

Walk Peru

Inca Trail to Machu Picchu



Inca Trail - Machu Picchu - spectacular mountain scenery
expert guides – acclimatise slowly – walk at a relaxed pace – quiet campsites –
time to appreciate Machu Picchu – dedicated Pura team – inclusive price

Walk the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu to experience the unique feeling of arriving at Machu Picchu on foot.

Take four days on the trail to walk a near empty trail and sleep in peaceful campsites with the best views.

Visit smaller ruins along the way and enjoy spectacular views of the Andes.

Acclimatise gradually as you explore Cusco and the Sacred Valley with your dedicated Pura guide.

Enjoy all of this in some comfort with porters, guides and good hotels.

This is a Pura *handmade* holiday with an activity rating *high* and a comfort rating *standard*.



Looking out over Machu Picchu.



"Quite simply, it was the most outstanding experience of our lives. From the detailed notes we received in advance to the magnificent tour guides through to the supreme way you stagger the trail trek to avoid the crowds (we have the trail to ourselves for a full three days seeing no more than 10 other people), we were blown away. I cannot fully express into words just what a jewel of a trip you have." Nigel P.

Holiday Itinerary

Day 01 | Cusco | **acclimatise in Cusco**

You are met at Cusco airport (or station) by your guide. Settle in to your comfortable hotel for two nights and start acclimatising to the rarefied air of this beautiful city (3,326m) with a gentle guided walk.

You have the services of one of our Pura guides throughout your time here and on the Inca Trail.

By travelling with the same guide throughout we believe that you can enjoy a far more insightful and in depth experience.

It also means that rather than a rigid schedule, you have a degree of flexibility in terms of what to see and do each day.

Day 02 | Cusco | **explore Cusco**

Still acclimatising, explore with your guide today.

You might 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 03 | Inca Trail | **Start the Inca 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 one-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.

Questions? Ready to book? Call us on **01273 676 712**

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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."

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 minutes.

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.

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 04 | 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)

Day 05 | Inca Trail | **high trail**

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.



Standing at Dead Woman's Pass

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.

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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.

Your campsite tonight is at 3,600m on a bluff overlooking beautiful mountain scenery. (b,l,d)

Day 06 | Inca Trail | arrive at 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.

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.



A Pura group arriving in the late 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 07 | 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 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 08 | Cusco | finish

After breakfast, depart for home or the next leg of your journey. (b)

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Porters on the Inca Trail...



... mean that you walk light with just a day pack



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Holiday Information

Pura Handmade

This holiday is unique to us, well we aren't the only ones offering the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu but we do make this holiday ourselves.

We have a Pura team on the ground in Cusco and the Inca Trail which means that we control the quality of the guides, the chefs, the porters, etc.

We also pace the walk differently to almost all other operators, giving you longer on the Inca Trail for the best possible chance of enjoying the walk fully.

How active?

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.

How comfortable?

Stay in comfortable 3* hotels near the centre of Cusco and in Aguas Calientes near Machu Picchu.

Fully portaged camping on the Inca Trail. Tents are pitched for you. Dining and toilet tents are provided.

How responsible?

We only run our own dedicated Inca Trail departures with a small family business in Cusco.

We only work with the best and most experienced guides and porters.

Our porters come from the community of Chacllanca, about 45km from Cusco. Generally they are subsistence farmers who supplement their earnings by working on the Inca Trail.

We adhere strictly to the Porter Protection Policies in place on the Inca Trail.

We take longer to walk the Inca Trail, keeping you away from the overcrowded and environmentally depleted campsites.

Instead you stay at peaceful campsites where numbers are low and therefore environmental impact minimal.

How independent?

All of our Inca Trails are dedicated Pura departures.

We have certain set group dates, listed below.

Groups are no larger than 16 with two guides. More usually our groups are six to eight with one guide.

We offer tailor made departures on any date you want, we then open these up as group departure dates.

We can also offer private Inca Trails, please enquire as to prices for this.

Who is it for?

Machu Picchu is a once in a lifetime experience available to anyone who is walking fit.

Broadly speaking this holiday attracts a wide range of people from families with younger teenage children through to people in their late 60s.

A majority of our clients walking the Inca Trail are between their 40s and 60s.

When should I go?

You can walk the Inca Trail any time from March through to January.

April to November is considered the best time with predominantly dry, sunny conditions during the day.

Nights can be very cold at altitude.

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.

Prices & set departures

2012	Weekly, March to October £975 - £1,100pp
	Price will vary according to departure date and group size. Please call for exact departure days. We also offer private departures, one-day trails and the train up to Machu Picchu, please contact us for details.
Prices include	Good hotels (twin or double); Services of Pura Aventura guide; Entrance fees in Cusco & Sacred Valley including Visitors' Ticket; Inca Trail entrance fees; camping; porters; train tickets; Two day entrance ticket to Machu Picchu; Private transfers; and Meals (b,l,d) as per itinerary.
Not included	Flights; personal expenses; tips.

Prices are per person, based on two sharing.

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