

Walk Wildlife Culture The Essential Peru



Machu Picchu – colonial Cusco - Inca Trail – fully portaged expert guides - Amazon rainforest – amazing wildlife - Lake Titicaca – charming Arequipa - comfortable hotels – carefully paced – tailored to suit you

Enjoy the amazing variety of Peru’s cultures, scenery and wildlife.

Walk the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu over four days at a relaxed pace.

Explore the Amazon rainforest from the comfort of your lodge.

Visit the islands of Lake Titicaca before relaxing in beautiful Arequipa.

This is a Pura *handmade* holiday with an activity rating *medium* and a comfort rating *first*.



One of the more permanent visitors to Machu Picchu.



"Everything was perfect: the hotels, the staff, the tours - we cannot thank you enough. We had the trip of a lifetime that we will never forget! Many, many thanks to you and everyone who made our trip so wonderful." Tara D.

Holiday Itinerary

Day 01 | travel | fly to Peru

Fly to Peru.

Please note: transatlantic flights for this holiday are quoted separately.

Day 02 | Amazon | travel into the jungle

Check-in for your morning flight to the Amazon.

From the airport you are taken to the lodge offices where you can shed unnecessary luggage and travel on with a relatively light load.

Travel a bumpy road to the banks of the river.

Along the way guides take time to introduce themselves as you will be together for the next three days.

Snacks are handed out which are made from local produce, these include brazil nuts, plantain chips and a somewhat unusual soft drink – a slightly acquired taste in our opinion but when in Rome...

The boat trip lasts about three hours up the Tambopata River leaving behind all obvious signs of settlement.

The boats are comfortable and an ideal opportunity to look for wildlife along with your guides.

Lunch is served on board, usually in a banana leaf.

You should arrive at around dusk. There is actually no sign of the lodge from the river, just a set of wooden steps leading up from the water’s edge into the jungle.

The lodge is built on higher ground, away from any standing water. This means that, despite the lodge being pretty much entirely open, there are few insects.



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Your Amazon lodge high above the Tambopata River.

Raised walkways lead from the main lodge building towards the 32 rooms spread over four wings.

Amazingly enough, the simple but very comfortable en suite rooms have one open wall facing the jungle so you really do feel close to nature.

Beds have very good box style mosquito nets which are tucked in for you each night.

The entire complex is lit at night by paraffin lamps, once these go out you use candles, or use your torch! After supper, walk back down to your boat to look for caiman along the riverbank. (b,l,d)

Day 03 | Amazon | **explore an oxbow lake**

Whilst here in the jungle you have a menu of excursions available to you throughout each day.

All excursions are led by one of a dedicated team of lodge guides, many of whom are from the local communities based around the Tambopata River.

Usually there is an early start as the best times of day to see wildlife is invariably sunrise, sunset and nighttime.

You can effectively choose how much or how little to do on any given day so you should read the following as a suggested range of activities rather than a set itinerary.

This morning set off early to walk to an oxbow lake.

When you get there you paddle around the lake hoping to see some of the resident giant river otters. These rare creatures grow to about two metres long.

You will hopefully also see caiman, hoatzin and horned screamers.

If you are feeling less adventurous then there is a lake much closer to the lodge, a 30-minute walk, where you

can see great wildlife though not the giant otters.

After a rest you might like to explore one of the rainforest trails which lead out from the lodge.

Look out for monkeys, beautiful butterflies and toucan.

As well as the larger animals, look out for the fascinating insects which form a crucial part of this ecosystem.

A procession of leafcutter ants walking in neat columns up down a tree trunk each with their little green corner of a leaf held aloft like a sail, is a very pretty sight.

After lunch you walk the short distance to a nearby cultivation plot where you learn about the plants and crops that are grown here in the jungle.

As well as crops there are, of course, the medicinal plants as well as some with more surprising properties.

If you are feeling brave then you can have a tattoo done using the sap from one of the plants. You can have any colour you like, as long as it's purple.

The 'tattoo' will last a couple of days so choose your design & location wisely.

Carry on to a patch of enormous mature Brazil nut trees. Find a few pods to carry back to the lodge where you can hack them open to reveal the delicious fresh nuts inside.

Do not expect them to taste like the nuts you are used to – these are actually moist and very tasty, a bit like coconut in fact. (b,l,d)

Day 04 | Amazon | **parrots and paddles**

Another day, another early start, this time to see a parrot clay lick.

Apparently there are toxins in some of the nuts which form the basis of the parrots' and macaws' diet. The clay of the riverbanks contains some form of compound which counteracts the toxins.

As a result, at certain points where there is an exposed clay cliff along the riverbank, parrots and macaws will congregate at dawn to lick the clay.

Do remember that this is a natural phenomenon so anything from the weather to fear of predators can stop the parrots from landing that day.

When they do land though, it is an amazing sight.

If you want to be more active, the lodge does offer optional adventure activities such as climbing into the jungle canopy and mountain biking.

Tonight you might like to take a nocturnal tour of the jungle since only 35% of the animals here are diurnal, this could be your best chance to spot wildlife. (b,l,d)



Macaws share a tasty snack of clay.

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Comfortable but simple rooms in the Amazon, note the lack of one wall.

Commitment to the environment

The environmental credentials of the lodge are very impressive. The lodge is integrated into its surroundings in almost every way imaginable.

The staff are largely sourced from the tiny local Condénado and Infierno communities.

There is an impressive programme of training which means that your guide may well have started as a pot-wash in the kitchen before working and training his way up the ladder to being a guide.

This tends to give the lodge a very friendly, almost familial feel.

The lodge is placed within a 200 hectare 'buffer zone' on the edge of the Tambopata Reserve. It is working hard with the local Brazil nut farmers to include them in the benefits from eco-tourism, thereby encouraging their participation in conservation.

The actual structure is built from wood brought in from upriver – essentially they would sit on the river banks until a fallen tree passed by and would drag it to the lodge for use in the construction.

Otherwise, materials are largely palm fronds, wild cane and clay from the surrounding area.

Day 05 | Cusco | canopy tower

Before you head downriver for your flight, you should have time to climb the 25 metre canopy tower not too far from the lodge.

A staircase leads you up this wired metal structure to a platform just above the level of the rainforest canopy.

From the top you can watch the sunrise over the Amazon, hear the howler monkeys' slightly spooky call and see parrots and toucan.

After breakfast pack yourselves back up into the boat to make your way downstream to the airport at Puerto Maldonado.

Fly up into the heights of the Andes and the charming colonial town of Cusco.

You are met off the plane by your Pura Aventura guide who is going to be with you throughout your time here in Cusco and up to Machu Picchu.

Remember that you are now at high altitude (3,326m) so are likely to feel a little light headed and strange.

Take things easy this afternoon with a gentle stroll through the picturesque streets or walk through the ceremonial Inca fortress of Sacsayhuaman from where

you have a panoramic view of the town.

Cusco has lots of great places to eat out. Your guide will help you find what you are looking for. (b)

Day 06 | Cusco | discover the Sacred Valley

You will still be acclimatising today so the pace will be fairly relaxed. Spend all day in the company of your guide exploring some of the Inca sites around Cusco and the Sacred Valley today.

You might also like to visit the colourful and lively market in the town of Pisac, renowned for its local weavings and hand-painted pottery.

Alternatively, your guide can take you to a less visited Andean village for you to see Peru away from the tourist trail. (b)

Day 07 | Inca Trail | start walking the trail

From Cusco drive into the Sacred Valley of the Incas, stopping to explore the Inca ruins at Ollantaytambo. Start your four day hike with a gentle walk alongside the Urubamba River.

Please note: we also offer the shorter 1-day 'Royal' Inca Trail and also the train journey to Machu Picchu. If you prefer a less active alternative, please just ask.

The start point of the trail is actually lower than Cusco so for the first couple of days you are actually still acclimatising to the altitude. Walk 5km, 2hrs, ▲ 50m While you walk all you need to carry is a daypack as porters carry your things and all of the camping equipment, food, toilet, etc.

Sleep in comfortable tents and enjoy delicious meals prepared for you by your cooks. Tonight's campsite is effectively private so you are very unlikely to be sharing it with any other groups.

On your two subsequent nights there may be one, occasionally two other small groups at a campsite but by and large you are on the trail with little evidence of other walkers.

Apparently the record for completing the high altitude 28 miles of the Inca Trail is just over 3 hours, 34 mins.

You will be taking rather longer to complete the trip as you linger to enjoy your surroundings as well as the culture and history of the Inca.



A Pura group arriving at Machu Picchu in the late afternoon light.

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What makes our Inca Trail different?

At Pura Aventura we only operate our own dedicated Inca Trail walks. By doing this we can be sure that you will get the most from your walk to Machu Picchu.

Permit system

Each day the Peruvian Government allows 500 people onto the trail. This includes all guides and porters so actually equates to about 200 hikers each day.

If this sounds like a lot, frankly it is but there are ways to avoid the crowds.

Their way

The vast majority of those 200 walkers do the three day trail which aims to arrive at Machu Picchu at sunrise. Once they arrive, they visit the site and catch that afternoon's train back to Cusco.

Those going at this pace on the Inca Trail suffer a couple of disadvantages.

Firstly, you have less time to acclimatise as you tackle the highest point of the trail on only the second day.

Secondly, the campsites are very busy, particularly the last night in Winaywayna which can have over 300 people spending the night. That equates to a lot of tents, a lot of noise and some fairly unpleasant sanitary conditions.

Thirdly, your first views of Machu Picchu can be rather compromised as people jostle for a perch in a small viewing area at the Sun Gate.

This a quote from one, very good, operator "Almost every group wants to be at the sun gate for sunrise. Sheer numbers require an early start to make sure people are in place for the sunrise."

Lastly, since Machu Picchu is in a cloudforest, sunrise happens probably around 30% of the time. More normal is that the clouds gradually drift clear later.

If the weather isn't good, they will not get to see the site in all its glory as they will be on a train back to Cusco that same afternoon.

Our way

Meanwhile...Pura Aventura clients are half a day behind the main group of walkers as you set off in the afternoon of day one.

Because you do not cross the highest pass until day three, you have an extra day to acclimatise.

Our guides work hard to make sure that you walk in the peaceful conditions at any time of year. You enjoy a quiet, often empty, trail ahead of you. The places we camp are very peaceful.

You arrive in Machu Picchu in the twilight when the site is at its prettiest and quietest.

That afternoon you stroll down through the site to soak up the atmosphere before spending a welcome night in a hotel nearby.

The following morning you come back up to the citadel - early enough to catch sunrise if you like. You have your full guided tour before returning to Cusco by train that afternoon.

In all you have about 24 hours at Machu Picchu spread over two days, giving you the best possible opportunity to see the site at its best.

"Jake (our guide) and the porters always found us wonderfully quiet spots to camp and Pura's method of taking plenty of time for the trail and not using the busy sites made the trail very special."

From your guide you learn about rural life in the nearby villages as well as the flora, fauna and the Inca Empire as you pass various ruins during the day. (b,l,d)

Day 08 | Inca Trail | steady walk to altitude

Today walk 10km, 6.5hrs, ▲850m at relatively low altitude (3,000m) through a pretty wooded landscape.

As the day goes on you will be passing the tree line and start to get spectacular views of although by the end of the day you will be higher than you were in Cusco, camping in a lovely spot at around 3,800m.

The drier season (April-November) coincides with winter in Peru so whilst daytimes are generally fairly pleasant, at night the temperature drops quickly.

Expect nighttime lows around freezing. (b,l,d)



Standing at Dead Woman's Pass

Day 09 | Inca Trail | cross the highest pass

Today is the hardest day of the trail as you cross over two high passes, effectively hiking an 'm' shape. Walk 15km, 8hrs, ▲650m, ▼850m

From your campsite walk a steady and increasingly steep path up to Dead Woman's Pass at 4,215m, the highest point of the trail.

You find yourself beyond obvious signs of human life and you begin to get a sense of how remote Machu Picchu really is.

You will also have stunning views of the surrounding Andean peaks and should have a great sense of achievement by the end of the day.

Lunch is served in the dip between the two passes.

This afternoon your walk is longer than in the morning but at lower altitude so should be easier on the lungs. Once you hike over the second high pass of the day, (3,900m) then you should find the going good.

Your campsite tonight is at 3,600m on a bluff overlooking the mountains. (b,l,d)

Day 10 | Aguas Calientes | see Machu Picchu

The final day of the trail is the most beautiful, starting with what can be the most stunning sunrise.

Walk 11km, 6hrs, ▼700m

There are lots of steps as you approach the satellite Inca site of Winaywayna. The evidence of Inca masonry is everywhere as the trail leads you through cloudforest rich with orchids and birds.

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Our porters

By the end of day one you are likely to really appreciate the work your porters are doing for you. In the mornings they are there to wake you for breakfast with a cup of tea and warm water for a wash.



As you set off walking for the day, they pull up camp, overtaking you a while later fully laden with all of the gear.

A couple of hours later you come across them again and they will have prepared a three-course lunch for you on the side of the trail.

After this, you waddle onwards and upwards only to be overtaken again soon afterwards.

By the time you get to the day's stopping point, the team will have set up the campsite, have supper on the go and greet you with a cup of tea!

Pura Aventura adheres strictly to the Porter Protection Policies in place on the Inca Trail.

In fact our porters are from the community of Chacllanca, about 45km from Cusco.

Generally they are subsistence farmers who supplement their earnings by working on the Inca Trail. Our two head chefs, Virgilio and Herlin are in charge of getting the teams together and are therefore the bosses.

Your team of porters is usually therefore made up of friends, family and neighbours who respect one another and work well together.



Wake up on the last morning of the trail to a stunning sunrise.

Remember that they are still discovering Inca sites along this stretch.

At points the path narrows and you can see through the lichen covered trees down to the Urubamba River far below.

Lunch is served at the ruins of Winaywayna before the final push up a steep stairway to the Sun Gate and your first views of Machu Picchu.

Take time to soak up your achievement and, hopefully, watch the citadel bathed in the warm afternoon light.

From the Sun Gate it is another 3km to Machu Picchu itself. You should be here at around 4pm when most people have gone for the day so take time to just wander through the ruins in the quiet of the late afternoon.

Catch a shuttle bus down the hill into the river valley to spend tonight in a fairly plain but comfortable hotel in the ramshackle village of Aguas Calientes. (b,l)

Day 11 | Cusco | explore Machu Picchu

This morning if you are feeling energetic, you can catch one of the first buses up to Machu Picchu, heading slightly up the hill beyond the site to catch sunrise over the mountains.

Enjoy a full guided tour of the site this morning.

Afterwards you can continue to explore the extensive ruins on your own or climb the emblematic peak of Huayna Picchu for a 'condor's-eye' view of the city.

Return to Cusco by train this afternoon to arrive some time after nightfall.

Transfer to your hotel for your last night in the town.(b)

Day 12 | Puno | cross the Altiplano

Board the bus to Lake Titicaca today.

Sit back, relax and watch the scenery slip by on this eight hour journey.

This road cuts across the formidable Peruvian Altiplano, rich with llama and remote settlements.

As you travel you will notice that the people change, from the Inca of Cusco and the Sacred Valley to the Aymara and Quechua of the Altiplano.

Traditional dress becomes incredibly colourful at the same time as the skies become bluer and more expansive.

Meet your guide who takes you to your comfortable hotel in the centre of Puno the main town on Lake Titicaca. After time in Cusco, Puno can be a refreshing change as it is so resolutely Peruvian.

Your hotel is at the top of the main, pedestrianised, street. Wander along the length of it to find some really quite good little restaurants. (b)

Day 13 | Puno | explore Lake Titicaca

Set off by boat early this morning.

First stop are the floating reed islands of Uros, a fascinating opportunity to see how people actually live out here on the edge of this massive lake.

The reed islands are several metres deep and every five months or so the inhabitants harvest more reeds to lay over the top as the previous layer begins to compact and decompose.

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Lake Titicaca

Sometimes customers come to us concerned that Lake Titicaca is going to be too 'touristy'. In fact, these are justified concerns. There are floating islands in Uros which are only occupied during the day before the 'inhabitants' get changed back out of their traditional garb and head back to their houses in Puno.

Similarly, the main visitor site on Taquile Island can be very busy indeed – almost like a conveyor belt with dozens of boats a day landing there.

In Uros we are very careful to visit only islands which are genuinely inhabited so you can get a sense of how they actually live day to day.

On Taquile we visit a community on the far side of the island which receives visitors usually once a week and is therefore a genuinely interesting opportunity for cultural interaction.



Uros floating islands in Lake Titicaca



Continue out of Puno bay as you realise that the huge lake you have been looking at from Puno is in fact just a protected bay on the main lake which is actually some 180km long and 70km wide.

Travel out into the main lake and the 'weaver's' island of Taquile where you visit the lesser known side of the island to learn about the history and culture of these charming people. While the women weave, the men knit. Return to Puno this afternoon. (b,l)

Day 14 | Arequipa | **travel to the white city**

Transfer from Puno to the amazingly chaotic town of Juliaca from where you fly 50 minutes over some beautiful scenery to the city of Arequipa.

The city sits in the shadow of several snow-capped volcanoes and is famous for its lovely climate.

As you are now much lower than you have been for ten days or so, you should all be feeling fit as a fiddle.

Whilst the outskirts of the city are as unappealing as any, the centre is really very pretty indeed with a large porticoed central plaza made entirely from white volcanic stone.

Arriving in the mid-afternoon means that you have time for a fairly brief introductory tour of the city.

Visit the rather moving 'Juanita' museum where you see the perfectly preserved body of a young victim of Inca sacrifice found at the top of a nearby volcano. (b)

Day 15 | Arequipa | **day to relax**

Today is an opportunity for you to simply relax and take things easy.

Arequipa is home to the Alpaca industry of Peru so you will find beautiful garments for sale.

The silver is also first rate. As well as possibly the best shopping of your holiday, Arequipa has plenty of restaurants and cafes where you can try excellent 'nuevo Andino' cuisine.

If you prefer to get out and about today, we can arrange an optional day trip to the Colca Canyon to see the condors.

Day 16 | Travel | **fly back to UK**

After a relaxed morning, catch your mid-afternoon flight back to Lima, connecting through to your overnight flight back to the UK.

Again, we quote international flights separately on this holiday. (b)

Space for your notes and questions for us

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Holiday Information

Pura Handmade

This holiday is unique to us.

We have designed and deliver this holiday using our own people and carefully selected local suppliers to create a Pura Handmade holiday.

You are looked after by a Pura team on the ground in Cusco and the Inca Trail which means that we can far better control the quality of this crucial part of your experience.

You have longer to walk the Inca Trail giving you the best possible chance of enjoying the walk fully.

Our Amazon lodge has been chosen for the quality of wildlife, the guides, the level of comfort and location.

The hotels and lodges we have chosen very carefully to best reflect the places you are visiting. They are comfortable without being 'fancy'.

On Lake Titicaca we are careful to avoid the usual tourist route so you get an insight into life in this most peaceful of environments.

Your holiday is carefully paced to allow you time both to stretch yourselves and just to relax and enjoy time in this absolutely fascinating country.

How active?

The focus of this holiday is on walking, wildlife and culture. The pace is relaxed, except for the Inca Trail.

The trail covers 28 miles over 4 days. However, it is at high altitude. The going can be slow and fairly tough. You must be used to hill walking to enjoy the trail.

Day one is a short walk on easy terrain at lower altitude than Cusco so you should find this quite easy.

Day two is a longer walk, mostly uphill on good paths with some paved sections. This is the day where you will really start to feel the altitude.

Day three is the hardest day as you go over the highest pass on the trail, down then up over a second pass and finally down and over a small third pass.

Day four is relatively long but you are losing altitude and walking down for most of the day. The path becomes much more structured with long sections of narrow steps and paved stretches. It can therefore be the toughest day for your knees.

Having said all this, by taking slightly longer to complete the trail you are walking with few other people and you can walk at a pace suitable for you. Remember that our team of porters carry your things as well as setting up the tents and cooking.

How comfortable?

In the Amazon stay in a very pretty, comfortable jungle lodge with 32 en-suite rooms.

Rooms have one open wall to the jungle and the architecture is traditional style which is to say that things are fairly open so noise travels.

Comfortable 3*hotel in Cusco near the centre.

Fully portaged camping on the Inca Trail. Dining and toilet tents are provided.

Aguas Calientes (Machu Picchu Pueblo) stay in a comfortable hotel with not much charm.

In Puno stay in a three star hotel near the centre.

In Arequipa stay again in a decent three star hotel with restaurants and shops nearby.

How independent?

This is a tailor made holiday so you are not traveling as a group although you will be with others during your holiday as follows:

In the Amazon you are led by lodge guides and so will be joined by other guests of the lodge.

In Cusco and the Inca Trail you will either have private services or be joined by other Pura Aventura clients. We only run dedicated Pura Aventura departures on the Trail with a maximum group size of 16 with two guides.

In practice our groups are usually around 6-8 people.

Shared boat and guide service across Lake Titicaca.

When should I go?

Generally we recommend this holiday any time between March and November. Expect the most stable weather between May and September.

Lake Titicaca is also best visited March to November.

Arequipa has a fairly stable, sunny and pleasant climate year round. The jungle is hot and rainy year round.

How responsible?

Pura Aventura is passionate about the places it visits.

To help preserve the integrity of these destinations we:

- Work directly with local businesses and organisations to directly benefit local economies.
- Work with local guides so that our holidays are more interesting for clients and more beneficial locally.
- Make payment to suppliers before our clients arrive.

We strictly adhere to the Porter Protection Policies which govern porters' work in Peru.

How do I book?

As a tailor made holiday we need to check availability and prices before taking your booking. If you would like us to prepare you a detailed proposal then simply email info@pura-aventura.com or call 01273 676 712 with your preferred dates plus any other changes you would like us to make.

Once you have the proposal and decide you would like to go ahead then please call in with the following:

- Full names
- Address
- Contact telephone numbers & email
- Deposit of 15%

Deposits can be paid by card, cheque or bank transfer, whichever suits you best (the balance of your holiday is due 60 days prior to travel).

We send you a confirmation email detailing all of the services agreed between us. We ask you to check through all of this carefully and sign off on the holiday.

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Prices and departures

2012	Daily, Apr – Oct £2,380pp guide price
Dates	Although this is a tailor made holiday, exact departure dates are tied to our Inca Trail departures, of which we generally have two or three per month. Please call us on 01273 676712 to discuss available dates.
Flights	<i>Price does not include international flights.</i> We can arrange these for you (guide price £700 - £900 depending on season) or you can arrange your own.
Price includes	Domestic Peru flights; comfortable three star hotels (twin or double en suite); Guiding, activities and entrances as above including Visitors' Ticket in Cusco; Inca Trail entrance fees, guides & porters; Transfers and transport as above; Activities mentioned; and meals (b,l,d) as per itinerary.
Not included	International flights; personal expenses; tips; Peru airport taxes (\$6 per domestic flight, \$30 international tax on departure).

Prices are per person based on two sharing.

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