

Walk Peru

Lares Trail & Machu Picchu



Alternative Inca Trail - Lares trail – Machu Picchu – colonial Cusco – fully portaged – expert guides – off the beaten track

Enjoy the beautiful and remote trek along the Lares Valley.

Visit remote Quechua communities as you hike into the Andes.

At the end of your walk, visit the beautiful citadel of Machu Picchu.

Spend time in the fascinating colonial city of Cusco.

No permits means that you can choose when you hike the trail.

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



Looking down over Machu Picchu.



Holiday Itinerary

Day 01 | Cusco | **arrive in Cusco**

Please note: no flights are included in this holiday. We can arrange these for you but they are quoted separately.

On arrival in Cusco, we transfer you to your hotel and start acclimatising to the rarefied air of this beautiful city (3,326m).

In the afternoon, take a short walking tour of the centre of Cusco to familiarise you with the main sights, restaurants and museums.

This is also a chance to stretch your legs and experience exercise at altitude.



Looking out over the beautiful and deserted landscapes of Lares.

Day 02 | Cusco | **free day in Cusco**

Today is yours to explore this lovely city on foot.

It is important that you give your body time to acclimatise properly before you set off walking.

At a convenient time your guide will arrange a full briefing for the days ahead.

Day 03 | Calca | **hike through a canyon**

Set off early to drive along the Sacred Valley which runs from Cusco to Machu Picchu.

At the village of Calca you turn off to head high into the Andes.

In just under two hours you will leave the vehicles and start your acclimatisation hike along an Inca trail, through a narrow canyon where Incan burial tombs can still be seen.

This is a perfect hike to get you used to trekking at altitude.

Meet your bus further up the valley and transfer over a 4,200m pass to a small local community where you set up base camp for the night. (b,l,d)

Day 04 | Cuncani | **amazing scenery**

Enjoy a beautiful day's hiking as you climb out of the Quisuarani valley, hopefully meeting en route some of the colourfully dressed locals.

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'Classic' Inca Trail versus the 'Alternative Trails'

When considering an alternative to the 'Classic' Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, you should be clear about a couple of things.

The 'Classic', both one-day and four-day routes, is governed by a strict system of permits. These generally sell out many months in advance.

Whereas the classic Inca Trail runs along the Sacred Valley to bring you out at the 'back door' (i.e. Sun Gate) of Machu Picchu itself, the alternative trails such as Lares do not lead to the citadel of Machu Picchu.

You should therefore think of the 'Alternative Trails' as beautiful hiking in stunning surroundings with a visit to Machu Picchu as a treat at the end.

On this Lares Trail, once you finish your hike, you take the train up to Machu Picchu and then by road up the hill to the citadel itself.

On the plus side, hiking on these alternative trails is generally stunning and the scenery more beautiful than the 'Classic Trail'.

The Lares Trail is particularly good as it combines great scenery with interaction with truly remote traditional Andean communities.

Lares is also rather special because there is vehicular access to each night's camp which means that you exist in rather greater comfort than would be the case if porters were carrying everything on their backs.



This whole area is famous for its weavings and at the various campsites you can barter for beautiful hand-made textiles at a fraction of the price of what they would be at home or even in Cusco.

Our trekking path borders the native tree reforestation project of ECOAN: this restored eco-system is home to several endemic birds.

Thereafter you will descend to the small village of Cuncani where you arrive in time for lunch.

Along the way pass spectacular waterfalls, crystal clear lakes, and even see herds of llama.

After lunch you have many options to entertain you.

From a short walk over the ridge to a neighbouring village to a soak in the Lares hot springs, you should find something to keep you happy this afternoon.

The valleys of Lares have many hidden treasures and are versatile enough to allow us to tailor the trek to weather and your needs. (b,l,d)

Day 05 | Huilloc | **climb over a summit**

Now fully acclimatised and rested, today is your toughest challenge.

Set off to climb over a 4,200m pass and descend towards the Sacred Valley of the Incas.

We take it very slowly, stopping beside beautiful lakes in the hope of arriving at the pass just after lunch for the best views of the snowy Mount Veronica.

From here, descend along an old mule trail to the village of Huilloc where we set up our final camp.

Huilloc is famous as being home to many of the traditional porters for the Inca Trail.

You will notice that traditional dress is always worn and Quechua is spoken and not Spanish. (b,l,d)

Day 06 | Purmamarca | **archaeological sites**

The start of your walk today is a short sharp climb bringing you to impressive yet rarely visited Inca ruins of Purmamarca.

After visiting the extensive site, you follow an Inca pathway along the terraced sides of the Huilloc valley.

Passing through eucalyptus forests, the trail ends near the enormous Incan fortress of Ollantaytambo where you enjoy lunch.

From here catch the afternoon train to Machu Picchu town, aka Aguas Calientes.

Checking into your hotel you have the evening free to explore the extensive artisan market and colourful bars and restaurants. (b,l)

Day 07 | Machu Picchu | **discover Machu Picchu**

First thing in the morning head up the hill to Machu Picchu with your guide for a full guided tour.

There should be time afterwards to climb Huayna Picchu, the peak which towers over the citadel.

Walk out to the Inca Bridge or else just wander through the ruins soaking up the amazing atmosphere.

In the afternoon, board the train for the beautiful ride along the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Here our waiting bus whisks you back to Cusco and your hotel.

If you have the energy you can explore Cusco's excellent nightlife. (b)

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Day 08 | Cusco | **explore Cusco**

There is so much to see and do in Cusco that we dedicate a whole day to doing just that.

Whether your interest is exploring Inca ruins, visiting Colonial churches, bargain hunting in artisan markets or just relaxing over a cappuccino on a terrace overlooking the Plaza de Armas, Cusco has it all. (b)

Day 09 | travel | **leave Cusco**

Transfer to Cusco airport in time for your flights home or of course to continue your exploration of Peru. (b)

Please note: You can combine this holiday with trips to the Amazon Rainforest, Lake Titicaca, Arequipa and the Colca canyon.

Further afield you can combine this trip with a visit to the Iguassu Falls and Rio or head up to the Galapagos Islands or go skiing in Chile.

Suffice to say, there are lots of amazing things to do. Please contact us to discuss suitable options.

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Holiday Information

Pura's opinion

This holiday is about an interesting mixture of spectacular mountain scenery, glacial lakes, waterfalls, high plains, hot springs and charming Andean villages.

The views of the snow topped peaks of Veronica, Chicon, Pituisiray and Sawasiray keep us company most of the way.

The trip also includes the chance to soak in the hot-springs at Lares village as well as the opportunity to barter for local weavings along the route.

The final location of the Purmamarca ruins and the superb walk down on an original Inca trail along massive, remarkably well-preserved Inca terraces to the back entrance of Ollantaytambo completes this satisfying trek.

How active?

This is an active hiking trip suitable for those who enjoy walking in mountain environments.

Day one is a short walk in Cusco, this is a chance to stretch your legs and experience hiking at 3300m.

Day three is a longer walk high into the Andes, this is a perfect hike to allow you to experience firsthand the affects of trekking at altitude.

Day four is a long walk in the morning as you climb out a valley and during the afternoon you will have many options but all of them ending to the Incas' Bath, a selection of heated pools.

Day five is the hardest day, climbing over a 4,200m pass. It will be take very slowly stopping beside lakes.

Day six is a short sharp climb then you will follow an ancient Inca trail along many terraces and across eucalyptus forests.

Day seven is the day to head up the hill of Machu Picchu.

Day eight as you wish, you can explore the city of Cusco or just relax.

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?

A good quality sleeping bag is essential for your enjoyment of this trip.

You will enjoy fully portaged camping during your hike. Dining and toilet tents are provided.

In Cusco and Aguas Calientes expect to stay in reasonable, clean 3* hotels with en suite bathrooms but don't expect anything too fancy.

Upgraded hotels are available, please call to discuss.

How independent?

The "Lares Alternative Inca Trail" travels through a remote and rarely visited part of Peru and we believe our clients should be aware that the remoteness that makes the hike so very special could also cause certain problems.

We and our partners on the ground endeavour to minimize the chances of anything unexpected happening, it has to be noted that no itinerary can or should be rigidly adhered to.

This is the very nature of adventure travel and we expect our clients to be prepared for delays and slight alterations in our programmed events.

When should I go?

Generally we recommend this holiday any time between April to December.

Expect the most stable weather between May and September.

During the day hopefully it will be generally sunny enough for shorts and t-shirts though having a fleece and rain gear handy is advisable.

It will get cold (as low as -5c whilst camping) especially in the evenings so bring a warm fleece jacket, a good waterproof and some warm clothes including thermal underwear, gloves, scarf and woolly hat as well as one set of smarter clothes for Cusco.

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 organizations 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.

Prices and departures

2011	18 Jun 27 Jul 17 Aug 31 Aug 21 Sep 19 Oct 21 Dec £875pp
2011	Two person private from £1,075pp
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	Comfortable three star hotels (twin or double en suite); Guiding, activities and entrances as above; Entrance and fully guided private tour in Machu Picchu; Guides & porters, camping and cooking equipment (except for sleeping bag); Transfers and transport as above; Activities mentioned; and meals (b,l,d) as per itinerary.
Not included	Flights; personal expenses; tips; sleeping bag rental.

Prices are per person based on two sharing. Minimum group size of four. Privat

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