



PERU

WORLD OF THE INCAS

A classic tour of Cusco, the Sacred Valley and magnificent Machu Picchu



DURATION: 9 days, 8 nights
SEASON: April through December
DEPARTURES: Guaranteed with a minimum of 2 participants
TRIP RATING: Moderate Cultural & Archaeological Tour, Grade (II): This first-class adventure is activity-oriented featuring optional daily walking tours through villages and Inca sites (2-3 hours in duration at elevations above 8,000'). Although the trip reaches a high point of 12,350', the itinerary has been designed to allow gradual adjustment to the altitude.

2025 DATES: On request any week. April, May, September & October are ideal months. June-August is peak season. January-March is the rainy (but also less crowded) season.

INTRODUCTION:

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 of 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.

Designed for those who wish to deepen their appreciation of the Incas, this exciting cultural and archaeological adventure leads you into the heart of the Incan Empire, *Tawantinsuyo*. We begin in the Inca's Sacred Valley, joining Quechua villagers at their traditional shops in Pisac before surveying the ruins overlooking town. Next, we visit a family in Chinchero, enjoy a weaving demonstration by master craftswomen and view the fortress at Ollantaytambo. A scenic train brings us to Machu Picchu to spend two full days exploring this jewel of Inca architecture. Machu Picchu was honored as one of the New 7 Wonders of the World. Returning to Cusco, we visit splendid royal palaces and admire the precise stonework of the Coricancha and Sacsayhuaman pre-Columbian sites. Our adventure ends with a tour of Lima's magnificent Larco Herrera Museum.

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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01	<p>HOME / LIMA</p> <p>Depart home and arrive this evening to Peru's capital city, Lima. Clear customs and walk on your own short distance to the hotel adjacent to the International Terminal. Meals are on your own today. Note: some flights from the USA are overnight to Lima, arriving early in the morning on Day 02.</p> <p>Wyndham Costa del Sol Hotel – 1 night</p>
DAY 02	<p>LIMA / CUSCO / SACRED VALLEY</p> <p>Your Southwind guide walks with you from the hotel to the terminal to provide check-in assistance for your spectacular, one-hour flight over the Andes to Cusco, the archaeological capital of the Americas. Meet your Andean guide at the Cusco airport and drive 1-hour to the Sacred Valley of the Incas. The route follows a winding mountain road with superb vistas of the rugged canyon formed by the Urubamba River. En route, we stop at the Awana Kancha craft center displaying some of the finest textiles in the Cusco region. Descending into the warm valley, we visit Pisac (9,708') and its traditional artists shops and craft center.</p> <p>After a local style lunch, we tour Pisac's impressive Incan ruins, perched spectacularly on a ridge overlooking the countryside. The walking tour is about 2 miles and follows a wide, exposed, stone-paved trail high above the valley. Gain insight about the religious center <i>Intihuatana</i>, or Hitching Post of the Sun and observing dozens of aesthetically built agricultural terraces rising from the Urubamba River. We continue down the valley to the community of Urubamba and check-in to the hotel, a charming Andean hacienda-style Relais & Chateaux property, at elev 9,430', where you can relax and unwind with dinner on your own to try the hotel's Killa Wasi Restaurant, one of the best in the region.</p> <p>Sol y Luna Hotel & Spa – 2 nights (B,L)</p>
DAY 03	<p>CHINCHERO / OLLANTAYTAMBO</p> <p>Enjoy a morning drive by private vehicle to the highlands with panoramic views of the snow-capped Urubamba range including Mt. Veronica and Mt. Pitusiray, both over 18,000 feet high. Arrive at Chincho (12,335'), a charming community characteristic of Andean towns combining both Incan and colonial architecture. Observe a massive Inca wall with ten trapezoidal niches that dominates the main square. After exploring the colonial church and ruins of Inca Yupanqui's palace, 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 (<i>fajas</i>), and shawls (<i>mantas</i>). On the way back to the fertile Urubamba Valley, we stop at the Inca Salt Mines, a series of over 2,000 terraced mountainside pools fed by a natural spring. Local families still harvest salt in a traditional way.</p> <p>Continue into the valley for an Andean lunch and chance to sample a variety of native delicacies including several types of potatoes (tubers such as oca), quinoa (sacred to the Incas as the "mother of all grains"), fava beans and perhaps <i>cuy</i>, a savory meat roasted with a variety of herbs. Later, we drive to the village of Ollantaytambo, passing burial tombs and ancient farming terraces, still in use today to grow barley, wheat, and corn. The main plaza and some side streets of this unique community 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 comfort of the hotel where dinner is on your own at leisure this evening.</p> <p>Sol y Luna Hotel & Spa (B,L)</p>

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<p>DAY 04</p>	<p>MACHU PICCHU</p> <p>Rise early to meet your private guide and head back to Ollantaytambo to board the Vistadome train for a 1.5 hour ride to the village of Machu Picchu. Ascend to Machu Picchu (7,973') by shuttle and continue with your expert guide for 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, Machu Picchu 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 American historian, Hiram Bingham. Our explorations of <i>The Lost City of the Incas</i> include most of the sectors of the ruins; the industrial area, Temple of the Sun and Royal Tomb, the ceremonial water fountains and baths and Sacred Plazas.</p> <p>Wet take a break for lunch at the Tinkuy buffet restaurant just outside the gates which serves a variety of hot and fresh selections. There should be time today for the 30-minute walk to the Inca Drawbridge, an ingenious construction. Ride the shuttle down to the village of Machu Picchu and check-in to the hotel, a former National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World, set at 6,627' among lush orchid gardens. Dinner is included this evening at the hotel's restaurant known for its creative fusion cuisine.</p> <p>Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel – 2 nights (B,L,D)</p>
<p>DAY 05</p>	<p>MACHU PICCHU</p> <p>Early risers can 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 for active group members. Huchuy Picchu Mountain, departing from an access gate, a gradual uphill hike on a newly cleared trail about 30 min to a lookout point at 8,193 ft. Huayna Picchu Mountain (8,836') forms the backdrop to Machu Picchu. A steep and challenging trail requiring good physical conditioning leads to terraced ruins on top, providing an excellent birds-eye view. The route ascends steadily uphill approx 1.5 hours (850 ft) on a winding and sometimes exposed trail requiring hands for balance and to hold handrails on steeper sections. There is low cloud forest vegetation along the trail. The hike back down takes approx 1 hour, roundtrip is usually about 2.5-3 hours depending on rest breaks. This trail has abrupt drops and exposure, so it's not recommended for anyone with a fear of heights or vertigo.</p> <p>A nice less-crowded alternative hike is the Temple of the Moon (elev 7,220'). A 3 hour roundtrip up and downhill shaded trail leads to the mysterious, partially excavated ruins on the backside of Huayna Picchu. A series of caverns likely contained mummies during Incan times. This quiet ceremonial monument is perched above the Urubamba River, access is via the same gate as Huayna Picchu then forks to the left initially following a stone paved section that traverses up and around the base of the mountain. You then arrive at a forested area of the trail to descend steadily on wider stone staircases 1,080 ft down to the Temple complex. This site is about 1,500 years old, it remained hidden until rediscovered in 1936 (25 years after the Hiram Bingham expedition). Lunch is on your own today to dine at Tinkuy or the snack bar at the entrance gate. In the afternoon, descend to the village by shuttle to relax among the unique ambiance of the hotel where dinner is included this evening.</p> <p>Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel (B,D)</p>

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DAY 06	<p>MACHU PICCHU / CUSCO</p> <p>Today offers a second guided morning to appreciate the glories of Machu Picchu. Enjoy discovering other sectors of the citadel or finding an overlook to photograph, meditate or continue personal explorations of this archaeological wonder. If you prefer, you can remain in town and stroll the community of Machu Picchu where artisans display a variety of crafts. We meet for lunch at Sumaq, one of the area's finest restaurants, before catching the afternoon Vistadome train for the 1 hr 30 min scenic journey back to Ollantaytambo. Tracing the course of the Urubamba River, we wind our way past Incan terraces and Quechua communities leaving the lush cloud forests to make our way back to the highlands.</p> <p>Meet up with the private vehicle and transfer 1 hr 30 min to Cusco (11,150') arriving at the historic hotel centrally located near the main plaza. You'll be staying in the former palace of the first governor of Peru, Francisco Pizarro which is built over Incan foundations. Dinner is on your own this evening, for convenience after a full day of touring, we recommend the hotel's excellent Inti Raymi restaurant.</p> <p>Palacio del Inka Hotel – a luxury Collection hotel by Marriott – 2 nights (B,L)</p>
DAY 07	<p>CUSCO</p> <p>After breakfast, join your guide for a private tour (combination of walking and vehicle) of this friendly, historical city. In the main plaza 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. Cobbled streets lead up narrow passageways with brightly painted balconies overhead. Small plazas are filled with flowers and fountains.</p> <p>Visit the impressive Coricancha, the Inca's Sun Temple; 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 Sacsayhuaman, 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. Return to the hotel, lunch is on your own with leisure time this afternoon to visit town, its side-street craft shops, museums and plazas. For dinner this evening, we recommend trying a nearby gourmet restaurant.</p> <p>Palacio del Inka Hotel (B)</p>
DAY 08	<p>CUSCO / LIMA / OVERNIGHT FLIGHT</p> <p>Enjoy the morning at leisure for shopping, sightseeing at the vibrant San Pedro Market or walking the narrow streets of colonial Cusco at your own pace. Later, meet your transfer staff in the lobby for a short drive to the airport in Cusco to catch a flight to Lima.</p> <p>Back in the capital, join your local resident guide for a private tour of colonial Lima declared by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site for its originality and high concentration of Spanish colonial monuments. Tour the fascinating Larco Herrera Museum with an extensive collection of pre-Columbian artifacts. Lunch and dinner are on your own to try a typical seafood meal, such as ceviche, at one of the several gourmet restaurants in the upscale Miraflores district. This evening, your guide brings you back to the airport with check-in assistance for your overnight flight home. The modern Lima airport has dining, Wifi and VIP lounges. (B)</p>
DAY 09	<p>HOME</p> <p>Arrive in your gateway city this morning to clear customs and make onward connections home.</p>

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NOTES ON THE ITINERARY: Although we do our best to adhere to the above schedule, this itinerary is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control, including group pace and acclimatization, weather, road and trail conditions, flight delays or cancellations, as well as changes in plane and train schedules. This trip is suitable for healthy participants accustomed to outdoor activities, age 7 and up. The Huayna Picchu ascent or the optional Km 104 hike are only recommended for kids age 12 and older. At Machu Picchu we stay at the comfortable **Inkaterra Machu Picchu Hotel**, we also recommend the modern **Sumaq Hotel** with a contemporary Andean style and exquisite cuisine. There will be opportunities to visit the ruins in the early morning before most tourist trains arrive.

In Cusco, if you choose to arrive early the night before the Sacred Valley, we recommend the deluxe boutique-style [Aranwa Cusco Boutique Hotel](#) (also located near the main square, this restored colonial mansion from the XVI century brings the added benefit of oxygenated rooms) instead of the **Palacio del Inka Hotel**. Distances and altitudes are approximate and travel times indicated do not include lunch breaks, rest or photo stops, time to explore the ruins, etc.

2025 LAND COST:	2-3 participants:	from \$7,200 p.p.d.
	4-6 participants:	from \$6,500 p.p.d.
	7-12 participants:	from \$6,000 p.p.d.
	Single Supplement:	from \$1,700

p.p.d.=per person based on double or triple occupancy not including airfare.

Note: End of the year or holiday departures could have a Land Cost surcharge of 10-20%. Please check with your personal Southwind Travel Consultant for more details.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE: The Land Cost DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY FLIGHTS. Southwind's ticketing partner can assist with all your air travel – providing an airfare quote to match your itinerary, personalized support for seating, monitoring schedule changes and coordinating directly with the airlines if any adjustments are needed. Business Class to Lima is often good value (Delta, United and Latam offer lie flat seats in Business). Non-stop flights to Lima are available from these US gateways: New York/JFK (Latam 8 hr flight time), Newark (United 8 hr), Los Angeles (Latam 8 hr 30 min), Miami (American & Latam 5 hr 45 min), Houston (United 6 hr 30 min) and Atlanta (Delta 6 hr 30 min). Estimated international economy fares are \$600-\$900/person and \$350/person for Lima-Cusco-Lima with Latam (SkyTeam Alliance). You have the option to arrange your own flights or redeem award travel yourself if you wish. Tickets should only be purchased after Southwind notifies you that your trip is confirmed. The airlines request that tickets match your passport name. Upon receipt of your deposit, Southwind provides flight booking details for your travel dates.

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SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- **In-country transfers** as noted & ground transportation in comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers.
- **First-class round trip Vistadome or similar train** from Ollantaytambo to Machu Picchu town. Machu Picchu bus service to/from town and the archaeological sanctuary.
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance**.
- All **accommodations in first-class (4-5 star) hotels** as listed (or at similar hotels) on a shared basis with private bath. Advanced bookings are recommended if you require double beds (king/queen) for couples, or plan to arrive early or extend your stay.
- **Meals** when indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast; L=lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request with advanced notification. For other diets, consult your travel advisor before reserving.
- All **guided tours** (as listed) conducted on a private basis by knowledgeable, English-speaking native guides (includes entrance fees). A local English-speaking guide/escort is provided for Sacred Valley/Machu Picchu/Cusco segments (Day 02-07). An assistant guide is provided for groups with 9 or more participants. A separate English-speaking resident guide is provided in Lima.
- Single Supplement provides single room accommodations in all hotels. Due to the limited number of rooms at the boutique hotels making reservations well in advance is recommended.

NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, International flights, nor local flights within Peru.
- Tours, meals (at about \$35-50 each per person) or other services not listed on the itinerary.
- Early arrivals, dayrooms or late check-outs at hotels.
- Alcoholic beverages nor items of a personal nature; such as clothing, equipment, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips to the local staff.
- Expenses incurred in preparation such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets, travel insurance, and additional expenses resulting from flight delays, schedule changes, cancellations, or missed connections.

OPTIONAL HOTEL UPGRADES:

According to interest, Southwind can quote and reserve these **upgraded accommodations**:

Lima: **JW Marriott Hotel** (overlooking Pacific Ocean in the Miraflores district).

Sacred Valley: **Tambo del Inka Hotel** (Luxury Collection) or **Belmond Rio Sagrado Hotel**.

Cusco: **Belmond Monasterio Hotel** (Cusco's original boutique historic hotel with oxygenated rooms, colonial arches & fine colonial artwork) or the luxurious **Belmond Palacio Nazarenas Hotel**.

Machu Picchu: **Belmond Sanctuary Lodge** (located at the entrance gate to Machu Picchu).

Note: Due to high demand, we recommend booking these upgrades at least 4-5 months in advance. Space is subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed. Please see the [Accommodations](#) tab on the trip page for details.

OPTIONAL ADD-ON ACTIVITIES & TRIP EXTENSIONS:

Dayhike on Inca Trail from Km 104 to Machu Picchu (Day 04):

A private trekking guide accompanies participants who choose to disembark the Vistadome train at Km 104 and hike the classic stone-paved Inca Trail through the Gateway of the Sun to approach Machu Picchu 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, advance planning is recommended (permits can sell out 3-4 months or more in advance). Please contact our office for details.

Trip Extensions:

Travelers with extra days can consider extending to the Galápagos Islands, the Amazon Basin, Lake Titicaca, Northern Peru, Arequipa and Colca Canyon or the Paracas Reserve and Nazca Lines. All extensions require a minimum of 2 participants. Please see the [Extend Your Trip](#) tab for details.

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WEATHER: Much of the *World of the Incas* trip takes place where atmospheric conditions can change suddenly. Participants must be prepared for all possibilities ranging from intense sunshine to rain, cold, and/or wind. Generally, the **Andean** climate during the months of April-November is clear, dry and cool, but time is included in the cloud forests on the eastern slopes of the Andes, so **rain should be expected any month**. Brief hail, sleet or snowstorms might also occur at the highest elevations mostly during the rainy season, January through March. Andean nights are cold while the days are pleasant and springlike. **Cusco** has daytime highs in the mid 70's and nighttime lows in the upper 30's. The **Sacred Valley** is about 10-15° warmer. The daytime temperatures at **Machu Picchu** are hot (80-85°F) with mild nights (lows around 45-50°F) and the likelihood of rain is high. Expect showers or mist on most departures. The sun can be intense at these elevations, a good sun hat and sunscreen is needed to prevent sunburn. Insect repellents such as Skintastic or Skin-so-Soft and long pants are helpful to guard against no-see-ums at Machu Picchu.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing coverage to protect your trip investment. Travel insurance is important in case of unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates. Weather, natural events, medical reason, quarantine, local strikes, personal injury/illness (for you, your traveling companion or family members at home), could require itinerary interruption or changes. Missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage or the need for medical attention or evacuation are also reasons why coverage is important. Southwind recommends **Travel Insured International** which offers coverage options at a good value. If you, your traveling companion or a family member has a pre-existing medical condition, you can still receive coverage if a recurrence of the condition forces you to cancel your trip, but you do need to purchase a plan **within 21 days of your deposit**. Southwind can provide eQuote for insurance to review upon receipt of your deposit and Trip Reservation eForm.

[Learn more about coverage offered by Travel Insured International](#)

NEXT STEPS: Please contact Southwind to speak with a personal Travel Advisor to help fine tune your travel plans and to receive a custom itinerary with a land cost quote based on your travel dates. You can reach us by filling out our [Private Trip Request form](#), by email at info@southwindadventures.com, by phone at 800-377-9463 or by text to 303-972-0701.

Reservations can be made up to 60 days before departure, provided tour services and hotels are available. Due to the popularity of Machu Picchu and the limited number of visitors per day, we recommend making reservations at least 4-5 months in advance for non-holiday or about 1 year prior for holiday departures. Once your trip is confirmed to operate, you will receive pre-departure planning materials, flight booking assistance and advice to help prepare for your exciting vacation in Peru.

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

Southwind Adventures, Inc

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