



PERU

Custom Sample Itinerary
Private Family Discovery Tour
with Lima, Cusco, Sacred Valley of the Incas, Machu Picchu
plus an ocean-side resort & dunes of coastal Peru
12 days / 11 nights
(can be adjusted longer or shorter according to preference)



[Map of South America](#) (interactive links)

Destination Maps: [Peru](#)

SEASON: Any month of the year (April-November are drier in the Andes, while December-March is summer in the coast).

TRIP RATING: Expertly designed for active families with teenagers. Grade II-Moderate cultural, educational and family-friendly tour. This first-class soft adventure is activity-oriented featuring optional walking tours through villages and Inca sites (2-3 hours duration at elevations above 8,000 ft). Although the trip reaches a high point of 12,150 ft, it has been designed to allow gradual adjustment to the altitude. This is a personalized guided trip with your own private guide and vehicle/driver.



INTRODUCTION: **Machu Picchu**, the “lost city of the Incas” honored as one of the New 7 Wonders of the World - sparks imagination of youth and adults alike! Explore this jewel of Inca architecture as all members of the family will find “wow” moments and make lifelong memories with this adventuresome and lively itinerary. In the nearby **Sacred Valley and Cusco**, you’ll find experience-rich interactive excursions for teens and great dining and relaxation for parents – all combined with active easy-to-moderate outdoor adventure and eye-opening cultural exchange everyone can enjoy! The **Paracas coast** of southern Peru is a nice place to relax at the end of any trip in Peru. Friendly seaside towns offer beaches, boat rides to view marine life, desert dune buggy rides, sandboarding, an oasis, bike riding and pool time.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Get up-close with llamas, vicuñas and alpacas and learn to tell them apart
- Practice Spanish as you bargain for artisan crafts in lively local markets
- Bike along scenic Sacred Valley roads following the Urubamba river
- Spot the Southern Cross and other night sky wonders at a planetarium and observatory
- Watch the ancient citadel of Machu Picchu emerge from the clouds
- Spot rare birds through binoculars & learn about endangered species of the cloud forest
- Get creative in the kitchen with a Peruvian cooking class
- Try sandboarding, a dune buggy ride & relax at an ocean-side resort in Paracas

DATE TOURING / HOTELS / MEALS (indicated as B,L,D)

<p>DAY 01</p>	<p>TO PERU Depart home and arrive this evening to Peru's capital city, Lima. Reception by your private Southwind guide providing a private transfer to your hotel in the coastal Miraflores District. JW Marriott Hotel</p>	
<p>DAY 02</p>	<p>LIMA After a relaxed breakfast to rest up after the late evening arrival. Pick up at 10:00am for a half-day guided Paso Fino horseback ride in the countryside and along the beach from a hacienda near the Pachacamac archaeological site overlooking the ocean (site visit included). A traditional style Peruvian lunch is included. Return to the hotel to prepare for the next leg of the journey to the Andes. Dinner is on your own with options to dine out near the hotel in the pedestrian friendly Miraflores district. (B,L) JW Marriott Hotel</p>	
<p>DAY 03</p>	<p>LIMA / CUSCO / SACRED VALLEY Early morning private transfer to the airport with your guide. Check-in assistance for your scenic flight over the Andes from Lima to Cusco (1.5 hours).</p> <p>Meet your Andean guide in Cusco (elev 11,150 ft) and drive 1 hour to Pisac in the Sacred Valley of the Incas. The route follows a winding mountain road providing superb vistas of the rugged canyon formed by the Urubamba River. En route, we'll visit the Awana Kancha textiles center to learn about South American camelids (llamas, alpacas, vicuñas and guanacos) and watch weavers craft the wool the same way their ancestors have done for generations!</p> <p>Descending into the warm valley, our next stop is at the town of Pisac (9,708 ft) to walk through a small private botanical garden with a unique collection of cactus, typical plants and flowers before enjoying a delicious Andean lunch. Later stretch the legs on a panoramic walk through Pisac's impressive Incan ruins, perched spectacularly on a ridge overlooking the town and countryside. The walking tour is about two miles along a wide stone-paved trail high above the valley, dotted with lookout points. We visit the main sections of the site including the religious center <i>Intihuatana</i>, or Hitching Post of the Sun. We'll see dozens of agricultural terraces whose formations were built to follow the contours of the hillside rising from the Urubamba River valley. Afterwards, we continue driving down the valley to the community of Urubamba and check-in to a charming Andean hacienda-style lodge at 9,430 ft. Enjoy some leisure time to relax on the lovely grounds. Dinner is on your own this evening in the gourmet restaurant with ingredients from the garden blending tastes and traditions of the valley's agriculture heritage. (B,BL) Sol y Luna Lodge & Spa - <i>Relais & Chateaux</i></p>	 
<p>DAY 04</p>	<p>SACRED VALLEY / OLLANTAYTAMBO After breakfast, we venture out on a guided mountain bike tour through the Sacred Valley (about 3 hours/15 miles) on comfortable front-suspension bicycles. This is an easy/moderate ride on scenic level paths through small communities, farm lands and fields. We first drive to the trailhead by the agricultural village of Huayllabamba (9,405 ft) to begin riding rural dirt roads with almost no traffic. We head first towards Urquillos and then continue along the bank of the Urubamba River towards Calca. Experience everyday life of the valley, encounter villagers as they work crops, plant, till, harvest and care for their animals.</p>	

	<p>A traditional lunch awaits us at Wayra restaurant, buffet-style with options for all kinds of eaters. Here we have a chance to sample a variety of native delicacies including several types of potatoes (tubers such as oca); quinoa (sacred to the Incas, referred to as the “mother of all grains”); fava beans; and corn. During lunch a Paso Fino horse show displays the elegance of the national breed known for their lilted gait while rhythms of <i>Marinera</i>, an emblematic Peruvian dance, accompany the show.</p> <p>After a short scenic drive up the valley, we'll scratch our curiosity about where salt comes from at the Salt mines, a fascinating patchwork of white and water. A series of over 2,000 terraced mountainside pools fed by a natural spring are still worked by local families today. From here, we'll take a 1 hour gradual downhill hike into the Sacred Valley, following a classic Andean gorge trail and admiring the views. Return to the peaceful comforts of the lodge to relax. (B,L) Sol y Luna Lodge & Spa - Relais & Chateaux</p>	
<p>DAY 06</p>	<p>MACHU PICCHU</p> <p>We head to Ollantaytambo early this morning to catch the Vistadome train for the 1.5 hour ride to village of Machu Picchu. En route, enjoy panoramic views of the snow-capped Urubamba range, including the peaks of Veronica and Pitusiray. Ascend to Machu Picchu (7,874 ft) by shuttle and join your expert guide for a private tour of this iconic archaeological site perched atop a crest high above the meandering Urubamba River and surrounded by rugged, green Andean hillsides. We'll ponder how this marvelous lost city was built so long ago without machines. How long was it forgotten? Who finally discovered it and exposed it to the world? Walk among the Temple of the Sun, the Royal Tomb, ceremonial fountains, Intihuatana ritual stone, the industrial area, and Sacred Plazas. You can take photos with the llamas and alpacas who peacefully graze among the terraces.</p> <p>Lunch today is buffet-style at the Tinkuy restaurant just outside the citadel. Afterwards, we'll take an easy going walk (30 min) to the impressive Inca Drawbridge. This ingenious construction forms a natural gap in a stone-paved trail that the Incas used to prevent unwanted visitors entering. Later, we descend to the village and settle in at Inkatererra's award winning hotel situated on 12 acres of cloud forest gardens along the Urubamba River. The grounds are a nature-lover's wonderland of birds, ferns, bromeliads and orchid species (over 370 orchid species have been identified here). Parents can indulge in an Andean massage using 100% local botanical ingredients. The whole family can relax in the outdoor hot tubs, try the Andean eucalyptus sauna or learn about Inkatererra's on-site spectacled bear conservation project which aims to rescue injured bears and reintroduce them into their natural habitat. This evening, enjoy a tasty dinner together while recounting our exploration of the lost city perched high on the ridge above the hotel. (B,L,D) Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel – A Nat'l Geo Unique Lodge of the World</p>	 
<p>DAY 07</p>	<p>MACHU PICCHU / CUSCO</p> <p>Those who wish can rise early to beat the crowds and walk into the ruins (gates open at 06:00) to see the early morning light as the sun emerges over the Gateway of the Sun. There are several optional guided hikes today to suit your experience and energy level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An easy going option is a 1.5 hour up-and-downhill hike on a shaded trail ending at the mysterious, partially excavated Temple of the Moon (7,580 ft), a natural cave where carved rocks have been fitted perfectly to form a wall of doors and windows. This passage is a fun off-the-beaten-path alternative to the more challenging and traveled Huayna Picchu hike. 	

- **Huayna Picchu**, or Young Peak, looms over the citadel at 8,860 ft. A vigorous climb (3 hrs roundtrip) follows a very steep and exposed trail, ending at terraced ruins offering a thrilling bird's-eye view of Machu Picchu.

Today is flexible - those who prefer can simply choose an overlook to meditate, photograph, or continue personal explorations of this archaeological wonder at your own pace. Lunch is on your own with dining options by the entrance. In the afternoon, join your guide to see the **Temple of the Condor** where rocks form outstretched wings etched on the floor. We then head over to the hidden Intimachay, where on only 2 days of the year (solstices), a stream of light passes through a precisely placed window.

Returning to the village, we board the Vistadome train and retrace the course of the Urubamba River winding past Incan terraces and Quechua communities, leaving the lush cloud forest en route back to the highlands. At Ollantaytambo, we meet our private vehicle for a drive across the highlands (during the picturesque late day light) to arrive in Cusco around 7:30pm. You will be staying near the main plaza in the restored palace of the first governor of Peru, Francisco Pizarro, built over the Inca's *Aclla Huasi* foundation. Dinner is on your own tonight, after a full day, we recommend the hotel's refined restaurant overlooking the colonial courtyard. (B,L) [Libertador Palacio del Inka Hotel & Spa – Luxury Collection](#)



DAY 08 CUSCO





This morning, set out with your guide to explore Cusco by van and foot. Visit the colorful and lively **San Pedro** open air market, where locals sell fruits, typical foods, breads, vegetables, herbs, clothing and more. Then, heading towards the historical Main Square, we stop for photos by the fountain and gardens before walking an original Inca street called *Hatunrumiyoc*, to discover a **12-angled stone** cut and fit with amazing precision. We'll ponder the Inca Sun Temple or **Coricancha** where walls and floors were once covered in sheets of solid gold!

At the Casa Qorikancha, we meet a chef and get hands-on in the kitchen with a **Peruvian cuisine cooking class**. Savor the *tiradito* (King fish rolls) or *ceviche* (a marinated fish appetizer) you've helped to prepare, along with other native delicacies.

We wrap up touring with a short drive above town to take in the view at the mighty **fortress of Sacsayhuaman**, a spectacular Incan complex overlooking the Cusco valley. The rest of the afternoon is free in Cusco. This friendly city is known for its great shopping and cultural opportunities. You may want to visit the **San Blas neighborhood** home to artist galleries and workshops. This evening, scout out your own dinner along the cobbled streets of Cusco, where gourmet, vegetarian, and international restaurants have something for everyone. (B,L)

[Libertador Palacio del Inka Hotel & Spa – Luxury Collection](#)



<p>DAY 09</p>	<p>CUSCO / LIMA / PARACAS RESORT</p> <p>After a leisurely breakfast in Cusco, pick up at the hotel for a private transfer to the airport for a morning flight from Cusco to Lima. Meet your resident Southwind guide and private vehicle and begin driving 3-4 hours south (170 miles) along the arid Pacific coast to the Paracas National Reserve, an important marine and terrestrial protected area and a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site. We stop at the secluded Cerro Azul surfing beach and to visit the towns of Cañete or Chincha to enjoy a local style lunch of fresh seafood. Arrive by late afternoon to your ocean front resort. Dinner is on your own to unwind in the hotel's casual yet distinguished restaurant.</p> <p>(B,L)</p> <p>Hotel Paracas Resort – <i>Luxury Collection</i></p>	
<p>DAY 10</p>	<p>PARACAS RESORT</p> <p>Morning at leisure to relax and enjoy the hotel amenities (luxury spa, kayaks, catamaran sailing, bikes, fitness center, gardens with views of the sea). After lunch at the hotel, we drive about 1 hour inland to the town of Ica.</p> <p>At the Huacachina oasis in the sand dunes above the town, we'll embark on a fun 4x4 beach buggy ride and sandboarding class. Afterwards explore the unique desert town and lagoon. Local legend says the water and mud here is therapeutic as a remedy for various ailments.</p> <p>En route back to Paracas, we'll stop at the Regional Museum housing an impressive collection of artifacts, textiles and ceramics from the Nasca culture (flourished from the 1st to 8th centuries A.D.) and the preceding Paracas culture. Back at the hotel, dinner is on your own, you can dine inside or al fresco at the poolside patio.</p> <p>(B,L)</p> <p>Hotel Paracas Resort – <i>Luxury Collection</i></p>	 
<p>DAY 11</p>	<p>PARACAS / LIMA / DEPARTURE</p> <p>After breakfast board a comfortable 20-passenger speedboat (open air with padded seats) for a 2 hour ocean journey to the Ballestas Islands home to several marine species and birds. En route, view the Candelabro, a figure sketched into the side of the cliff dunes overlooking the sea, similar to the figures found on the Nazca plains. After crossing the bay out to the islands, enjoy close-up observations of dozens of sea lions as they swim near the boat or sun themselves on shore. Watch a spectacular natural display with thousands of marine birds including the Inca tern as they nest and dart about overhead. It's possible you may also catch a glimpse of Humboldt penguins among the rocks and dolphins jumping in the bay. The visit is by boat (there is no disembarkation in the reserve). The roundtrip boat ride is together with other passengers (not private). Return to the hotel for lunch prior to check-out.</p> <p>Depart Paracas with your guide in the early afternoon for the 3.5 hour drive back north to Lima with a rest break en route. Arriving in Lima, your guide will bring you to the pedestrian friendly Larcomar dining & shopping district with nice options for dinner and a promenade along the bluff looking out at the Pacific. Later this evening, your guide and private vehicle will transfer you to the airport with check-in assistance for your overnight flight home.</p> <p>(B,L)</p>	
<p>Day 12</p>	<p>ARRIVE HOME</p> <p>Arrive in your gateway city this morning to clear customs and make onward connections home.</p>	

Meals: B=breakfast; L=lunch; BL=box lunch; D=dinner. If a meal is not indicated, you can dine out at your leisure.

OPTIONAL UPGRADES:

Hotels: In Lima, we can reserve the luxurious Miraflores Park Hotel perched above the Pacific. In the Sacred Valley, consider the lovely Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado or Libertador Tambo del Inka. In Cusco, the historic Monasterio Hotel or Palacio Nazarenas Hotel are favorites of discerning travelers. At Machu Picchu, consider the exclusive Sanctuary Lodge adjacent to the citadel. Due to high demand reservations are recommended at least 4-5 months in advance. Upgrades are quoted on request and are subject to availability. See [Accommodations](#) for details. Please contact our office for prices and upgrade information.

Km 104 Inca Trail dayhike on Day 06: With your private trekking guide, disembark the Vistadome train at Km 104 for a classic hike on stone-paved Inca Trail. Pass through the Gateway of the Sun to approach Machu Picchu on foot as the Incas did centuries ago. The 7-mile hike is moderate/difficult but highly rewarding and takes approximately 6.5 hours. Extra costs apply for the required permit and logistics and advance planning is recommended (at least 4-5 months in advance). Please notify our office if interested.



Nazca Lines Overflight on Day 10: With this add-on, you will depart the hotel in Paracas by private vehicle for a 1 hour drive south to Ica. Here you board a Cessna Grand Caravan single engine turboprop (or similar 4-12 seat aircraft) to view the mysterious geoglyph drawings etched into the coastal plains that can only be seen clearly from the air! The lines have fascinated scientists, archaeologists and visitors for decades. Scientists believe the Nazca people who lived along the coast from A.D. 1 to 700, made most of the lines. With only 20 minutes of rain all year and little wind or erosion, the lines have been preserved for 500 to 2000 years. Over 800 straight lines, 300 geometric figures and 70 animal and plant designs are found here, some lines run perfectly straight up to 30 miles and show alignment with the sun on the winter solstice. Figures such as the monkey, fish, hands and whale are highlights during the flight which lasts approx 40 min including 25 min overflying the lines themselves. German Maria Reiche who studied the lines for 40 years theorized an astronomical and calendar purpose behind the formations. More recent studies led by Johan Reinhard, see animal symbolism pointing to rituals related to water and crop production. While flying, there is much circling, so motion sickness remedy and a light breakfast is recommended. Please notify our office if interested.



NEXT STEP: Contact Tom Damon to setup a custom planning phone call. With your feedback on the destinations, activities and accommodations in this sample itinerary, Southwind will create a custom proposal tailored to your travel style, goals, dates and budget. Your proposal will provide Land Cost pricing and more details. Accommodations shown in this sample are in the 4-5 star category with superior or preferential rooms with views. Optional upgrades to exclusive top tier hotels can be provided during the planning. Note that space or room types cannot be guaranteed until a design fee or deposit is paid and Southwind receives confirmation. It will help to finalize plans at your soonest convenience for best selection. For high season or holiday dates, we are able to place a complimentary hold with a design fee to help secure space while we fine tune your itinerary.

We look forward to having you travel with us in Peru!

For more information please contact your personal travel planner:
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