

PARK TUDOR GOES TO PERU

14 days

Itinerary downloaded on: February 22, 2024

Day 1: *Arrive in Lima*

Today we arrive in Lima, Peru. In recent years, this city has undergone some wonderful restorations of the plazas, ornate facades, and wooden balconies for which it is famous. Named the 'City of Kings' by the Spanish Conquistadors, Lima is the capital of Peru. Founded in 1535 by Francisco Pizarro, where the River Rimac meets the Pacific Ocean, this was the most important Spanish city during the colonial era with a population of about 100,000 inhabitants. Today the city is home to more than 7 million people.

Overnight in Lima.

Meal Plan: Dinner

Day 2: *Lima - Cuzco*

Today we fly to Cuzco. Our afternoon is at leisure to relax after our early start and to acclimatize to the altitude. Cuzco is a pleasant place to wander, with charming narrow walking streets and a very attractive central square.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3: *Cuzco: Horseback Riding & Sacsayhuaman*

Early this morning we will meet our guide and travel 20 minutes to our ride's starting point. The Horseback ride lasts 2.5 hours, and will take us through fields, Andean-style villages, and Incan remains. We will enjoy a wonderful view of the city of Cuzco on our way to the Temple of the Moon where we will leave our horses and drive back to our hotel. This afternoon we visit Sacsayhuaman, an impressive complex which, like so many others of that time, had both a religious and military purpose. The fortress known as the 'storehouse of the sun' incorporates some of the largest stones ever used in a building. The zig-zag walls represent the teeth of the sacred puma and provide an excellent defensive structure. The stones fit so perfectly together without mortar that not even moss can grow in the cracks! We also visit ruins at Tambo Machay, Puca Pucara and Qenko. The latter is an Inca sacrificial site carved with inscriptions. We will also include a visit to the Cathedral and Koricancha Temple. Folkloric Show with dinner in a local restaurant.

Overnight Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4: *Cuzco - Chinchero - Mountain Biking - Cuzco*

Early this morning we will transfer 45 minutes to Chinchero (28km from Cusco). This place is known for its textile work and communal organization. After this visit, we will continue our journey to Moray town (11,152ft) where we will start our mountain bike adventure. After a safety briefing we will begin our cycle, enjoying lovely views of impressive Andean peaks, many cactus plants, and Andean

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villagers, until we reach the archaeological site of Moray. This site is neither a city or a fortress, but an earthwork. After our guided visit of this special site we will enjoy a boxed lunch. We mount up again and continue to the Salt Mines of Maras (9,840ft). Here we have impressive views of the snow-capped mountains of Chicon, Veronica and Salcantay. The Maras salt works is comprised of about 3,000 small pools on the slopes of the Qaqawinay mountain. People fill up or "irrigate" the pools during the dry season every three days, with salty water emanating from a natural spring located on the top of the complex. When the water evaporates the salt crystallizes and can be collected. Finally we end our adventure in Pichingoto, where we will get into our private vehicle that will transfer us back to our hotel.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5: Cuzco - Inca Trail Hike - Machu Picchu

At 6:30 am we shuttle to Cusco's San Pedro train station. The train ride covers 104 kilometers/ 64.6 miles (4 hours), where we will start our trek. On the way we will have the opportunity to admire beautiful waterfalls and expansive vistas, finishing at Inti Punku (Sun Gate) from where we will have an amazing view of the Inca itadel of Machu Picchu and the surrounding landscape. We will visit the site and have some brief free time to explore before descending to our hotel.

Overnight near Machu Picchu.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6: Machu Picchu - Cuzco

A large part of the beauty of Machu Picchu is created by its setting on a mountain top surrounded by deep valleys. By staying for a second day to visit Machu Picchu, rather than visiting as a day trip from Cuzco, we are able to savour the atmosphere of this very special place. In the early morning of our second day at Machu Picchu we take the bus back up to the site with the weather-dependent hope of seeing the mist-clad mountains greet the morning sun. Weather notwithstanding, the best thing about going up the second day is being there early when there are fewer people, allowing time to "soak it in," as well as the opportunity to climb Huayna Picchu. Later we return to Cuzco by train.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7: Cuzco - Raqchi

We have a morning departure for Raqchi, located 125 kms south of Cuzco. En route we visit the village of Andahuaylillas and its humble looking Church of San Pedro of Andahuaylillas. This Catholic church was built in 1631, after the conquest on the base of an ancient Inca temple. This church was one of the first attempts in this area to impress and convert the pre-Spanish inhabitants of Peru. The building itself is of simple construction, but the interior makes it one of the most valuable jewels of colonial art in Peru, sometimes called the "Capilla Sixtina," or "Sistine Chapel" of America. Raqchi is a small entrepreneurial Andean community, where residents offer guestrooms to tourists, providing a unique in-depth cultural experience with the local population. As direct descendants of the Inca, they have many reasons to be proud of Raqchi; a fantastic three-story temple honouring the God Wiracocha, creator of the universe, according to Pre-Inca and Inca mythology, is the focal point of this village. Upon arrival, we will get settled at our family homes where we will enjoy a traditional Andean lunch. After lunch we will visit the remains of the Wiracocha Temple. Then everyone

will head to their respective homes to prepare for dinner, featuring traditional music and dances.

Overnight in Raqchi.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8: *Raqchi - Cuzco: Choco Museum*

This morning we have a pottery demonstration and lunch in Raqchi before returning to Cuzco. Early this afternoon in Cuzco, we'll have a 2-hour workshop* at the Choco Museum during which we will learn the secrets of chocolate, its production process, and the history of cacao since the Maya 1,000 years ago. All chocolate prepared here uses organic fair-trade cacao from the region of Quillabamba. * We will be split into two groups.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9: *Cuzco - Lima: Chinatown*

Today we fly back to Lima. After dropping our luggage at our Lima hotel, we'll head off to visit Lima's colourful and lively Chinatown where we have lunch. The first 75 Chinese to arrive in Peru -- to the province of Cañete and the department of Ica -- arrived, to be more precise, in 1849. In the late 19th century, the Chinese came to work in the 'haciendas' along the Coast, at the time lacking labour force as a result of the liberation of black slaves. Throughout the next 25 years, approximately 100,000 Chinese entered Peru. At that time, not only did they work at the haciendas, they also worked at building the railroad and at extracting 'guano'. There are over 6,000 Chinese restaurants in Lima called "chifas". Peru is by far the country with the most Chinese restaurants in Latin America. Very commonplace Chinese dishes are almost impossible to find on a menu as the Chinese food in Peru has been greatly influenced by Peruvian ingredients and culture.

Overnight in Lima.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 10: *Lima: Bike Tour & Folklore Show*

Today we have cycling tour, starting with Barranco, the old and Bohemian neighborhood of the city, and its mansions, bars and parks. We also visit the neighborhood of Chorrillos with its old fishing pier, beaches, and promenade, and the historic Morro Solar hill. Finally, we bike through the vibrant district of Miraflores with its amazing cliff edge sidewalks and parks overlooking the ocean. The tour travels mainly over bike lanes, through beautiful parks, on wide sidewalks, one way streets and always on flat areas. The tour includes a snack in a traditional old bar or cafe of the area. This evening's dinner features a folkloric show at Las Brisas del Titicaca.

Overnight in Lima.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11: Lima: City Tour

In the morning you will have a city tour, starting at Lima's port, the Callao. We visit the submarine, Abtao, a Sierra-type submarine built in the USA in 1953. In 1957 her name was changed to Abtao in memory of the naval battle of 7 February 1866 that was fought between the Spanish and Peruvian/Chilean naval squadrons. Abtao was decommissioned in 1998 and became a museum in 2004. During our visit we will participate in a simulated immersion and combat situation. Real Felipe Fortress is undoubtedly the most prominent landmark in Callao. It was constructed during colonial times (1747-1774), and it is the largest example of military architecture built by Spain in the Americas. It was built to defend the port of Callao and the city of Lima from pirates and corsairs during colonial times. The fortress also played an important role in the 1820s when Spanish royalists made their final stand with Peru. After lunch our tour continues to the main Square, Cathedral, San Francisco Church, and Catacombs and Inquisition Museum. This evening we visit the Magical Circuit of Water, a park featuring several whimsical water fountains set to light and music.

Overnight in Lima.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12: Lima - Nazca

We have an early morning private transfer to the bus station for the public bus to Nazca (6-7 hrs). In Nazca our tour includes Chaucilla Cemetery of the Nazcan Indians. They buried their mummies in the fetal position and facing east. Waceros (grave robbers) found this place about 80 years ago and stole much of what was buried with the mummies, leaving cotton, pottery fragments and human bones scattered in the desert. Later we visit the Planetarium "Maria Reiche." Maria Reiche (1903-1998) was a German-born mathematician and archaeologist famous for her research on the Nazca Lines.

Overnight in Nazca.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 13: Nazca Lines Overflight - Ica: Huacachina

This morning we head directly to the small airport to board your scenic overflight of the 2,000 year old Nazca Lines, comprised of about three hundred figures made of straight lines and geometric shapes most clearly visible from the air. The lines were supposedly built by an ancient civilization called the Nazca, though no one knows for sure who built them or why. Since their discovery, the Nazca Lines have inspired fantastic explanations from ancient gods, a landing strip for returning aliens, a celestial calendar, used for rituals probably related to astronomy, or a map of underground water supplies. Your total flying time will be about one hour; the total time spent over the lines themselves will be approximately 25-35 minutes. Later we drive to Huacachina, built around a small lake in the desert. Called the "Oasis of America," it serves as a resort for local families from the nearby city of Ica. Legend holds that the lagoon was created when a beautiful native princess was apprehended at her bath by a young hunter. She fled, leaving the pool of water in which she had been bathing to become a lagoon. We head off into the dunes in dune buggies and have a chance to do some sand-boarding. Return to Ica.

Overnight in Ica.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14: Ica - Ballestas Islands - Lima - Departure

This morning we travel to Paracas and enjoy a boat trip to the spectacular Ballestas Islands, often described as Peru's answer to the Galapagos. Though they don't quite match the splendour of their northern cousins, they are quite spectacular in their own right. The islands have been eroded to form countless natural caves and arches. In fact, this is where the islands' name comes from -- the word Ballesta means 'bow' (as in archery). There are colonies of thousands of seabirds such as pelicans, Inca terns and cormorants as well as a small colony of Humboldt penguins. You will also see hundreds of sea lions and often schools of dolphin. We return to Paracas and take the bus north, arriving back in Lima late afternoon. After time to freshen up, we enjoy a farewell dinner and show before transferring to the airport for our flight home (departing just after midnight).

Departure from Lima. BUEN VIAJE!

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner