

ADVENTURE DOSSIER FOR:
“PERU EXPLORER”

**AREQUIPA- COLCA CANYON - LAKE TITICACA - CUSCO – SACRED VALLEY - MACHU
PICCHU – CUSCO**
(11 DAYS)

This trip is ideal for travellers looking to experience the best of Southern Peru in just eleven days plus have the opportunity to visit Machu Picchu.

We begin our journey in the ‘White City’ of Arequipa in Southern Peru dominated by the stunning conical “El Misti” mountain. At 2600m Arequipa is the ideal place to begin our acclimatisation to the rarefied air of the Andes. One can explore Arequipa’s fine Plaza, the ice mummy museum or visit the many alpaca textile shops. We then board a private minibus and head off through remote villages to the impressive Colca canyon and the delightful Colca Lodge. Here we have the chance to see Condors over one of the world’s deepest canyons, hike to local ruins or just relax in some of the finest hot-springs imaginable.

A spectacular drive through the altiplano brings us to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca. This busy lakeside town is the base for our day trip on Lake Titicaca. We take a private express boat to visit the floating reed islands of Uros and Taquile Island. These are renowned for their ancient way of life, weavings and spectacular views of the lake.

We then take one of the World’s classic railway journeys* from Puno across the high plains to Cusco. We spend a day exploring Cusco, the former Inca Capital - a wonderful place to explore full of culture, history, good restaurants and fun nightlife.

Now fully acclimatised, our next adventure takes us to the local ruins surrounding Cusco and through the Sacred Valley of the Incas, passing local markets and the Inca Fortress town of Ollantaytambo, before arriving at the lost city of the Incas, Machu Picchu. After a night in the colourful town of Aguas Calientes, we spend a whole day exploring the awe-inspiring citadel of Machu Picchu. The return to Cusco is by luxury train and bus with a final free day for any last minute sightseeing and souvenir hunting before heading back to the airport for your ongoing flight. Those with more time should consider adding on our Amazon Rainforest Jungle Extension.

* Please note: the train only operates four times a week, there is a luxury bus alternative on the other days.

DETAILED ITINERARY

For those requiring Lima hotel, airport transfers and internal flight services within Peru, please contact us for best options and availability.

DAY 1: AREQUIPA

You will meet your guide on arrival off your flight to the “White City” of Arequipa. This is the ideal place to start acclimatizing to the rarefied air of the Andes and a beautiful city to explore. Arequipa boasts a magnificent marble Plaza de Armas, quaint old town streets, the picturesque Santa Catalina Monastery (included in your tour) and Juanita the Ice maiden museum (optional). Alpaca wool is Arequipa’s finest export and there are plenty of opportunities for treating yourself to some stunning textiles here. (B)

DAY 2: AREQUIPA TO COLCA CANYON

Driving out of Arequipa we enjoy spectacular views of the mountains surrounding the city before climbing high into the Andes and descending into the amazing Colca canyon. The Colca canyon is one of the World's deepest canyons and is home to Condors and a fascinating local culture, totally different from any other place you will visit on this trip. We over night in the charming Colca lodge. Soaking in the World class hot-springs is the prime activity here, closely followed by exploring the lodge's restaurant, bar or games room. Dinner can be taken either a la carte or try their delicious Alpandina buffet to sample Peru's finest. (B/L)

DAY 3: CRUZ DEL CONDOR AND COLCA CANYON

The private guide and minibus are at your disposal for the day. An early morning drive to Cruz del Condor is recommended in search of one of the world's largest birds, the condor, which nest in the cliffs of one of the world's deepest canyons (approx. 3,400m deep). Hiking to near-by ruins and a tour of the unique native culture and weavings in the area are also available activities. On return to the lodge plenty of time is left for just relaxing in the hot springs, taking advantage of the amazing spa facilities or book up more hiking, horse riding, biking or fishing trip at the in house adventure agency. (B/L)

DAY 4: COLCA CANYON, SILUSTANI AND PUNO / LAKE TITICACA

A spectacular drive through the high Andes, passing beautiful lakes and huge vistas as we travel on a newly asphalted road to Juliaca and on to our destination of Puno. En route we can take a visit to Silustani ruins, whose fascinating circular burial chambers pre-date the Incas. The amazing stone work of this early civilisation was obviously a strong influence on the famous Inca stone masons. In Puno we check into our hotel and can explore this interesting town and barter for locally hand-knitted woollen goods. (B/BL)

DAY 5: LAKE TITICACA – UROS AND TAQUILE

Lake Titicaca is a photographer's dream, its clear sapphire water and the astounding blue skies are mesmerizing. A full day's boat trip with your own private guide and shared rapid boat ensure you see all the sights in safety and style. The famous floating reed islands of Uros and the ancient traditions and weavings of Taquille Island are explained and viewed at your leisure. We have lunch in a typical restaurant before returning to Puno and transferring back to your Hotel (B/L)

DAY 6: ORIENT EXPRESS TRAIN TO CUSCO

Today we board the luxury all day train from Puno to Cusco. This classic Orient Express train journey, recently voted "one of the top ten railway journeys of the world" cuts across the formidable Peruvian Altiplano, whose high plains are rich with llama herds, green Ibises and mountain villages where life is harsh but the resilient locals keep their communities with pride and good humour. On arrival at Cusco train station we transfer to your hotel. This evening we stretch our legs around the spectacular Plaza de Armas and dine in one of the many excellent restaurants as we begin to explore the fascinating city of Cusco. Please note: the train only operates four times a week, there is a luxury bus alternative on the other days. (B/L)

DAY 7: CUSCO LOCAL RUINS

Your guide and minibus are at your disposal for the day to explore Cusco and its outlying ruins. A 0900 pick up for the ten kilometre drive out of Cusco at Inca ruin of Tambo Machay. This is popularly called

the Inca's Bath due to its finely preserved waterfalls, carefully diverted through fine stone channels. The Incas acknowledged water as one of the principal elements of life and revered it accordingly.

A few hundred metres back towards Cusco we visit the site of Puca Pucara. This delightful ruin on a small prominence is believed not to be the 'red fort' its name suggest but a 'Tambo' – a rest house for travelling animals, goods and travellers. We now cut across country following the old Inca road from Cusco to Pisac. The traditional farming methods and highly adapted Andean crops are a treat to see still functioning.

With Cusco now in our sights we visit the fascinating Q'enko. This 'waca' contains some of the finest examples of Inca carvings in-situ. The eroded limestone fissures have been artfully carved into zigzag channels (from where Q'enko derives its name), pumas, condors, snakes and houses. Bountiful Mummy Niches in the caves, an amphitheatre and the central phallic column all add to the mystery of its multi-functional use. After a picnic lunch we visit our final and most stunning ruin is the extensive Sacsayhuaman. Although the smaller stones of Sacsayhuaman were used to build modern day Cusco, the remaining stones are up to 8.5m high and weigh over 360 tones. The distinctive zigzag ramparts that form are attributed to being Puma teeth, lightening and also fortification. This major centre obviously had many functions with storehouses, administration buildings, reservoir and play area. It was also site of a crucial battle between the Incas and the Spanish.

With time and energy permitting we head down to San Cristobal church built on top of Inca Manco Capac's Palace and a fantastic view point of Cusco, then into San Blas the photographic, artisan area of Cusco for some culture and souvenirs. Further down we can explore the impressive Cathedral on the Plaza de Armas with its famous paintings of Cusco's great city fire and the last supper where Jesus is eating Guinea pig. Finally the Qoricancha Sun Temple, this sacred Inca site was the centre of the Inca Empire Sun-Worship. It had temples for the sun, moon, stars and lightening. There was so much gold, silver and jewels it was said the Spanish took three months to melt all the treasures down. Overnight in Cusco Hotel. (B, L)

DAY 8: SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS TO MACHU PICCHU

Your guide and minibus are again at your disposal for the day. An early pick up for the thirty two kilometre drive out of Cusco to [the picturesque Andean village of Pisac](#). [The village is famous for its Sunday market and superb Artisan stalls](#). Old Pisac ruins have much to explore with a [circular hike along a well defined through Royal buildings, look-outs, terraces, tunnels and irrigation channels before returning on another good trail to the bus](#). After lunch near Urubamba, a short drive down the Sacred Valley of the Incas brings us to Ollantaytambo, site of the last battle between Incas and Spanish before the remaining Incas rebels fled into the jungles of Vilcabamba. In this well-preserved village and ruins you can still feel the true magic of the Incas. Heading to the train station, we take the late afternoon train down the Urubamba River gorge to Machu Picchu town (formally known as Aguas Calientes and check into our hotel for the night. (B /L)

DAY 9: MACHU PICCHU GUIDED TOUR

Early this morning we set off to the fabled "Lost City of the Incas- Machu Picchu". A short bus ride takes you direct to the ruins (or hike). Once there your guide gives you an extensive walking tour of the ruin and explains the fascinating history of the Incas to you. If time permits you may wish to explore further to the Inca bridge, walk back up the Inca Trail to the sun gate or try the strenuous climb to the top of Huayna Picchu (permits required, please advise your guide in advance) for an awe-inspiring Condor's eye view of Machu Picchu. Some may prefer to just relax and take in the awesome location. We return to Aguas Calientes from where you catch the afternoon Vistadome train return and bus back to Cusco. If we have the energy we can then explore Cusco's excellent nightlife. (B)

DAY 10: CUSCO

A free day to explore Cusco. From the Plaza de Armas, we suggest a visit to the sun temple, Qoricancha, the Cathedral, a walk up to the San Blas district and for the energetic a visit to San Cristobal church overlooking the city. For those looking to relax there are countless excellent bars and cafes overlooking the Plaza de Armas and plenty of bargain hunting to do in the artisan markets. (B)

DAY 11: TRANSFER TO AIRPORT FOR ONGOING FLIGHTS

Depending on your ongoing flight arrangements, we will transfer you to Cusco airport in time to make your connecting flights onwards, for those with more time, ask about our Amazon Rainforest or Nazca lines and Ballestas Extensions. (B)

WE PROVIDE: All airport transfers, Inka train/bus tickets, private vehicle transport. Entrance fees to Sta Catalina monastery, Colca Canyon, Silustani ruins, Taquile island, the Inca ruins surrounding Cusco, Pisac, Ollantaytambo and Machu Picchu A registered, English-speaking guide, Extensive First-aid kit & oxygen. A guided tour in Machu Picchu. A bus transfers between the ruins, Transport from Machu Picchu to your hotel in Cusco will be on a train service and bus transfer. Quality 3 and 4 star accommodation in Lima, Arequipa, Colca, Puno and Cusco, Aguas Calientes, All meals as indicated in the itinerary (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner).

NOT INCLUDED: International and internal flights, personal belongings, airport taxes (\$6 local, \$31 international), personal expenses, travel insurance and tips. **Lima hotels, airport transfers, day rooms, tours and all internal flights are not included but can also be organised and quoted for on request.**

Please Note: The price is based on twin share accommodation. Single supplements are available on request.

WHAT TO BRING:

On this expedition we will be experiencing all extremes of Peruvian climate, from freezing Altiplano to extremely hot sunshine. During the day hopefully it will be generally sunny enough for shorts and T-shirts though having a fleece and rain gear handy is advisable. It will get especially in the evenings so bring a warm fleece jacket, a good waterproof and some warm clothes including thermal underwear, gloves, scarf and woolly hat as well as one set of smarter clothes for Cusco. Good quality Alpaca jumpers are available in Cusco.

General:

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| - Smart clothes for nightlife | - Comfortable clothes for journeys |
| - Shorts | - T-shirts |
| - Warm fleece or down jacket | - Sweater (Available in Cusco) |
| - Raincoat / rain trousers / poncho | - Socks / underwear |
| - Trekking trousers | - After trekking trousers & t-shirt |
| - Good, well worn –in walking shoes | - After trek shoes (sandals) |
| - Day-sack & rain-cover | |
| - Sunglasses with attaching string | - Peaked cap |
| - Water bottle | - Torch & Spare Batteries |
| - Swim suit | - Lipbalm |
| - Suntan lotion Factor 15+ | - After sun |
| - Personal toilet kit | - Camera and spare batteries / memory cards |
| - Warm night-clothes | - Book, Notepaper & Pen (optional) |
| - Money belt | - Spare Glasses / Lenses |

- Personal first aid kit to include: painkillers, plasters (band-aids), moleskin, antiseptic cream, after-bite, anti-diarrhoea tablets, throat lozenges, re-hydration salts & personal medication. (Amazonas Explorer carry an extensive first aid kit & Oxygen on all trips, but these are generally for emergencies only)

Please note:

- For the majority of the days this is a vehicle supported trip, so any spare clothes or equipment can be stored in the bus when not in use, leaving you to walk freely. Please bring a small day-pack to facilitate this.
- New rules at Machu Picchu limit the number of visitors to Huayna Picchu to the first four hundred people before ten o'clock. Please let your guide know early if you wish to climb this peak so they can plan ahead.
- We have an extensive tipping document available. – If you have not received this from your agent or have misplaced your document please ask your guide for a copy to be provided from the office.
- We implement a 'porter protection policy' that ensures all porters are well treated, paid, insured, fed and looked after.
- Most good quality sporting equipment is unavailable in Peru so if anyone wishes to donate any outdoor clothes, sleeping bags etc they will be gratefully received by any of our staff.
- Amazonas Explorer is a member of www.onepercentfortheplanet.org. We support a local native-tree re-forestation program www.ecoanperu.org and planted 13,000 trees in 2007 and 16,000 in 2008. We are dedicated to reducing our 'foot-print' by reducing waste, sourcing produce as locally as possible, recycling and discouraging the use of plastic bottles.
- If you would like to give a donation to charity whilst in Peru, Amazonas Explorer recommends the Dental Project Peru, run by a past client of ours, Jacqui Nimmo who provides emergency dental treatment in the very poor Apurimac region. You can find out more about this excellent project and how to donate tax efficiently at www.dentalprojectperu.org.

RECOMMENDED READING

The White Rock or Cochineal Red - Hugh Thomson,

Exploring Cusco - Peter Frost

Field guide to the birds of Machu Picchu - Barry Walker

Neo-tropical companion - John C Kricher.

Running the Amazon - Joe Kane.

The last days of the Incas - Kim MacQuarrie

Birds of Peru - Clive Byers

The bridge of San Luis Rey - Thornton Wilder

Conquest of the Incas - John Hemmingway

Into the forests of the night - John Simpson

Touching the void - Joe Simson

Heart of the Amazon – Yossi Ghinsberg

Inca Kola – Matthew Paris

Inca Gold - Clive Cussler

Realm of the Incas – Max Milligan

Manu or Where the Andes meets the Amazon – Kim MacQuarrie & Andre Bartschii

AND LASTLY PLEASE NOTE: The “Peru Explorer” travels through a remote and rarely visited part of Peru and we believe our clients should be aware that the remoteness that makes this trip so very special could also cause certain problems. Thus, whilst Amazonas Explorer endeavours to minimise the chances of anything unexpected happening, it has to be noted that no itinerary can or should be rigidly adhered to. This is the very nature of Adventure Travel and we expect our clients to be prepared for delays and slight alterations in our programmed events.

Please note last minute international and national flight changes, train times changes, also excess baggage charges are out of our control. In all cases we will advise you of any changes in the itinerary as early as possible. We have taken all these possibilities into account when planning this expedition and have allowed sufficient leeway to enable us to successfully run this exceptional trip.

The travelling in Peru involves driving / trekking over several high passes up to 4500m and involves steep descents on old Inca steps-it is recommended that all clients should be in reasonable fitness.

The majority of dietary and medical requirements can be catered for, but we must be notified of these at the time of booking. Obtaining the correct vaccinations and visas required for Peru is the responsibility of the client's.

You should also be aware that adventure travel, in particular trekking, rainforest river travel and travelling in remote areas such as Southern Peru, does carry with it certain inherent risks that you, the client, will have to assume. You will have to take out adequate **travel insurance** to cover these risks and any costs incurred due to sickness, delayed flights and other factors out of Amazonas Explorer control.

A pre-departure meeting will be held on arrival. It is highly recommended you attend. All clients will be asked to sign a release and waiver form and must provide a photocopy of their travel insurance.

We look forward to seeing you in Peru.

