an excellent archeological overview of the ruins, and afterwards, there is time to go about on your own to further investigate and contemplate the meaning of the area at a relaxed, enjoyable pace.

For those hearty trekkers, the easy but steep ascent of Huayna (Wayna) Picchu is a satisfying optional challenge, which offers a great "reverse view" of the Machu Picchu ruins. **Please note:** we may not always make this option available to the group, depending on the trail and cable conditions that lead to the precarious summit. There have been fatalities and injuries recorded in the past on this short excursion. Sure footedness and a healthy respect for the exposure are required to make the ascent.

We invite you to join us, and take a journey back in time—to view the incredible sights and views that Machu Picchu and Cusco can offer. It's an experience that will provide memories for a lifetime!

Background Requirements

Fitness: Most of the trek days typically require long hiking days, 6-10 hours of effort, with the bulk of our gear carried by porters. All mornings usually start early and the day's journey often takes until dinner time. Because of the trekking portion of this trip and the general high altitude of the area (10-13,000 feet), we recommend that all participants engage in a physical training program for at least six months prior to trip departure. All participants must consult with their family physician regarding their personal health and the additional demands of high altitude well in advance of the trip.

Experience: Participants should have solid day hiking experience over steep terrain. Overnight backpacking or trekking experience is equally important. High altitude experience is not required, but is beneficial, to confirm that your body can reasonably tolerate visits to 10,000 feet and higher.

Insurance and Travel Arrangements

We invest in insurance coverage for commercial liability and medical and disability insurance for our employees while participating on our programs. We cannot insure you for your personal needs, but we do expect you to be as fiscally responsible as we are. We require that you insure yourself against potentially expensive difficulties that may arise. First, Trip Cancellation Insurance may provide financial relief should you be forced to withdraw from the program before it even happens. Next, make sure you have adequate Travel Insurance for coverage should you have a problem during the trip. Medical care and evacuation in remote locations can be expensive. For more information, please see our page on [cancellation, rescue/repatriation insurance](#) or contact the IMG Office.

International Mountain Guides has worked closely with various travel agents throughout the years and are happy to make recommendations to our customers based on their needs once confirmed on a program.

Personal Equipment and Clothing List—Machu Picchu

Note: During the trek, each member will be allowed 7 Kilos (about 15 pounds) of personal gear to be carried by a porter (Inca Trail) or pack horse (Salkantay trek). This normally included your sleeping bag, change of clothes for Aguas Calientes at the end of the trail, insulated parka, extra snacks, limited toiletries, camp shoes and extra hiking socks.

In your pack each day you will carry rain gear jacket and pants, extra insulating layers, two water bottles, snacks for the day, sun hat, sun glasses, sun screen, warm hat, gloves and camera.

ON THE TREK

FEET:

- ☐ Medium to medium heavy weight waterproof hiking boots – with suitable ankle support; make sure whatever you wear is broken in and very comfortable; if leather, treat the boot multiple times with waterproofing)
- ☐ Wool or wool/synthetic blend socks (2-3 complete changes)

LOWER BODY:

- ☐ Long johns (1 pair, lightweight synthetic)
- ☐ Stretch nylon hiking/climbing pants, Schoeller type fabric.
- ☐ Waterproof/breathable pants (preferable with leg zips)
- ☐ Hiking shorts (nylon hiking style is best...avoid very short ones, as it might offend the locals. Best of all are the nylon zip-off hiking pants. Make sure you have one extra pair of pants on the trek, reserved for your arrival in the town of Aguas Calientes. It is nice to have a clean pair of clothes after checking in to the hotel at the end of the trek!
- ☐ Underwear (2-3 pair for trail use)

UPPER BODY:

- ☐ Long john top (1 lightweight, 1 medium—zip neck is best)
- ☐ Soft shell or fleece jacket
- ☐ Waterproof/breathable rain jacket with hood
- ☐ Down or synthetic parka (REQUIRED, but reasonably light in weight)
- ☐ T-shirt (synthetic is best). Bring at least two, one extra shirt to wear when you arrive at the hotel at the end of the trek.

HEAD AND HANDWEAR:

- ☐ Fleece or wool hat
- ☐ Sun hat or baseball cap
- ☐ Wool or fleece gloves
- ☐ Bandanna
- ☐ Chemical hand warmers (2 sets for cold mornings, only if your hands get cold easily)

SLEEPING:

- ☐ Sleeping bag (down or synthetic, down to 25 degrees with a compression stuff bag). A down bag is usually much lighter and more compact than an equally rated synthetic bag.
- ☐ Sleeping pad. An inflatable, 1 ½" insulated sleeping pad is provided for each member of the trek. This is sufficient for most, no need to bring another. If you really want extra padding underneath, bring a very lightweight inflatable pad like the Therm-a-Rest NeoAir.

-- Gear List Continued on Next Page --

MISCELLANEOUS:

- ☐ Pack (medium size, internal frame, in the range of 25 to 45 liters; Note: test prior to use! Try to keep the weight of the pack down. Top loading works best.)
- ☐ Pack rain cover, to protect from mist...and mud! (As an alternative, bring 1-2 large garbage bags for the same purpose)
- ☐ Adjustable ski poles (baskets are NOT required on the poles, but the poles MUST have tip guards (for the Inca Trail only) to help protect the ancient stone steps from wear.
- ☐ large stuff sacks (2; for packing clothes and bulk of personal lunch; to keep things organized and dry)
- ☐ Small stuff bag (for daily lunch)
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Sun cream (1 full bottle; 35-50 SPF protection)
- ☐ Lip protection (with high SPF)
- ☐ Water bottles (2 wide mouth 1 qt. Nalgene type bottles; a water hydration system can substitute for one bottle)
- ☐ Toilet paper (1 roll in Ziploc bag; plus personal hygiene wipes)
- ☐ Garbage bags (4 large, heavy duty; 30+ gal; use one to line your pack and the others to protect the contents of your duffel; it's an excellent way to keep your gear dry. At camps, put your boots in one. Extra bags are ALWAYS GOOD!)
- ☐ Headlight (LED with fresh batteries, plus 1 spare set). You'll need a headlight, if we decide to walk in the dark to catch the first sun-rays on Machu Picchu.)
- ☐ First aid kit (Personal needs only, Band-Aids, athletic tape, blister pads, non-prescription pain meds and anti inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen. Pepto Bismol tablets are helpful for dealing with minor stomach distress. Imodium is good for diarrhea. Consult with you doctor about the trip and travel at altitude and bring any recommended prescription drugs **in original prescription bottles**. Talk with your doctor about bringing Acetazolamide (Diamox) in 125mg or 250mg tabs to aid in acclimatization. Also consider a general antibiotic for the treatment of traveler's diarrhea.
- ☐ Water purification tablets, Iodine or Chlorine Dioxide (1 bottle or approx. 20 tabs) for backup water treatment. Your trail cook will boil all drinking water issued to the group and your guide will carry a portable water filter just in case.
- ☐ Insect repellant (a high concentration of DEET is most effective. The bugs, in general, are not too bad, but best to be safe!)
- ☐ Travel toothbrush & paste
- ☐ Lightweight day pack. Optional, but recommended for air travel & general walking in town and touring the grounds of Machu Picchu—lightweight with few frills, 20 liters or less.
- ☐ Lunch (for on and off mountain, to supplement provided lunches). Please bring a variety of non-perishable foods weighing in total no more than 5 lbs. You can supplement this some with local foods, candies, and fresh fruits. 3 bars/items per each of the 4 trekking days is sufficient.

Lunch ideas include:

string cheese, beef jerky, dried fruit, candy bars (chocolate may melt), energy bars, hard candies, nuts, electrolyte replacement drink mix (several quarts repackaged into a Ziploc bag), Salty snacks are often appreciated.

-- Gear List Continued on Next Page --

IN TOWN

- ☐ Passport/Visa
- ☐ International shot record
- ☐ Money (\$150 for the local staff tips, plus \$500± for misc. drinks, some meals, travel, gifts and extras. Bring some smaller bills, like \$5's and \$10's) ATM's are available (but limited) in Cusco and Aguas Calientes. Dispensed money is in local currency. Traveler's checks are no longer recommended.
- ☐ Credit cards (alert your card carrier that you will be traveling out of country)
- ☐ Money belt/neck pouch
- ☐ Running/tennis shoes (use as camp shoes)
- ☐ Socks; cotton or synthetic, for travel (3)
- ☐ Small vial of liquid biodegradable soap (for clothes)
- ☐ Underwear (3-4)
- ☐ Toiletries (be sure to keep it light here)
- ☐ Cotton pants or synthetic travel pants (2)
- ☐ Dress/sport shirts (1-2)
- ☐ T-shirts or short sleeve travel shirts (2-3)
- ☐ Small to medium size duffel bag, lightweight but durable (for air travel and porter carry during the trek; with small combination TSA lock)
- ☐ Large duffel bag or suitcase (for air travel and to store gear at hotel; small combination TSA lock)
- ☐ Ear plugs (for the tent)

OPTIONAL

- ☐ Smart phone for quick photos and music
- ☐ Camera(s), extra storage media cards and extra batteries
- ☐ Binoculars, smaller style

Clothing Notes

Easy-wash travel-clothing is convenient, as are jeans and non flashy shirts. Avoid bright colors or logos that mark you as a tourist. Cusco and the Inca trail are "tourist friendly," so being a tourist doesn't create any problems—but it's a good idea to dress-down, nonetheless. Cotton for trail use, however, is generally discouraged.

Gear Donations:

We like to encourage our Peru trekkers to bring along some of their used and close-to-worn-out-gear and clothing on this trip. This gear can then be donated to our local guides and staff after the trek—and make your bag lighter for your flight home. Appropriate items include long underwear tops and bottoms, pile clothing, socks, gloves and mittens, outerwear, gaiters, and other clothing items that you've used during your trip but you no longer need—or want. This token is not expected by us or our local staff, but it is a good way to "unload" some of your older gear that you no longer need or want and help out someone who can put it to good use. Extra trek food can also be left for the Peruvian staff after the trek.

We certainly don't want to overwhelm our local staff, and your guides will help coordinate the donation so that all are treated fairly. Our local contacts certainly appreciate anything you can give them, but please don't make any promises along the way.

Lastly mark all personal gear including water bottles clearly in indelible ink with your name. Check the condition of your gear and be sure to test new pieces of equipment thoroughly.

Machu Picchu Classic Inca Trail Itinerary

Our trip to Peru will be an amazing experience, and is designed to give trekkers adequate acclimatization time for all objectives. There are several opportunities in the schedule to allow for shopping, sightseeing and general non-guided touring. Arrangements can easily be made to accommodate non-trekking partners or family members into the program. In many ways, this will be a dream trip for just about *any* trekker. We'll see some of the most beautiful areas in the world and visit culturally diverse ruins. The trekking on this adventure will be challenging long days, but reasonable for active, fit participants.

Trip itinerary is subject to change, based on the needs of our group, weather and route conditions, and other foreseen and unforeseen circumstances. Alternative routes and/or schedule may be used as warranted.

- Day 1-2** Depart from home on day 1, either planning to arrive in Lima in the evening and overnighing at the airport (at your expense), or arriving early morning on day 2 and waiting at the airport for your connection to Cusco.
Note: many prefer to arrive **an extra day early in Cusco** and spend an additional day there. This helps with acclimatization and it is easy to arrange an extra day of touring in Cusco if you wish.
- Day 2** Once in Lima, we'll transfer to a national flight to Cusco (10,988'), trying to choose a flight around 9:30am (consult with IMG regarding the flight number) arriving by mid-day. All members will be met at the airport and transported to the hotel. Rest and relaxation will be in order, focusing on acclimatization. Our local guide will meet us after check in, make arrangements at a local restaurant for lunch (not included), and conduct a short afternoon tour. The team will meet at 6pm for a briefing on what to expect in the coming days. A team dinner will follow. (Meal included, dinner)
- Day 3** An exciting cultural touring day. We'll first visit the local ruins of Sacsayhuaman on the way out of town. We'll travel on to the Sacred Valley where we will tour the famous Pisak market, a good place to purchase local crafts and goods. Our last cultural visit in the Sacred Valley will be Ollantaytambo, which sits above the town in a beautiful setting. We'll overnight in a hotel here, close to our departure point for the Machu Picchu trek. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Day 4** Rise around 4:30-5 AM, have a quick breakfast in our hotel, then our bus will take us to the trailhead, at km. 82 (2,400m or 7,872'). After meeting and introductions with the porter crew our team will wait in line to be checked in at the trailhead. We'll hike about 8 miles with an hour or more break halfway up for a cooked lunch, and then to our tent camp at Llullchapampa (3,600m or 11,808'). Figure on 6-8 hours of trekking on this day. There will be awesome views well worth the effort. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Day 5** Wake up by 7 latest, then start trekking out of the light woodland. The trail continues to climb upwards beyond Llupachayoc, up steeper trail and LOTS of rock steps. The woodland gives way to scrub, then to *puna*, bleak grassland and bare slopes. The ascent becomes increasingly steep, and the terrain increasingly rugged. The trail climbs steeply towards the first pass, the **Abra de Huarmihuanusca** ("Dead Woman's Pass"), 4198m, or 13,769'. This is a tough day by trekking standards. All trekkers are advised to train in particular for this ascent, as it will be the most demanding of the entire trip. While we will not be carrying heavy packs, the ascent up the pass and descent down the other side requires good endurance and a steady, all day pace. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)

- Day 6** Another early wakeup. From the valley of the Pacamayo, the trail climbs steeply up the opposite side of the valley wall, towards the second pass, **Abra de Runkuracay**, 3,998m (13,113'). After the pass, the trail descends towards a valley containing a shallow lake. Here, the trail changes from a dirt path to a narrow stone roadway, the beginning of the "true" Inca Trail. The stones of the roadway were laid by the Quechua people during the period of the Inca Empire. We'll journey along the most classic looking parts of the stone path, so be sure to take plenty of photos as you approach the "Third Pass," (12,200') and, just beyond it, an Inca ruin, Phuyupatamarca ("Cloud-level Town"). We will camp at the high pass with a spectacular 360 degree panorama, or just down on the other side, depending on our camp assignment. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Day 7** This morning be prepared for a pre-dawn wakeup and hike to the gate for admittance to the final leg of the hike to Machu Picchu. Our porters will leave us here and carry our personal gear down to the town of Aguas Calientes where it will be waiting for us. Part of the early rising is to allow the porters, after leaving our gear in safe hands in town, to catch the early morning porter train back to their homes. The final section of the trail to Machu Picchu, from Huinay Huayna to Intipunku, is an easy hike, following a broad level path which winds comfortably through scrub and light woodland.
- After no more than an hour or two, the trail comes to a narrow flight of steep stone steps leading upwards into a small stone structure. This is **Intipunku**, and through the rectangular doorway, you can see the ruins of Machu Picchu. From Intipunku, a pathway leads directly to Machu Picchu itself, and a descent of over an hour will take us down to the actual ruins. We'll have until midafternoon to explore the area. Our cultural guide will take us for a general tour of the area, explaining Machu Picchu's highlights. Following the tour, there will be time for individual exploration and photography. After the tour, we'll await a bus for our trip down the mountain and walk to lunch in town, then check-in to our hotel in Aguas Calientes, a tourist mecca below the Machu Picchu ruins. Overnight in hotel. (Meals included, breakfast, dinner)
- Day 8** A great advantage of this itinerary is that we have a SECOND day to tour Machu Picchu if members wish. This is a great time to climb Huayna Picchu in the early morning for those that are willing and able. Others may choose to wander Machu Picchu on their own, for more photo and sightseeing opportunities. Some members may opt for sleeping in and some morning shopping/sightseeing in Aguas Calientes. We'll all meet after lunch then catch a private train for the journey to Cusco. Get off train half way to Cusco, then private bus the remainder of the way. Overnight in hotel after a team celebration dinner with included entertainment. (Meals included, breakfast, dinner)
- Day 9** Departure for Lima, then late flight from Lima to USA (Meal included, breakfast)
- Day 10** Flights generally arrive early in the U.S., which leaves plenty of time to make final connections for flight home. Arrive home by mid-afternoon.

"I had a wonderful time on the trek! The places we stayed and ate in were top notch. The guides were great... Off the top of my head I can't think of anything that could/should be changed. Thanks again for providing a wonderful experience in Peru!..." —Jason G.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Machu Picchu Salkantay Trek Itinerary

Day 1-2 Depart from home on day 1, either planning to arrive in Lima in the evening and overnighing at the airport (at your expense), or arriving the early morning on day 2 and waiting at the airport for your connection to Cusco.

Note: some prefer to arrive **an extra day early in Cusco** and spend an extra day there. This helps with acclimatization and it is easy to arrange an extra day of touring in Cusco if you wish.

Day 2 Once in Lima, we'll transfer to a national flight to Cusco (10,988'), trying to choose a flight around 9:30am (consult with IMG regarding the flight number). All members will be met at the airport and transported to the hotel. Rest and relaxation will be in order, focusing on acclimatization. Our local guide will meet us after check in, make arrangements at a local restaurant for lunch (not included), and perhaps a short tour if desired. The team will have a complete briefing on what to expect in the coming days. A team dinner will follow. (Meal included, dinner)

Day 3 An exciting cultural touring day. We'll first visit the local ruins of Sacsayhuaman on the way out of town. We'll travel on to the Sacred Valley where we will tour the famous Pisak market, a good place to purchase local crafts and goods. Our last cultural visit in the Sacred Valley will be Ollantaytambo, which sits above the town in a beautiful setting. We'll return to our hotel in Cusco at day's end. (Meals included: breakfast, lunch) Dinner is not included to give the team a chance to sample one of the many local restaurants.

Day 4 Departure from Cusco early in the morning, bus ride for about 4 hours to the start of the trek at Mollepata. We will meet with the rest of the staff including the wranglers and horses and then start the expedition at an elevation of approximately 11,500'. We'll hike to Soraypampa and Salkantaypampa, about 6 hours and 1500' elevation gain including a lunch stop on the trail. Pampa is Quechuan for "flat grassy plain." (Meals included: breakfast at hotel, lunch and dinner on the trek)

Day 5 We take the right side of the moraine and start climbing up to turquoise colored Suyrococha Lake at 14,280 feet in elevation. Continuing up to the top of Salkantay Pass at a maximum height of 15,180 feet, we'll enjoy spectacular views of the glacier and the surrounding peaks of the sacred mountain, Salkantay. After an appropriate amount of time resting and taking photos, we descend down to a campsite at Andenes or beyond to Collcapampa hot springs, located at around 12,500 feet. Total walking time is an estimated 8-10 hours, with a gain of about 2,000 feet, and loss of 2-3,000 feet, depending on which camp the team uses in descent. This is a long, tiring day on the trail. The team will be issued a sack lunch for today to keep the lunch break reasonable. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner on the trek).

Day 6 We head down through valleys eroded by glacier waters. Different ecological zones are passed on the way down following Collcapampa creek, then the Santa Teresa River. We'll be down in warmer zones here, with waterfalls, flowers, fruit trees and exotic birds to view. We climb back up to an Andean community named Paltaybamba, where a bus will be waiting to transfer the group to our campsite, located in the small town of Santa Teresa. There is a lovely hot-springs here, a visit is definitely in order to soak tired muscles! It's a 6 hour walk this day, with a loss of 2,000 feet. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner on the trek).

Day 7 The team has an option this day. The IMG leader will make the final decision on this, based on team interest, strength of the group and weather. Option 1: an early morning start hiking to Llactapata, a recently re-discovered Inca site. This includes nice views of the mountains and Machu Picchu's eastern flank but involves a steep final climb up a ridge crest to the site and back down again. At the end of the trail at the Machu Picchu hydroelectric plant the team will catch a local train to the town of Aguas Calientes. Option 2: spend the morning touring a coffee plantation, learning about the process of growing and roasting coffee beans, then a short private bus ride to the trail head for a final five hour hike to Aguas Calientes. The trail leads all the way in to town and is

essentially flat, following the train line. After a stop for lunch in town, we'll check in to our hotel for much needed showers. (Meals included, breakfast on the trek, dinner at the hotel in AC).

Day 8 Early wakeup (4am!) for a dawn bus ride up to the Machu Picchu archeological site with a full tour of the area. There will be additional free time to hike around the site, explore and take photographs. With the early start, some members may choose to climb Huayna Picchu peak, rising above Machu Picchu. This hike is limited in number twice each day to the first 200 visitors and is subject to availability on a first come, first served basis. Those who register after the first of the year may not be able to get permits for Huayna Picchu if they have all been issued. Note, this also cuts down on the amount of time available to tour Machu Picchu. In the afternoon after lunch on our own, we'll take the train to Cusco and transfer to our hotel for a final dinner with entertainment to celebrate the end of the expedition. (Meals included, breakfast and dinner).



Day 9 Late afternoon flight to Lima, then flight from Lima to USA. We'll try to book the latest flight to Lima allowed to make our international connections in order to allow a few more hours to shop and sightsee in the city of Cusco. (Meal included, breakfast)

Day 10 Arrive in US early morning, with plenty of time to make connections for final flight home. Arrive home by mid-day.

"I want to compliment both IMG for a great effort on our Machu Picchu excursion... The places we stayed, the quality of the guides, and the overall organization was top notch... I don't think my wife and kids could have had a better overall experience and clearly one that they will cherish for a long time. I purposely booked with IMG because of my experience with your team on Mt. Rainier, and you did not let us down. I am already thinking about a few other trips... and I cannot imagine using any other guide service than IMG...."

—John M.

"The thing I like best about George's longer expeditions is how everyone comes together and becomes a tight knit team. It's like having a family away from home. George takes smaller groups, and I think that makes a big difference..."

—Bruce G.

"I was very impressed with how everything was so well organized. It seemed like every little detail was covered. IMG is way better than the others. Way better! You guys are the best in the business..."

—Jim P.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml
