

PERU IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE INCAS 8 days

Itinerary:

Day 1 : Arrive Lima

After arrival at the airport in Lima, transfer to your hotel to relax from your flight. *Optional city tour*

Lodging: Costa de Sol Hotel



Day 2 : Lima - Cuzco - Andean weaving experience (B)

After breakfast depart for Cuzco, upon arrival transfer to the Sacred Valley. On the way visit the Andean weaving. The founder Nilda Callañaupa is the head of The CENTER FOR TRADITIONAL TEXTILES, an NGO dedicated to preserving the textile heritage of the Andean people. A native of the village of Chinchero, Nilda was only 14 years old when presenting at the Smithsonian Institute and the American Museum of Natural History. After attending university she started the Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco which includes a weaving cooperative and a school for young girls (who must come dressed in traditional costume to be considered). Nilda is a shining example of how indigenous people can fully engage with the world markets and still remain true to their roots.

Meals: Breakfast **Lodging:** Casa Andina Hotel

Day 3 : Scared Valley - Maras Salt Mines (B / L)

After breakfast visit the Maras salt mines and Moray terraces. The sight of this still operating salt mine, in use since Incan times, is amazing. Continue to the archeological site of Moray. Used as an agricultural testing ground, the site's system of circular terraces descends 490 feet, serving as a perfect testament to the achievements by the Incas, excelling at building masterful constructions in harmony with nature. After lunch explore Ollantaytambo town and fortress one of the last remaining Incan towns, once fiercely guarded by a massive fortress. Discover the large archeological complex of what used to serve as a wayside inn for royal delegations on long journeys. Than visit a local Chicheria, an establishment for the brewing and sale of chicha, the famous traditional Andean drink made of germinated corn.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch **Lodging:** Casa Andina Hotel

Day 4 : Scared Valley - Machu Picchu (B / L)

After breakfast take the train to Machu Picchu and start your tour of the citadel. This archaeological site was hidden for centuries until it came to light in the early 1900s. Rediscovered by Hiram Bingham, Machu Picchu is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Here follow in the footsteps of the ancient Incas as you explore this magical site along with your guide. It is truly amazing when the citadel suddenly appears between the mountains that mark the beginning and the end of the Andes and the Amazon Basin. In the afternoon take the train to Ollantaytambo from there transfer to Cuzco

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch **Lodging:** El Mercado Hotel

Day 5 : Cuzco - Sacsayhuaman (B)

After breakfast start your tour just outside the city where Sacsayhuaman awaits you. A spectacular fortress built with huge carved rocks jointed with accuracy, this astounding sample of the Incan military architecture is, undoubtedly, the greatest architectonic work of the Tahuantinsuyo. The exploration of the city continues with a visit to the Mercado de San Pedro (St. Peter's Market) the main street market to get to know the products of Cusco, with its unique aromas, tastes, and colors of the region. A few blocks away discover one of the most impressive buildings of Incan Cusco: the Korikancha (the Golden Temple) - a temple dedicated to the worship of the Sun God, its interior walls were said to been covered in gold. Complete the day with a stroll through the Plaza de Armas (Main Square), where you visit the Cathedral with its exquisite vestibules and priceless paintings from the Cusco School of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Meals: Breakfast **Lodging:** El Mercado Hotel

Day 6 : Cuzco - Puno (B / L)

After breakfast at your hotel transfer to the bus station to embark onboard a bus for a full day of breathtaking views of the Andes. Stop on the way in Andahuaylillas, a small village 24 miles south of Cusco built by the Jesuits in the late sixteenth century. Its famous church is called the Sixtine Chapel of the Andes. Later see Raqchi, one of the most important constructions of the Inca Empire known for its extraordinary architecture. Continue to Pucaraís famous for its pottery, especially the well-known “Toritos de Pucara” (Little Bulls of Pucara). The famous torito is believed to have magical qualities among the inhabitants of the Andes as a symbol of procreation for the flocks, happiness in marriage, fertility at home and protection for the house. Later reach Puno along the shores of Lake Titicaca.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch **Lodging:** Casa Andina PC Hotel

Day 7 : Puno - Lake Titicaca (B / L)

Lake Titicaca, the cradle of Incan civilization, is the largest freshwater and highest navigable lake in South America. First stop are the Uros floating islands. These are a peculiar grouping of around 40 small islands made only of totora, a natural reed that grows around the lake. The cheerful inhabitants invite you to get to know their traditional lifestyle and customs. Continue your voyage across the waters of the lake until you come to the picturesque island of Taquile, a peaceful place where old Quechua traditions live in perfect balance with modernity. Discover a landscape distinct from the other islands thanks to the Incan terraces filled with local flowers and crops. The rich colors of the clothes worn by the local inhabitants are stunning. Enjoy the hospitality of the islanders, known as Taquileños.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch **Lodging:** Casa Andina PC Hotel

Day 8 : Puno - Lima departure (B)

After breakfast transfer to the airport for domestic flight to Lima and international return connection flight.

Meals: Breakfast

