

Andes to Amazon bike ride, Peru



After a day spent exploring the ancient Inca capital of Cusco and a spectacular train journey to the majestic Machu Picchu ruins, your cycling challenge will begin with a beautiful acclimatisation cycle from the impressive ruins of Ollantaytambo along the length of the Sacred Valley of the Incas to the artisan market of Pisac.

From here you will cut through the Andes, with spectacular views of the cordillera Ausangate, dropping down into the charming village of Paucartambo before a final tough climb to Tres Cruces, the last pass before the Andes begins its descent into the Amazon rainforest.

Following a spectacular sunrise over the Amazon, you will have the thrill of a 1,400m dirt-road descent, crossing multiple ecosystems until you reach the pristine cloud forest and set up camp.

The challenge continues as we cycle deeper into the rainforest of the Manu Biosphere Reserve, home to Peru's national bird, the Cock of the Rock, toucan, monkeys, spectacled bears, giant ferns, orchid and much much more.

Day 1: Depart UK to Lima, Peru.

Take your overnight flight from London Heathrow Airport to Jorge Chaves International Airport in Lima, Peru; our Charity Challenge representative will be at the airport to assist you with the check-in and any last minute questions.

Day 2: Fly Lima to Cusco (3,400m)

You will arrive in Lima in the morning, you will transfer to your domestic flight for your one-hour flight along the Andes to Cusco, the centre of the Inca world. Once in the city of

Cusco, you will transfer to your centrally located hotel, and have the rest of the day to acclimatise to the altitude (3,326m). You will begin with lunch and a briefing on the challenge facing you in the week ahead followed by a guided walking tour of the city. Walking to the beautiful Plaza de Armas you will have the opportunity to visit the very informative Inca Museum, take a tour around the Incan ruins of Qoricancha; Temple of the Sun, visit Cusco's impressive cathedral or just relax in one of the many cafes overlooking the plaza and watch the world go by. Your evening meals will be at a local restaurant. Overnight will be spent in a hotel in Cusco.



Day 3: Guided Tour of Machu Picchu (2,800m)

Today you board the early morning train (3 hrs) to Machu Picchu, passing through the spectacular plains around Izcuchaca before dropping down to the famous sacred valley of the Incas. The train line then follows the valley down, past the Incan town of Ollantaytambo and continues into the upper reaches of the high jungle and your destination, the town of Aguas Calientes, from where you will catch a bus (30mins) up to the famous Incan site of Machu Picchu. Following a full guided tour of this incredible place, you will have some free time to explore on your own before returning to Aguas Calientes for a late lunch and the afternoon train (1.5 hr) back to Ollantaytambo. Here you will stay in a small hostel. Tonight you will have dinner and time to prepare for your challenge.



Day 4: Cycle along Sacred Valley to Pisac (3,000m) – 63kms biking

Today is your first day on the bikes! After breakfast in the hotel you will prepare your bikes, load up with water before starting the ride. From Ollantaytambo you will take a straight forward acclimatisation ride along the beautiful Sacred Valley of the Incas generally along a flat tarmac road. You will see the way of life in the fertile valley, a sharp contrast to the lifestyle of the Altiplano and the Amazon basin you will see in the following days. Passing through the villages of Urubamba, time permitting, you will have a short visit to the internationally renowned studios of Pablo Seminario and Calca where you will enjoy a picnic lunch en route on the banks of the Urubamba River. This will give you ample opportunity not just to get used to the Peruvian climate but to experience the fabulous local culture and scenery. Your ride will end at your first night's camp site just outside the town of Pisac. Pisac is famous for its artisan market which you can visit if time permits. Overnight camping.

Day 5: Cycle ascent and descent in the Andes. Camp at Colquepata – 48kms

Your First "Challenge day" Starting from Pisac you will cycle upwards out of the Sacred Valley of the Incas on a steep tarmac road (6kms) which gradually deteriorates into a fairly smooth dirt road. Here you are climbing out of the very fertile Sacred Valley of the Incas into the Altiplano. Here the communities survive on growing some of the many thousand different varieties of potatoes as well as llama and alpaca breeding. After 20kms / 2-3 hours of climbing, those who haven't made it to the top of the pass at 4,236m will use the bus to cover the last few kilometres after which you will stop for a picnic lunch. From the pass, you will again start cycling, mainly downhill now, to your campsite for the night. The dirt road descends steeply at first before levelling off for a beautiful cycle down to the town of Colcapata. Today, weather permitting, you will experience spectacular views towards Mount Ausangate and the distant Apolabamba range on the Bolivian border. Tonight you camp near a deserted hacienda beside a stream and some Inca ruins, at an altitude of 3,285m.

Day 6: Descend to Paucartambo. Challenging climb to Tres Cruces – 62kms

After the warm up of the previous two days, today is your next 'challenge day'. The day starts with a rapid downhill into the small village of Paucartambo (2,973m), where you have time to look around its famous square. This is a very clean and tidy village which every year holds a famous pagan festival, where dancers wear colourful costumes and exotic masks! After visiting the village there will be a tough climb, of about 3hrs (33kms) to an altitude of 3,547m, at the entrance to the Manu National Park. This is a fairly steady climb. Arriving at the entrance to the Manu National Park, where you will have your picnic lunch, you will get your first views of the Amazon Basin. After lunch you turn off the main road and follow a rough undulating track for 14km with the Sierras falling steeply off on your right hand side down into the Amazon basin, a truly fantastic cycle. The views (when not in cloud) are spectacular! Finally you arrive at Tres Cruces, possibly one of the worlds most spectacular campsites. You will spend the night, camping at 3,900m where the vista is fantastic.



Day 7: 1,400m Descent into Cloud Forest – 63kms

At certain times of the year the view of the sunrise from Tres Cruces can create a strange phenomenon. As the sun rises over the steamy Amazon rainforest, its light refracts to create a sensation of several different suns. A truly amazing sight which, weather permitting, you shall see. Cycling back to the main road, you should keep an eye out for deer or the ultra-elusive Andean bear. Arriving back at the entrance to the Manu National Park you take a short break and contemplate what you have achieved so far and what you are about to achieve. Why? Because the next section of riding is 59km of pure downhill, you head down and down and down, through beautiful cloud forest. An almost endless downhill as you weave your way into the steamy Amazon Basin. You finish your day in the cloud forest at the small community of San Pedro at 1,400m with time to swim in a beautiful crystal clear river before dinner.



Day 8: Cycle deeper into the Rainforest – 65kms

Continuing on downhill, you enter the rainforest passing various small villages, where you can see how settlers try to eek out a living in this hostile environment. The track continues gently downhill deteriorating the further you progress into the hot and steamy rainforest, you have some relief from the heat as you stop, where possible, for cold drinks and swims in pristine jungle streams. You end your ride with a short sharp climb to a spectacular view point over the Manu National Park, followed by a fast descent to the end of the road at the jungle village of Atalaya where you will spend your last night camping (750m).

Day 9: Transfer to Cusco – 15 kms optional

Today you will return by vehicle back into the Andes. You will appreciate an early morning wake up to the chorus of jungle sounds, have breakfast and pack up camp before saying goodbye to your support staff. You then jump on the support bus and head back along the long road you've cycled, stopping to appreciate the beautiful views that whilst cycling maybe you may have missed out on. You will break this long journey by stopping en route for a picnic lunch. You then have the option if time permits to cycle back into the Sacred Valley on a good dirt road (15 kms). You return to your hotel in Cusco for the night and enjoy a celebratory dinner to commemorate the journey you have just completed. Those who then have the energy can continue the celebration and sample some of the many fantastic nightspots the city of Cusco has to offer.



Day 10: Fly Cusco to Lima. Depart Lima to UK

After breakfast at the hotel, you will have the sometime in Cusco to do some last minute shopping. In the

afternoon you will get your flight to Lima Airport for your flight back to London Heathrow.

Day 11: Arrive UK

Your flight arrives back in the UK.

N.B. The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say.

Optional extensions:

Rafting at the Urubamba River and Cusco (3 days, 2 nights)

- Half-day of White river rafting on the Urubamba River, lunch on the shores of the river and an overnight stay in Cusco.
- Walk around Cusco town enjoying fascinating mix of Inca and colonial Spanish architecture.



N.B The organiser of the rafting extension will ask you to sign a 'release of responsibility' form.

Lake Titicaca (4 days, 3 nights)

- Spectacular rail journey to Puno through Cusco and Vilcanota valley
- Full day at Island of Taquile discovering the pre-Incas ruins and the ancient communal lifestyle.
- Watch the impressive panoramic views of the lake

To find out more information, visit the Andes to Amazon bike ride challenge page on our website or click on "extensions" in your member's area.