

# PERU IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE INCAS



## Day 1 : Arrive Lima

Upon arrival at Lima airport transfer to your hotel with time to relax from the flight.

## Day 2 : Lima - Cuzco - Andean weaving experience

After breakfast depart for Cuzco, upon arrival transfer to the Sacred Valley. On the way visit the Andean weaving, dedicated to preserving the textile heritage of the Andean people. A native of the village of Chinchero, Nilda 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.

## Day 3 : Sacred Valley - Maras Salt Mines

Today 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. Later visit a local Chicheria, an establishment for the brewing chicha, the famous traditional Andean drink made of germinated corn.

## Day 4 : Sacred Valley - Machu Picchu

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

### *Day 5 : Cuzco - Sacsayhuaman*

In the morning begin your tour of Sacsayhuaman. A spectacular fortress built with huge carved rocks jointed with accuracy, this astounding sample of the Incan military architecture is, 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. Here get to know the products of Cusco, with its unique aromas, tastes, and colours of the region. A few blocks away discover one of the most impressive buildings of Incan Cusco: the Korikancha, the Golden 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, where you visit the Cathedral with its exquisite vestibules and priceless paintings from the Cusco School of the 17th and 18th centuries.

### *Day 6 : Cuzco - Puno*

Today after breakfast make your way to Lake Titicaca. 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 Pucara's 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.

### *Day 7 : Puno - Lake Titicaca*

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 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. The rich colors of the clothes worn by the local inhabitants are stunning.

### *Day 8 : Puno - Lima Departure*

After breakfast transfer to the airport for domestic flight to Lima to connect to your international return flight.