

SYCAMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS GOES TO PERU

10 days

Itinerary downloaded on: February 22, 2024

Day 1: ***Fly to Lima, Peru***

Day 2: ***Arrive in Lima***

Transfer to hotel. Depending on arrival time, there will be a walking tour of the neighborhood with talks by our expert Tour Leader on Peru's history, diverse culture and currents politics and economy.

Overnight in Lima.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3: ***Lima***

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.

This morning we start our tour with a visit to San Francisco's Church to visit the extensive catacombs that lie underneath. We then continue to the Plaza de Armas, the most important plaza in Lima. The oldest surviving part of the plaza is the impressive bronze fountain, erected in 1650. Surrounding the plaza is the exquisite Archbishop's Palace, the cathedral, and the Government Palace where handsomely uniformed presidential guards are on duty all day. We visit the cathedral where the great conquistador Francisco Pizarro's tomb lies.

We then proceed to the Larco Museum, which showcases remarkable chronological galleries and an excellent overview on 3,000 years of development of Peruvian pre-Columbian history. Located in a unique vice-royal mansion of the 18th century built over a 7th century pre-Columbian pyramid, is surrounded by beautiful gardens. Features the finest gold and silver collection from ancient Peru and the famous erotic archaeological collection, one of the most visited Peruvian tourist attractions. For an unforgettable experience, Larco is one of the few museums in the world where visitors can also choose to enter the storage area with its 45,000 classified archaeological objects. Later we head to the trendy area of Miraflores and finish our day at the Artisan Market.

Overnight in Lima

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4: ***Lima-Cuzco***

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1-800-665-3998

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This morning we fly to Cuzco and then travel by road into the Urubamba Valley, or "Sacred Valley of the Incas," along one of the most scenic drives on our trip. We continue to Ollantaytambo railway station and board our train to Aguas Calientes, the village at the base of Machu Picchu.

Overnight in Aguas Calientes. Hostal Machu Picchu or similar.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5: *The Urubamba Valley - zip lining and hiking part of the Inca Trail*

STUDENT SPECIAL

After an early breakfast, we will board the local train that will take us a short distance to a private vehicle to the Cola de Mono Adventure Center, where the highest zip-line in South America is located. In an hour and half we will enjoy this amazing experience over the Amazon cloud forest. A zip line is an adventure activity in which participants are harnessed and attached by pulley to a cable anchored to two different mountains. You slide from one mountain to the other, fast enough that you feel like you are flying! The tour includes all equipment (harness, helmet and gloves) and is fully-guided and supervised. Go to www.canopyperu.com for more information.

After our zip-trek, we transfer by road 30 minutes to the start point of a trek at Lucmabamba, from where few people in the world have enjoyed a privileged view of Machu Picchu. The trek starts at a point on the original Inca Trail, with a steady ascent to the Mirador of Llactapata, located at 6,600 ft above sea level. From here we will have a spectacular view of the lost city of the Incas, Machu Picchu. On the Inca site of Llactapata we will rest and admire the mountain panorama and enjoy our boxed lunch. Our trek continues to Aobamba and to the train station from where we have the chance to hike for 90 more minutes to Aguas Calientes, or just board the local train.

Overnight in Aguas Calientes. Hostal Machu Picchu or similar.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 6: *Machu Picchu - Cuzco*

In the early morning we ascend the switchback road up to the Machu Picchu site for a guided tour and independent time to explore this amazing place. Later in the afternoon we board the train from Aguas Calientes to Cuzco, where we will arrive at approximately 8:15pm. On route we will see the locals working their potato and grain fields, and see children at play near their adobe brick homes.

Cuzco is located in a fertile valley at 3354 m (11,004 feet). This is the archaeological capital of the Americas and the ancient capital of the Inca Empire that, at its height, stretched from Colombia in the north, through Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, and down to central Chile in the south. Although the empire already existed in the 12th century, it remained small until the mid-15th century. Over the next 100 years, it expanded massively but declined due to the civil war and the conquest by the Spanish conquistadors under Francisco Pizarro in 1533.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7: *Cuzco and the Sacred Valley*

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Today we return to Urubamba, or "Sacred Valley of the Incas," with more time to stop in Pisac, a picturesque Andean Village, typical except for the huge, spreading tree that dominates the central square. The village is best known for its market, which draws hundreds of visitors. In spite of its popularity the market retains much of its local charm, at least in the part where villagers from miles around gather to barter and sell their produce. In the tourist section of the market you can buy a wide variety of handicrafts.

We continue to the Inca ruins of Ollantaytambo located on a spectacular ridge with deep valleys on either side. We can admire the carefully constructed and maintained farming terraces on the surrounding hillsides. Return to Cuzco.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 8: *Inca Cuzco*

We also visit some of the most important Inca sites in the Cuzco area. This Inca city was laid out around a great central square in the shape of a puma, the god of lightning.

Today, stone walls built by the Incas line most of Cuzco's central streets and form the foundations of colonial and modern buildings. The Inca buildings were so well built that the Spaniards simply knocked down the upper parts of the Inca temples and palaces and built their churches and mansions on top of the Inca walls. Shortly after the Spanish conquest, the capital was moved to Lima on the coast. Thus Cuzco has retained a wonderful, untouched colonial atmosphere. The culture is also very much alive here, and is evident in the music, clothing and handicrafts of the people. Sacsayhuaman is 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.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9: *Cuzco - Lima - depart for home*

We have some time free at leisure in Cuzco to explore and browse in this historic city that has layer upon layer of history round every corner.

This afternoon, we will fly back to Lima and have some time before connecting with our onward return flight home.

Meal Plan: Breakfast