

Trek to Machu Picchu, Peru



Your first taste of the Inca world will be in and around the city of Cusco, the ancient Inca capital. After acclimatising to the high altitude by visiting local Inca ruins and Spanish Colonial churches, you will head towards the remote and rarely visited Lares Valley.

Tucked behind the Sacred Valley, the region has remained largely unchanged for more than 500 years.

Boasting spectacular scenery, this trek will offer you a real insight into how the Andean peoples live. The Quechua people dress in brightly coloured ponchos and live in thatched stone houses. Farmers herd llamas and alpacas, and guinea pigs often run loose inside the houses. Potato and maize are staple crops, and locals are also known for their intricate weaving, which dates back to the time of the Incas.

The region is also home to the Baños del Inca, probably the best hot springs in southern Peru. Situated at an altitude of 2,667m, the springs offer spectacular views of snowy peaks and glaciers such as Mounts Veronica, Chicon and Pumahaunca. As you continue along your route, you will also take in the dazzling sight of glacial blue lakes.

You will eventually have some time to explore the ruins at Machu Picchu, the 'lost City of the Incas'. These breathtaking pre Columbian ruins are nestled high in the Andes between two peaks. The ruins were rediscovered in 1911 by Yale archaeologist Hiram Bingham and are one of the most beautiful and enigmatic ancient sites in the world.

Day 1: International Departure

You will depart from Dublin to London and then fly to Lima, Peru. An Irish Red Cross representative will assist you in Dublin. A Charity Challenge representative will assist you at London Heathrow airport with check-in and any last minute questions. Overnight flight to Lima.

Day 2: Lima to Cusco

Transfer at Lima airport to board your one-hour internal flight to Cusco, the ancient Inca capital, where you will stay the night in a centrally located hotel. You will spend the rest of the day acclimatising to the altitude (3,350m/11,400ft) on a walking tour of the city. Among the highlights is the Inca sun temple of Qoricancha. In the evening you will be fully briefed about the week ahead and the challenge it entails. Meals included at local restaurants. Overnight in a centrally located 3 star hotel.

Day 3: Visit Pikillaqta (Acclimatisation Day)

Today you visit the lesser known yet very impressive Pikillaqta Ruins. You will be provided with packed lunches and head back to Cusco for dinner and overnight at the Mabey hotel or similar in Cusco.



Day 4: Cusco to Lares hot springs to Cuncani

The day begins early as you drive back towards the Sacred Valley and over the high mountain passes to the Lares Valley (4 and a half hrs), Your group will stop at the famous Lares hot springs for a swim and some lunch. After lunch you start your trek with a 4-5hrs hike to the small village of Cuncani, where you will camp overnight (3,800m).

Day 5: Cuncani to Huacahuasi

After breakfast in Cuncani (3,800m/12,600ft) you will hike over a pass to the small community of Huacahuasi (6-8hrs). Along the way you will stop for a picnic lunch. Here you will start seeing alpacas and llamas roaming among the scattered houses. After lunch you will continue your trek down the valley to the Huacahuasi where you will get to meet the locals. Overnight camp near the river in Huacahuasi.

Day 6: Huacahuasi to Challwacocha

Today is a beautiful day (6-8hrs). Over the course of the morning, you will gradually gain altitude as you hike for about four and a half hours. You will take a little used route through the Ranrayoc valley passing the small community of Puñunayoc. Your route takes you past a lake with views of the southward snow peaks. Lunch will be served along the way (4378m) with views of snowy mountain Tirijhuay. From here you will continue for a further 2hrs until reaching your campsite at Challwacocha (Lake of Trout) (4,248m).

Day 7: Challwacocha to Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes

After your last breakfast in the mountains you will say thank you and good bye to your support crew and descend to the Patacancha valley where you will have a vehicle waiting. You get transferred down the valley until you reach the fortress town of Ollantaytambo which guards the entrance to the Sacred Urubamba valley. You have time for a look around before taking the afternoon train which follows the Urubamba River to Aguas Calientes. Here you will settle into your hotel and take a well earned shower and Dinner in a superb local restaurant.



Day 8: Machu Picchu to Cusco

Today is dedicated to exploring these extraordinary Inca remains. If you are still feeling energetic you can also climb Wayna Picchu, the mountain overlooking the site. The early afternoon train takes you back to Cusco. It's party time at a local restaurant in the evening, as you celebrate achieving your Charity Challenge goal and discovering the majesty of Machu Picchu. Overnight at a hotel in Cusco.



Day 9: Cusco to Lima. Fly to UK

You will have a morning free in Cusco before transferring to the airport for your return flight to Lima, where you will transfer for your international flight to the airport for your flight back to London.

Day 10: Arrive UK

Arrive back in the UK and connect with your flight back to Dublin.

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 expedition leader will have the final say.