PERU

World of the Incas - Iconic Itinerary

As seen in Condé Nast Traveler Magazine

Including an optional day hike on the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu

DURATION: 9 days / 8 nights

SEASON: April through November

DEPARTURES: Guaranteed with a minimum of 2 participants

TRIP RATING: Moderate Cultural & Archaeological Custom Tour, Grade (II): This luxury adventure is an activity-oriented program featuring daily walking tours through villages and Inca sites (2-3 hours duration at elevations above 8,000 ft). The optional Km 104 hike to Machu Picchu is a challenging day with 7 miles of hiking and 1,745 ft elevation gain (to a maximum altitude of 9,005 ft). The highest elevation of the overall trip is 12,350 ft. The itinerary has been designed to allow gradual adjustment to the altitude.

2027 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. The Km104 dayhike to Machu Picchu requires permits that can sell out 3-4 months in advance, so plan early. The route from Km 104 is usually closed in February for trail work.

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 looking to deepen their appreciation of the Incas while traveling in comfort, this exciting cultural and archaeological adventure takes us into the very heart of *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 marvel at the fortress of Ollantaytambo. The following morning we take the Vistadome train to the famous Km 104 trailhead and begin an optional uphill hike to Wiñaywayna ruins where we join the classic Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. As we reach Intipunku, the Gateway of the Sun, our first view of the ancient city is impressive and unforgettable. In 2007 Machu Picchu was honored as one of the New 7 Wonders of the World, we spend 2 full days exploring this jewel of Inca architecture. Returning to Cusco by scenic Vistadome train and private vehicle, we trace the footsteps of ancient Inca leaders in their royal palaces and admire precise stonework of the Coricancha, Sacsayhuaman and other pre-Columbian sites. Our adventure finishes with a tour of Lima’s splendid Larco Museum.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01	**DEPART HOME TO LIMA** Depart the US and arrive this evening to **Peru's capital city, Lima**. Meet your Southwind guide who will assist with check-in at your hotel located near the International Terminal. Meals are on your own today. **Note:** some flights from the US are overnight to Lima arriving early in the morning on Day 02. Wyndham Grand Costa del Sol Hotel **– 1 night** (elev 112')
DAY 02	**LIMA / CUSCO / SACRED VALLEY** Walk with your guide into the airport national terminal with assistance checking-in for the 1 hour flight to **Cusco** (11,150 ft). Reception by your Andean guide and drive 1 hour by private vehicle to the lower elevation **Sacred Valley of the Incas** (9,700 ft) to help acclimatize. In the village of **Pisac,** walk among typical houses and local artisan shops before lunch at Hacienda Sarapampa or the Cuchara de palo restaurant serving delicious regional cuisine. This afternoon tour the impressive Incan ruins, perched spectacularly on a ridge overlooking the town and countryside. The walking tour is about 2 miles and follows a wide, exposed, stone-paved trail high above the valley. Visit the main sections of the site including the religious center *Intihuatana*, or Hitching Post of the Sun, and see cliff walls housing caves which served as South America's largest pre-Columbian cemetery. The dozens of agricultural terraces were aesthetically built to follow the contours of the hillside rising from the Urubamba River valley. A short drive down the valley brings us to the luxurious hotel located along the river with a temperate outdoor pool set among lovely gardens. Settle in for a restful night. Belmond Rio Sagrado Hotel **– 2 nights** (elev 9,000') (B,L) (Deluxe Terrace room)
DAY 03	**SACRED VALLEY** After breakfast, we drive to the highlands with panoramic views of the snow-capped Urubamba range including Mt. Veronica and Mt. Pitusiray, both over 18,000 ft high. Arrive at **Chinchero** (12,335'), a charming community characteristic of Andean towns combining both Incan and colonial architecture. On market day (Sunday), we watch as villagers from neighboring communities arrive with local goods to trade. We'll enjoy a weaving demonstration, see the nineteenth-century church and walk along an Incan wall with trapezoidal niches below the ruins of the Inca Yupanqui's palace. Continue by vehicle to the concentric terraced ruins at **Moray** that served as an agricultural center where the Incas experimented with acclimatizing and domesticating crops. We also visit the **Inca Salt Mines** (an optional 2 hour hike brings us down to this site), a series of over 2,000 terraced mountainside pools fed by a natural spring that are still worked by local families today. Lunch today is at Wayra or Hawa restaurants serving delightful *Novo Andino* cuisine. This afternoon, tour of **Ollantaytambo's** ancient Sun Temple and a visit to the historic district. We see 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. Return to the hotel for dinner on your own at the El Huerto Restaurant in a cozy and sophisticated atmosphere. Belmond Rio Sagrado Hotel (B,L)

DAY 04	**SACRED VALLEY / MACHU PICCHU** Early this morning to meet your private guide, drive to the Ollantaytambo station to board the Vistadome train to the **Km 104 trailhead** at approximately 7,260 ft. Begin an optional, exceptionally rewarding dayhike from the Sacred Valley to Machu Picchu. The trail gains approximately 1,585 ft in elevation to the Wiñaywayna ruins at 8,845 ft. Following a picnic lunch, join up with a section of the **classic stone-paved Inca Trail**. Continue hiking for about 2 hours more, then ascend stairs to reach the *Intipunku* Gateway of the Sun (9,005 ft) to be rewarded with an incredible view of the **Machu Picchu** citadel and surrounding mountains. By late afternoon, descend on foot 45 minutes through the ruins complex during the most tranquil time at the sanctuary after the crowds have dispersed. Ride the shuttle bus to the village of Machu Picchu and check-in to the Inkaterra hotel, a former National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World, set among lush orchid gardens. The moderate/difficult hike is approximately 7 miles and takes about 6 hours. Hiker luggage stays on the train and is retrieved by the hotel staff; you carry only a daypack while hiking. Non-hikers remain on the train and continue to the village of Machu Picchu with an assistant guide, ride the shuttle bus up to the ruins and begin touring, walk up towards the stone-paved trail coming from Intipunku that Km 104 hikers use. Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel **– 2 nights** (elev 6,627') (B,L,D) (Junior Suite Deluxe with fireplace)
DAY 05	**MACHU PICCHU** Depart the hotel early by shuttle with your guide, enter the ruins to find a spot to catch **sunrise at Machu Picchu** (gates open at 06:00). Join your guide for a private tour of the citadel with optional hikes according to how active you wish to be. **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. At 8,836 ft **Huayna Picchu**, or Young Peak, looms over the citadel. An optional 1 hour climb along a very steep, narrow and exposed trail ends at terraces and ruins on the mountain's top, providing an excellent bird's-eye view of Machu Picchu. 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. 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. Another 1.5 hour up and downhill hike on a shaded trail ends at the mysterious, partially excavated **Temple of the Moon** (elev 7,220'). This passage is an excellent off-the-beaten-path alternative to the main ruins. Take a break mid-day with lunch to try the Tinkuy buffet restaurant just outside the gates which serves a variety of hot and fresh selections. The afternoon is set aside for personal guided explorations to simply enjoy and photograph the dramatic natural beauty of this archaeological wonder. For an additional easy-going hike, your guide can lead you to the **Inca Drawbridge** built into the cliffside on the outskirts of the complex. After taking in the afternoon light, aboard the shuttle back to the hotel. Here you can relax with a Pisco sour, the national cocktail, followed by creative fusion cuisine in the hotel's glass-walled restaurant overlooking the lush Urubamba River. Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel (B,L,D)

DAY 06	**MACHU PICCHU / CUSCO** Today offers a second guided morning to appreciate the glories of **Machu Picchu** (7,973'). Join your Southwind private guide for additional visits and enjoy some time finding an overlook to photograph, meditate or continue explorations of this archaeological wonder. If you prefer, you can stroll through the community of Machu Picchu where artisans display a variety of crafts. We meet together in town for lunch at Sumaq, one of the finest restaurants in town, before catching the afternoon Vistadome train 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, leaving the lush cloud forest en route back to the highlands. Meet your driver and vehicle at the station and transfer by private vehicle for 1 hr 45 min to the elegant and historic hotel in **Cusco** (11,150 ft). Dinner is on your own to try one of Cusco's fine restaurants. For convenience, we recommend El Tupay Restaurant at the Monasterio for international cuisine featuring fresh, locally sourced ingredients in a cozy setting or Oqre located by the historic cloisters with views overlooking the hotel's inner courtyard. At the nearby Map Café, you'll find a sophisticated Peruvian menu with French and Italian influences. Belmond Monasterio Hotel **– 2 nights** (elev 11,150') (B,L) (Deluxe oxygenated room with terrace or balcony)
DAY 07	**CUSCO** Morning at leisure for personal explorations of Cusco's vibrant San Pedro market or the city's many side-street craft shops, museums and plazas. The former Incan capital still retains ancient walls dating back hundreds of years. Lunch is on your own (Chicha offers a local favorite - guinea pig! Or try Greens for vegetarian fare). Join your guide for an afternoon tour of **Cusco**. At the Inca's most important temple, the **Coricancha**, learn how the floors and walls were once lined with solid gold. At the main square and Cathedral see how stones were taken from nearby Inca palaces. Walk along Incan walls on *Hatunrumiyoc Street*, which is named for the 12-angled stone that is clearly visible. Above the city, we tour the ancient ceremonial pools at Tambo Machay. From the hilltop fortress of **Sacsayhuaman** take in sunset views over the city and mountains. Back in town, dinner is on your own. We recommend the MAP Café encased in a stylish glass courtyard capsule at the nearby Pre-Columbian Art Museum. This unique spot offers a sophisticated Peruvian-French inspired menu or the chic Cicciolina, with a bar de tapas and a superb selection of wines. Settle in for the night at the familiar hotel. Belmond Monasterio Hotel (B)
DAY 08	**CUSCO / LIMA / OVERNIGHT FLIGHT** 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**. 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)
DAY 09	**HOME** Arrive in your gateway city this morning to clear customs and make onward connections home.

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, acclimatization, weather, road and trail conditions, flight delays or cancellations, as well as changes in plane and train schedules. **On Day 02**, please note Hacienda Sarapampa doesn't open on Sundays. **On Day 04**, the Km104 day hike is optional; those not planning to hike will remain on the train and approach Machu Picchu via a short shuttle ride from the village. This trip is suitable for healthy participants accustomed to outdoor activities, ages 7 and up. The Huayna Picchu ascent or the optional Km 104 hike are only recommended for kids ages 12 and older. In Pisac and Chinchero the main craft market day is Sunday; although everyday vendors and small shops are open. In Urubamba, the food and local goods market is more active on Wednesdays and Fridays with products from different regions.

At Machu Picchu we stay at the **Inkaterra Machu Picchu Hotel**, we also recommend the modern **Sumaq Hotel** with contemporary Andean style and exquisite cuisine. There will be opportunities to visit the ruins in the early morning to avoid the crowds, well before most of the trains arrive. Distances and altitudes are approximate and travel times indicated do not include lunch breaks, rest or photo stops, time to explore the ruins, etc.

2027 LAND COST:

2-3 participants:	from $10,300 p.p.d.
4-6 participants:	from $9,400 p.p.d.
7-12 participants:	from $8,700 p.p.d.
Single Supplement:	from $3,500

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.

AIRFARE ON REQUEST: **International and in-country airfare is not included in the land cost.** Tickets should only be purchased after Southwind advises that your trip is confirmed. Southwind has a ticketing partner who can quote and help coordinate all your flights (or just the in-country flights on Latam) to match your tour itinerary. You'll have a dedicated agent to arrange your seats according to cabin preference, to monitor schedule changes and work directly with the airline on your behalf, if any adjustments are needed after ticketing. United, Delta, American and Latam provide service to Lima via their US gateway hubs. You have the option to purchase any of the flights yourself or redeem award travel directly through your airline program. The airlines request that your tickets match your full name in your passport (including middle name if shown). If connecting, a 2-hour minimum buffer is important between flights.

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- All in-country private transfers as scheduled. Ground transportation in spacious and comfortable private vehicles with experienced 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 and Deluxe-class (4-5 star) hotels** as listed 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. Advanced bookings are necessary to increase the chances of obtaining the room type of your choice. An initial deposit does not guarantee a specific hotel or a trail permit; hotels listed above are subject to availability at the time of your reservation.
- **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 private guided tours (as listed) conducted by **knowledgeable, English-speaking local guides** (includes applicable entrance fees).
- A native expert English-speaking guide/escort is provided for Cusco, Sacred Valley & Machu Picchu segments (Days 02-08), an assistant guide is provided for groups of 8 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 $40-60 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 preparing for this program such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets or traveler's insurance, and additional expenses resulting from flight delays, schedule changes, cancellations, or missed connections.

HOTEL AND TRAIN UPGRADES:

In Lima, if staying longer in the capital, you can choose to upgrade to the luxurious **Belmond Miraflores Park Hotel** or the elegant **JW Marriott Hotel**, both overlooking the Pacific Ocean in the upscale Miraflores pedestrian friendly district, 50 minutes from the airport. In the Sacred Valley, you can upgrade to the **Tambo del Inka Hotel** offering a deluxe resort and spa experience. At Machu Picchu, upgrade to a Suite with fireplace and outdoor shower at the **Inkaterra Pueblo Hotel** or perhaps the exclusive **Belmond Sanctuary Lodge** just outside the entrance to Machu Picchu. In Cusco, select the sophisticated and historical **Belmond Palacio Nazarenas Hotel**.

The deluxe **Hiram Bingham Orient Express train** offers top level service and fine dining during the 3.5 hour return ride from Machu Picchu to the Poroy Station (outside Cusco). During the rainy season (January-March) and high season in May, please note that the Hiram Bingham train may provide services only from/to the Sacred Valley station, in this case the ride will be about 45 minutes shorter. Due to high demand, we recommend reserving at least 4-5 months in advance. Upgrades have an additional cost quoted upon request, they are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed. See details in Accommodations.

OPTIONAL TRIP EXTENSIONS: Travelers with extra days may wish to extend their trip to the Galápagos Islands, Amazon Basin, Lake Titicaca, Arequipa & Colca Canyon, Northern Peru or Paracas Reserve and the Nazca Lines. All extensions require a minimum of 2 participants. To view the extensions on our website, click on Extend Your Trip.

WEATHER: Much of the Iconic Itinerary takes place in regions where atmospheric conditions can change suddenly. Guests 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 as this program includes time in the cloud forests on the eastern slopes of the Andes, **rain should be expected any month**. Brief hail, sleet or snow storms 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 spring like. **Cusco** has daytime highs in the mid 70's and nighttime lows in the upper 30's. Both daytime and nighttime temperatures in the **Sacred Valley** are 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 is quite intense at these elevations and a good sun hat along with sunscreen is needed to prevent severe sunburn.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Southwind strongly recommends that you purchase optional coverage to protect your trip investment. Having coverage provides peace of mind and is important in case of unexpected trip cancellation due to illness or health/medical condition/injury requiring medical treatment by a physician. Other benefits can include tour delay/interruption from flight issues, weather events, strikes, medical quarantine or emergency accident/illness with evacuation to nearest treatment by US standards. Southwind recommends the **Worldwide Trip Protector Deluxe** from Travel Insured International. We can provide an eQuote on request tailored to your trip. A policy can be purchased directly from TII online or by phone with their customer service in CT at 800-243-3174. You are also welcome to arrange travel insurance coverage through any provider of your choice.

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 Cusco and Machu Picchu's popularity, we recommend making reservations at least 4-5 months in advance. 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.

Passport note: Due to the mandatory Inca Trail and Km 104 trekking permit system, a **valid passport** (with a mandatory expiration of at least 6 months after your return from Peru) is needed at the time of deposit or soon thereafter. Only 500 spaces (for hikers and local staff) are allowed into the park each day on a first-come first-serve basis. Generally, the hiking permits sell out 3-4 months in advance.

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

Southwind Adventures, Inc

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