



## PERU

### Custom Sample Itinerary

**Lima's Culinary Scene, Luxury Riverboat Cruise on the Amazon,  
the Sacred Valley of the Incas, Machu Picchu & Cusco**  
**12 days/11 nights**  
**(can be adjusted longer or shorter according to preference)**



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

Destination Maps: [Peru](#)

**SEASON:** We recommend April through December. The dry season in the Peruvian Amazon is June-October. The rainy (flooded season) is November-May with the heaviest rains occurring January through March. Both seasons offer opportunities to view a diversity of plant and animal life. The dry season in the Andes around Machu Picchu is mid-April through mid-November.

**TRIP RATING:** Easy/Moderate nature oriented River Cruise & Andean Walking Tour, Grade (II) - This active, soft adventure includes a 2 nights in Lima, 4 nights on the M/V Aria cruising the Amazon River tributaries and 4 nights in the Andes. Walks are usually 2-3 hours on occasionally unmaintained trails plus sightseeing on motorized skiff excursions in the Amazon. Although the trip reaches a high point in the Andes of 12,350 ft, the itinerary has been designed to allow gradual adjustment to the altitude.

This is a personalized guided trip with your own private guide and vehicle/driver in Lima and the highlands. On the Amazon cruise, you'll have an all-inclusive stay with daily nature excursions led by on-site expert guides in small groups with other guests according to weather conditions and water levels in the rainforest.

**INTRODUCTION:** The **Amazon region** of northern Peru is isolated and rich in biodiversity. The region offers travelers a wonderful taste of the rainforest surrounding the Amazon River from the comfort of a 32 passenger luxury riverboat complete with A/C, hot water shower, panoramic windows and gourmet dining. Explore small creeks, lakes, tributaries, nature reserves and forest trails.

The Incas... Sons of the Sun... mysterious builders of stone fortresses, mountaintop citadels and golden temples. According to legend Manco Inca and Mama Ocllo, the first Inca rulers, came forth from Lake Titicaca to unite warring tribes under a common language and a unified religion, creating one of the most fabulous **ancient empires**, *Tawantinsuyo*, "the four quarters of the world." At its apex in the late fifteenth century, this impressive kingdom spanned an area more than five times the size of the state of California! The Incas governed this vast realm, which was connected by thousands of miles of stone-paved highways, from their cultural and religious center in Cusco. Persecuted by Spanish *conquistadores*, much of the Inca's history was destroyed. Even so, many stone monuments stand today, a testament to the skill of their master architects.

Awarded **South America's leading culinary destination** in 2019 by the World Travel Awards, Peruvian menus fuse flavors from highland Incan traditions with seafood delicacies from the coast together with a rich variety of Amazon fruits. In a farm to table fashion, taste your way through Peru while seeing and learning about ancient ways of farming.

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

<p><b>DAY 01</b></p>	<p><b>TO PERU</b>  Depart home and arrive this evening to Peru's capital city, Lima. Airport reception by your private Southwind guide providing a transfer to your hotel in the coastal Miraflores district along a promenade overlooking the Pacific Ocean.  <a href="#">JW Marriott Hotel</a></p>	
<p><b>DAY 02</b></p>	<p><b>CULINARY TOUR OF LIMA</b>  Today is a true taste of Lima beginning with a culinary tour of the city by a foodie specialist who brings the gastronomic side of the capital to life. Stop by a market to savor aromas, textures and intense colors of fresh ingredients including corn, peppers, multicolored potatoes, succulent seafood and juicy fruits from the Peruvian rainforest. Try out your Spanish phrases with friendly market vendors. Next, visit two renowned restaurants to try some appetizers from different regions of Peru. Visit a <b>cevichería</b> for a taste of Peru's signature dish, ceviche (made of fresh white fish marinated in lime juice). Join a cooking demonstration by a well-known Peruvian chef in one of Lima's top restaurants. Included are lunch and Pisco Sours - Peru's signature cocktail made with <i>Pisco</i> as the base mixed with key lime juice, syrup, ice, egg white, and Angostura bitters.</p> <p>In the afternoon, walk through the bohemian neighborhood of <b>Barranco</b> with a visit to a Chocolate Museum in adjacent <b>Miraflores</b> for some sweet delights. You'll learn how chocolate is made from Peruvian cocoa beans and satisfy any cravings in their bean-to-bar chocolate factory. This evening, dine at one of the finest restaurants in the city; <b>Huaca Pucllana</b>, located amidst the Pre-Columbian archaeological site of the same name.  (B,L,D)  <a href="#">JW Marriott Hotel</a></p>	 
<p><b>DAY 03</b></p>	<p><b>LIMA / IQUITOS – NAUTA – EMBARKATION – MARAÑÓN RIVER</b>  After a nutritional breakfast and perhaps an early morning walk at leisure along the garden paths overlooking the ocean, meet your guide at the hotel for a private transfer to the airport's Domestic Terminal. Check-in assistance for your <b>flight over the Andes from Lima to Iquitos</b> (1 hr 45 min). Meet Aria staff and drive to the port town of <b>Nauta</b>. Lunch is provided in Nauta or en route according to the flight schedules.</p> <p>This afternoon, set off on your first skiff excursion along the <b>Marañón River</b>. At 6:00pm, board the M/V Aria Amazon and settle into your modern suite as the ship casts off to begin a journey of discovery into the greatest wilderness on Earth. Following a routine safety drill and introduction to our naturalist guides, we gather for innovative Amazonian cuisine created by Executive Chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino, whose restaurant, Malabar, is the one of Lima's top ranked dining experiences. Consider a nightcap as you cruise slowly up the Amazon as the stars above present an incredible spectacle of both northern and southern constellations.  (B,L,D)  <a href="#">M/V Aria</a></p>	
<p><b>DAY 04</b></p>	<p><b>UCAYALI RIVER – PACAYA RIVER</b>  Boarding skiffs, we start the day like Amazon River dwellers, cruising along the <b>Ucayali River</b> watching the warm sunshine spread over this verdant ecosystem. As we float down the river, past the occasional farmer or fishermen paddling in their canoes, keep your binoculars ready to spot wildlife. We may see terns, orioles, tropical songbirds, black collared hawks and even a sloth. Be especially keen for the unusual and famous pink dolphins in these pristine waters.</p> <p>Later in the day, we return to the skiffs, to ride along the black waters of the Pacaya River at dusk, searching for the mysterious wildlife including some of the 13 species of primates found in <b>Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve</b>, including tamarins, howlers, capuchin, squirrel monkeys, dusky titi monkeys and pigmy marmoset monkeys. Listen in on the symphony of the Amazon rainforest as other nocturnal animals send their shrill calls across the treetops. En route back</p>	



	<p>to the boat, you may see other nocturnal creatures, such as huge black caimans (South American alligator). Return to the M/V Aria for a crew presentation and dinner while you navigate the headwaters of the Amazon River. (B,L,D)</p> <p><a href="#">M/V Aria</a></p>	
<b>DAY 05</b>	<p><b>PACAYA RIVER – UCAYALI RIVER – TAPICHE RIVER</b></p> <p>The rewards of our early start today are plentiful. <b>Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve</b> is a flooded forest covering five million acres at the headwaters of the Amazon basin. Your morning excursion will be accompanied by abundant bird song, as you glide in small boats past riverbanks filled with large-billed terns, laughing falcons, gray tanagers, sandpipers, exotic short-tailed parrots, and dozens of other vibrantly hued birds. Enjoy a breakfast picnic accompanied by jungle sounds and fishing along the black waters of the <b>Pacaya River</b>. As you fish, trained naturalist guides will tell the story of the area and its inhabitants. Return to the riverboat for a fulfilling lunch and a mid-day break.</p> <p>In the afternoon, cruise the Amazon's largest tributary, the <b>Ucayali River</b>. This area is home to the slow-moving three-toed sloth, iguanas, orioles and horned screamers. On the river, see and meet native <i>balseros</i>, or native fisherman, demonstrating their skill and their catch. We should see a type of "armored" catfish, with a shell-like skin, that they take to the Requena village market. Along the way we will see "banana balsero" rafts loaded with hundreds of clusters of bananas drifting down the river. Your naturalist guide will tell you about sustainable development projects carried out in this region of the Peruvian Amazon. As we make our way back to our riverboat, you may see caiman, frogs and fishing bats. Back on board of the M/V Aria, enjoy another delightful dinner this evening and a restful night. (B,L,D)</p> <p><a href="#">M/V Aria</a></p>	 
<b>DAY 06</b>	<p><b>CLAVERO LAKE – SAN JOSE DE SARAPANGA FOREST</b></p> <p>After a nourishing breakfast, this morning provides the chance to choose among several activities; a jungle walk in search for wildlife encounters and learning first-hand about medicinal plants. Spot a magnificent Ceiba tree, the tallest in the Amazon or perhaps an eye-catching but poisonous frog along the trail. Another option is paddling a traditional Amazonian wooden canoe, or more modern kayak. A refreshing swim in the waters of the <b>Yarapa or Clavero Rivers</b> is also possible. Life jackets, ponchos, rubber boots, and drinking water are always available. Return to the M/V Aria to set off downstream toward Nauta. Before a tasty lunch, participate in a fun cooking demonstration.</p> <p>This afternoon, board the comfortable skiffs to sail from the Ucayali River and take a short jungle walk in the <b>San Jose flooded forest</b> and see the unforgettable giant water lilies. A vast variety of wildlife: terns, tropical songbirds, pipites, black collared hawks and sloth share this wonderful spot. Back on board the ship continues to navigate towards the headwaters of the <b>Amazon River</b>, where the Ucayali and Marañon Rivers merge. Meet in the lounge with the naturalist guides for the crew presentation. The guides will introduce some of the "behind the scenes" crew members whom you may not have met yet. These are the people who worked to ensure your memorable trip has been filled with countless exceptional experiences. Enjoy a gourmet farewell dinner in the ship's dining room. (B,L,D)</p> <p><a href="#">M/V Aria</a></p>	 

**DAY 07 IQUITOS – MANATEE RESCUE CENTER – FLY TO CUSCO**

This morning, we visit the local fresh market, your guide can identify the day's catch by the fishermen and the region's exotic fruits. Return to the Aria for breakfast, to pack up and to say goodbye to our new crew friends. En route to the airport, we stop for a visit of the Manatee Rescue Center, an animal orphanage for Amazonian manatees to rescue, rehabilitate and release them back into the wild. Time permitting, we'll also check out the San Juan craft market. Lunch or a box lunch is provided according to flight schedules. Check-in at the airport for your **flight from Iquitos to Lima and onto Cusco**.

Meet your private Andean guide in Cusco, the archaeological capital of the Americas located at a brisk 11,150 elevation. To help acclimatize, we drive 1 hour to the lower elevation **Sacred Valley of the Incas** with superb vistas along the route of the rugged canyon formed by the Urubamba River. We arrive in the village of **Pisac** (9,708 ft) and walk through the main plaza where shops and artisans display a variety of colorful locally made weavings and crafts. Walk among Pisac's impressive Incan ruins, perched spectacularly on a ridge overlooking the town and countryside dotted with agricultural terraces aesthetically built to follow the contours of the Urubamba River.

Later, we continue down the valley to the community of Urubamba and check-in to the charming Andean hacienda-style lodge at 9,430 ft. Enjoy some leisure time to relax on the lovely grounds before dinner together this evening. (B,BL,D) [Sol y Luna Lodge & Spa](#) - *Relais & Chateaux*

**DAY 08 SACRED VALLEY (CHINCHERO / OLLANTAYTAMBO)**






Following an Andean breakfast, we drive to the highlands with panoramic views of the snow-capped Urubamba range including Mount Veronica and Pitusiray-both over 18,000 feet high. Arrive at **Chinchoero** (12,335 ft), a charming community characteristic of Andean towns in that it combines both Incan and colonial architecture. We can observe a massive Inca wall with ten trapezoidal niches, which dominates the village's main square, and visit the colonial church. After exploring the ruins of Inca Yupanqui's palace, we join a local community in their courtyard for an overview of the Andean weaving process. After wool is carded, spun, and dyed, learn about the different techniques used to create ponchos, belts (*fajas*), and shawls (*mantas*).


On the way back to the fertile Urubamba Valley we stop at the **Inca Salt Mines**, then continue in our private vehicle to enjoy a buffet-style Andean lunch. 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 perhaps try *cuy*, a savory meat roasted with a variety of herbs.

This afternoon, we drive past burial tombs and ancient farming terraces still in use today to grow barley, wheat, and corn to reach the town of **Ollantaytambo**. We visit the main plaza and some of the side streets of this unique community which still retains the original street plan and foundations designed by the Incas. We'll explore the impressive terraced remains of the Sun Temple before returning to the peaceful comforts of the hotel to relax and unwind. (B,L) [Sol y Luna Lodge & Spa](#) - *Relais & Chateaux*





<p><b>DAY 09</b></p>	<p><b>SACRED VALLEY / MACHU PICCHU</b></p> <p>Early this morning, we drive to the station to board the <b>Vistadome train</b> for a 1.5 hour ride to the village of Machu Picchu. Ascend by bus above the valley to reach Machu Picchu (7,973ft). With your expert guide begin a private tour of this superb archaeological site. Perched atop a crest high above the meandering Urubamba River and surrounded by rugged, green Andean hillsides, <b>Machu Picchu</b> stands as more than just the jewel of Inca architecture. It represents the perfect union of human engineering and the natural environment, a city in harmony with its surroundings. Never reached by the Spanish, this magical place was brought to the world's attention in 1911 by the Yale historian, Hiram Bingham.</p> <p>Our explorations of <b>The Lost City of the Incas</b> include the industrial area, the Temple of the Sun and the Royal Tomb, the ceremonial fountains and Sacred Plazas. There should be time in the afternoon for the 30 minute walk to the Inca Drawbridge. We overnight in the village at Inkaterra's award winning property situated at 6,627ft among 12 acres of cloud forest gardens along the Urubamba River. Dinner is included this evening in the hotel's glass-walled restaurant overlooking the river. (B,L,D)</p> <p><a href="#">Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel</a> – A Nat'l Geo Unique Lodge of the World</p>	 
<p><b>DAY 10</b></p>	<p><b>MACHU PICCHU / CUSCO</b></p> <p>Rise early if you wish to head up to the ruins (gates open at 06:00) to catch the early morning light as the sun comes over <i>Intipunku</i>, or the Gateway of the Sun. There are several optional guided hikes in and around the site if you want to be active this morning. At 8,836 ft <b>Huayna Picchu</b>, or Young Peak, looms over the citadel. An optional 1 hour climb along a very steep and exposed trail ends at terraces and ruins on the mountain's top, providing an excellent, bird's-eye view of Machu Picchu. Another 1.5 hour up and downhill hike on a shaded trail ends at the mysterious, partially excavated <i>Temple of the Moon</i>. This passage is an excellent off-the-beaten-path alternative to the main ruins.</p> <p>The <b>schedule is flexible</b> to relax or explore a favorite spot at your own pace inside Machu Picchu. Lunch is in the village before catching the early afternoon <b>Vistadome train</b> for the 1.5 hour scenic journey back to Ollantaytambo. Tracing the course of the Urubamba River, we wind our way past Incan terraces and Quechua communities as we leave the lush cloud forests and make our way back to the highlands. Reception upon arrival and transfer by private vehicle to your hotel in <b>Cusco</b> (11,150ft) centrally located near the main plaza. Dinner is on your own this evening, after a full day, we recommend the hotel restaurant offering a variety of delicious Peruvian and international cuisine. (B,L)</p> <p><a href="#">Libertador Palacio del Inka Hotel &amp; Spa</a> – <i>Luxury Collection</i></p>	 
<p><b>DAY 11</b></p>	<p><b>CUSCO / LIMA / DEPARTURE</b></p> <p>After breakfast, join your guide for a private tour (walking and vehicle) of this friendly, historical city. In the <b>main plaza</b> and side streets, we see how Cusco is still a very colonial city. There are no skyscrapers and most buildings are whitewashed adobe with red tile roofs set on Inca foundations. Cobble streets lead up narrow passageways with brightly painted balconies overhead. Small plazas are filled with flowers and fountains. Visit the impressive <i>Coricancha</i>, the <b>Inca's Sun Temple</b>; the Cathedral, many of whose stones were taken from nearby Inca palaces; and the Incan walls along <i>Hatunrumiyoc Street</i>, which is named for the 12-angled stone that is clearly visible. Driving up to the surrounding hills we explore the Incan fortress of <b>Sacsayhuaman</b>, a spectacular complex with commanding views of the Cusco valley, and time permitting, <i>Tambo Machay</i>, whose ceremonial pools have remained clear and cold since the time of the Empire.</p>	

	<p>Lunch is on your own to dine out in Cusco and have some leisure time to shop and walk Cusco's side-street craft shops and plazas. By mid-afternoon, you'll have a private transfer to the airport with check-in assistance for a <b>flight from Cusco to Lima</b>. Back in the capital connect on your own to your <b>overnight flight home</b> departing later this evening. There are restaurants and VIP lounges where you can relax prior to your flight.</p> <p>(B)</p>	
<b>DAY 12</b>	<p><b>ARRIVE HOME</b></p> <p>Arrive in your gateway city this morning and make onward connections home.</p>	

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

### OPTIONAL UPGRADES:

**Hotels:** In Lima, you can select the luxurious Miraflores Park Hotel. In the Sacred Valley, consider the lovely Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado or Libertador Tambo del Inka. In Cusco, the historic Monasterio Hotel and Palacio Nazarenas Hotel delight discerning travelers. At Machu Picchu, consider the exclusive Sanctuary Lodge adjacent to the citadel. Due to high demand these 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.

**NEXT STEP:** Please 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 itinerary 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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