

TRUCKEE HIGH SCHOOL GOES TO PERU

10 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 (Miraflores).

Day 2: *Lima: City Tour*

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 where people stroll along the cliff tops and watch the sun setting on the Pacific Ocean. The best location is the new "Love Park," with its magnificent monument to lovers at its centre. We continue to the Hacienda Mamacona for an exhibition of beautiful Peruvian Paso horses, accompanied by a delicious dinner of Criollo food and a folkloric show.

Overnight in Lima (Miraflores).

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3: *Lima - Paracas - Lima*

Dawn departure from Lima by private vehicle with guide to Paracas for a morning visit of the 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.

Transfer to the airport to take an aircraft and then flight over the Nazca Lines. The lines were supposedly built by an ancient

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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.

We return to Lima.

Overnight in Lima.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4: *Lima - Cuzco - Urubamba Valley - Ollantaytambo - Yucay*

Early this morning we fly to Cuzco, 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.

On arrival we will travel by road into the Urubamba Valley, or "Sacred Valley of the Incas," along one of the most scenic drives on our trip, 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.

We continue to Pisac with its lively market where you will encounter traditionally dressed locals with whom you can barter for colourful craft items. You will see many unique Andean musical instruments as well as dazzling textiles. Peruvian woollen items are justifiably famous for their imaginative designs, based on Inca art and the local flora and fauna. You can buy sweaters and caps made from the extremely warm wool of alpacas and llamas.

We continue to the town of Yucay on the bank of the Urubamba River (2300m/7,590 ft). This is an attractive little town of particularly fertile lands whose name translated into Spanish means "deceit" or "bewitchment". According to legend, in the middle of the 15th century, the Inca Huayna Capac was captivated by the incomparable magnificence of Yucay's setting and decided to settle here.

Overnight in Yucay.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5: *Yucay - Machu Picchu Area*

Today we take the early morning train* from Urubamba to Aguas Calientes and Machu Picchu. The train journey to Machu Picchu is a highlight of any trip to the Andes; the scenery is simply spectacular, and the train allows you to enjoy it in comfort. The +/-3 hour trip takes us through a changing landscape with wonderful vistas of the mountains and, deep in its dramatic canyon, the beautiful Urubamba River. Our early arrival from Urubamba ensures that we are at the site before the tourist throngs arrive on the train from Cuzco later in the morning.

Upon arrival at the Aguas Calientes train station, a bus will take us on the 6 km (4 mile) twisting journey up the mountainside to the site of Machu Picchu. Having already dropped our baggage at our hotel, we proceed immediately for a guided 3-hour walking tour of the ruins (please be prepared with all that you need for our tour). We will enter the site through the House of the Terrace Caretakers, which flank the agricultural sector.

Once on the site, we will see, among other features: the Temple of the Sun, the Fountain Caretaker's House, the Royal Sector, and the puzzling Temple of the Three Windows. We will also see the Common District, the Sacred Rock, and the prison-like Temple of the

Condor.

Machu Picchu, popularly known as the 'Lost City of the Incas,' is an ancient city of stone palaces, towers, temples, and staircases. It is a very mysterious place and, to this day, our knowledge of it remains sketchy. There are no records or artifacts on the site to indicate what any of the buildings were used for. Archaeologists have ascertained that the site was most likely a ceremonial centre and possibly used for administrative purposes for the populous region.

After our tour, you may choose to proceed to the hotel or remain on the site for some independent exploration (your ticket is good for the day), and return to the hotel on your own using the return portion of your bus ticket.

* PLEASE bring an overnight bag for this one night at Aguas Calientes as the train enforces strict luggage limits. Our larger bags will be transported back to Cuzco for us.

PERU RAIL : Carry-on Baggage Allowance (Train to Machu Picchu)

Each passenger may take :

1 bag or back pack - 5kg (11lb) - 157cm (62") (length + height + width)

Baggage that exceeds the measurements will not be allowed.

Overnight at Agua Calientes (near Machu Picchu).

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6: Machu Picchu Area - Cuzco

A large part of the beauty of Machu Picchu is created by its setting on a mountaintop 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,* most group members choose to 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 and/or to the Sun Gate.

During our time at Machu Picchu, we will also include a visit to the Manuel Chavez Ballon Site Museum, which focuses on the "discovery", excavation, and history of Machu Picchu. On display are historical photos, including photos of Hiram Bingham at Machu Picchu shortly after he came across the ruins, informative write-ups on the construction of Machu Picchu and the life of the Incas, and artifacts found at the site. Outside the museum is a very lush botanical garden running along the river; some plants are labelled and there are a few short trails. This is a nice shady area to rest on a hot day and is an easy 25 minute walk from Aguas Calientes down the road leading to Machu Picchu.

Later in the afternoon we board the VISTADOME train from Aguas Calientes to Ollantaytambo Station (1.5 hours) from where we bus back to Cuzco.

* DUE TO strict limits on the number of visitors daily, if you elect to visit again today, you will need to book well advance online via www.ticketmachupicchu.com. You will need to choose the EARLIEST options for Machu Picchu only OR Machu Picchu & Huayna Picchu if you want to hike Huayna Picchu.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7: Cuzco Area

This morning we visit some of the most important Inca sites in the Cuzco area.

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! Continuing we visit the ruins at Tambo Machay, Puca Pucara and Qenko. The latter is an Inca sacrificial site carved with inscriptions.

In the afternoon we return to Cuzco and enjoy a tour of the town. We visit Coricancha, the temple of the sun which was the most important location in the Inca empire. Entombed in the closed cloister of the Sto Domingo Church, these sacred walls were hidden from modern civilization until the colonial walls were brought down in 1950 by a powerful earthquake. We also visit the church of San Blas with its fabulously carved pulpit. Wandering the narrow streets of the San Blas artisan region we make our way to the cathedral which towers impressively over the Plaza Mayor. Inside we find precious paintings from the Cuzco School of Art, one of the most prolific of its era.

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.

Overnight in Cuzco.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8: Cuzco - Puerto Maldonado - Peruvian Amazon

Today we fly from Cuzco to Puerto Maldonado and transfer to our lodge, where lodge staff will welcome you and provide the necessary information for your stay.* To get there, we navigate by outboard motorized canoe along the Madre de Dios River to Inkaterra Hacienda Concepción for approximately 25 minutes. Enjoy lunch with organic ingredients and native flavours.

After lunch, take a walk through Concepcion Trails, where you will discover and learn about primary and secondary rainforest, its components, uses, and relevance for the world. At dusk navigate by outboard motorized canoe for a the twilight river excursion. By sailing on the Madre de Dios River, you will learn about its ecosystem, Amazonian creeks, nocturnal animals' behaviour, and the southern constellations. In the evening enjoy dinner in the Casa Grande dining room.

* Please note that the program for your Amazon visit may vary depending on weather.

Overnight at a comfortable lodge.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9: Amazon Exploration

New experiences are ahead and, after a buffet breakfast, get ready for a trek through the Tambopata National Reserve towards Lake Sandoval. Here you will understand why Madre de Dios is called the biodiversity capital of Peru, while learning about the Reserve's

conservation efforts and the lake's formation. Navigate by dugout canoe across this mirrorlike oxbow lake that is home to the endangered giant river otter, blue and yellow macaw, red howler monkey, black caiman, and one of the world's biggest fresh water scaled fish, the paiche.

Back to the lodge for lunch and, later, the canopy walkway & anaconda walk. Take a 20-minute ride by outboard motorized canoe to the Inkaterra Canopy Walkway Interpretation Centre, where you will learn about its construction and the conservation projects of ITA-Inkaterra Asociación (NGO). Ascend one of the two 98-foot towers and cross the 7 hanging bridges that connect the treetops at 91 ft high. Enjoy the breathtaking vistas and get the chance to watch white-throated toucans, woodpeckers, trogons, squirrel monkeys, and the three-toed sloth. You will learn about the fauna and flora of this flooded ecosystem.

Tonight we experience the rainforest by night, where you will explore the Amazon rainforest that gives way to nocturnal animals who display intriguing behaviour patterns and enhanced senses as adaptation mechanisms. Listen to nocturnal nature sounds as we penetrate this hidden world.

Overnight in the Amazon.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 10: *Puerto Maldonado - Lima - Departure*

After breakfast, take a ride back to Puerto Maldonado by outboard motorized canoe. Arrive at the Butterfly House, where you may wait for your flight while visiting this beautiful Butterfly House and learn about the fascinating transformation of these colourful insects.

Later we transfer to the airport for our flight back to Lima. We have use of day rooms at a Lima hotel to freshen up before transferring to the airport for our overnight flight homeward.

BUEN VIAJE!

Meal Plan: Breakfast