

Machu Picchu Trek, Peru An Incan Cultural Adventure!

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Trip Overview

Join us for a fun filled adventure starting in Cuzco, Peru. We'll acclimate, explore local ruins and tour the "Sacred Valley of the Incas." Afterwards, we'll trek for several days to Machu Picchu, a nearly indescribable sight of early Incan architecture and ingenuity. We hope you can join us trekking to this awesome cultural and adventure experience!



Trip Highlights

- A full day at Machu Picchu to explore and sightsee (most adventure companies only spend part of one day here).
- Local guides and experts will supplement our own IMG staff to lend insight into the culture and the history of the area.
- Porters will transport a large part of your gear during the trekking portion of our trip, to make the hike more enjoyable. A cook staff accompanies the trek.
- Ample time to comfortably acclimatize to the higher altitude.
- Private vehicle with driver for all transfers
- Most meals throughout the trip, both on the trek and in town

Location: Southern Peru

Rendezvous Point: Lima, Peru, then an in country flight on to Cuzco.

Team Size: 12 Trekkers with 1 Senior IMG Leader and 1 local cultural expert **plus** a staff of Quechuan porters, cook and cook staff. On the Salkantay route horses are used to pack gear.

Prerequisites: Good all around fitness. Some hiking or trekking experience is helpful

About Machu Picchu and Inca Culture

Machu Picchu, once the citadel of the Inca culture in Peru, sits atop a mountain in a jungle of green landscape in the steep rugged mountains of southern Peru. A mystery for over 400 years, it was left undiscovered during the Spanish Conquest, although the Spaniards searched in vain for the gold that was believed to have been there. The idea of a "lost city" of the Incas faded in credibility over time, as it sat disguised in the jungle overgrowth. Then, after years of searching, Yale archaeologist Hiram Bingham found it in 1911. The rediscovery of the ancient city made worldwide news, as the citadel was slowly unearthed from its hiding place.

Today, the Inca trail is an extraordinary journey leading into a mysterious city built by remarkable craftsmen. The hidden secrets of this lost city are yours to explore with us, as we venture to the ruins on a spectacular four-day trek. We'll have ample opportunity to explore and photograph the breath-taking architecture; enjoy the beautiful scenery along the way; and learn about the Incan culture that fostered the growth of this extraordinary creation—the "Eighth Wonder of the World."

2012 Machu Picchu Dates:

Classic Machu Picchu Trek ("Inca Trail")

July 28 - August 6, 2012
 Group maximum: 12 trekkers
 Landcost: \$2,750

Salkantay Trek

July 15-24, 2012
 Group maximum: 12 trekkers
 Landcost: \$2,700

Cost includes: IMG leader and local staff including local lead guide/cultural expert, cook, cook staff, porters; private tours as described in itinerary; transfers to/from Cusco airport and return; entrance fees for all cultural touring sites; hotel accommodations in three-star hotels (or better) with continental breakfast; most meals in town unless noted on the itinerary; group camping gear (tents, cooking gear, porter gear, stoves, lights, dining tent, bathroom tent; cook and trek food and 3 meals/day, while hiking).

Cost does not include: airline tickets of any kind; airport taxes; trail snacks, bottled water, alcoholic drinks, or required [travel insurance policy](#) (for trip cancellation, medical treatment, evacuation etc.)

Salkantay Trek Variation

At 6271 meters (20574'), Nevado de Salkantay is the tallest and most majestic mountain in the Cordillera Vilcabamba range and the backdrop for an alternate trek to Machu Picchu. This journey travels off the beaten track, far from the crowds found on the Inca Trail. It offers a true view of the Peruvian mountains with spectacular vistas and provides the feeling of adventure and remoteness the Inca Trail has lost. Salkantay means "Savage Mountain" in the Quechua language.

The trek takes us up over a high mountain pass gaining a maximum elevation of 4600 meters (15,180 feet), past the massive snow clad peaks of Tucarhuay, Salkantay and Huamantay. The trek then descends from the region of high peaks down river drainages and multiple ecological zones, ending in lush forested terrain, the "cloud forest" with wild orchids, banana plantations and exotic birds. The total trek distance is approximately 20 miles yet experiences the breadth and depth of the Peruvian mountainous region. This trek is slightly more arduous than the Inca Trail, but requires no load carrying other than a day pack. On the Salkantay we pack personal and group gear on horses led by wranglers in addition to the normal trek leaders, kitchen and camp staff. This route is less traveled than the Inca Trail and there is no limit on the number of permits for the trek. You do not need to apply by the first of the year in order to guarantee participation on the program.

The Machu Picchu Trek with IMG

Our program begins in the 12th century colonial town of Cuzco, once the Incan capital and home of Manco Capac, one of the early rulers. Today, Cuzco retains a history which is a mix of tradition and legend. We'll spend a day here, acclimating to an altitude of 10,900 feet, with time to stroll the downtown area, sight see and shop for local artifacts. The following day we will depart for the "Sacred Valley." We'll visit the local ruins of Sacsayhuaman, travel to the famous Pisak market, a good place to purchase local crafts and goods, and on to Ollantaytambo, a spectacular site perched high above the town below. We'll overnight in a hotel here, close to our departure point for the Machu Picchu trek. Many people find the local cultural tours to be nearly as impressive as Machu Picchu itself.

Throughout our small expedition our staff will include at least one local resident and guide who is an expert of the local history and legends that surround the sights we will explore. This cultural expert will accompany the group throughout the trek and visit of Machu Picchu.

During the trek portion of our program, we will use local porters to transport our gear and supplies. This permits us to enjoy the walk each day, as we move along unencumbered, free to take photos and investigate our surroundings. Meals will be served by our cook staff in a dining tent set up for your comfort during breakfast and dinner.

Signup Early (Inca Trail only)

Beginning in the summer of 2001, a limit was placed on the number of trekkers allowed to walk the Inca trail to Machu Picchu. It is imperative that we submit actual requests for trekking permits for each person as close to the first of the year as possible in order to guarantee permits for each member of the group. This means you will need to submit your application and deposit prior to the first of the year in order to confirm a place on the trek. For the Salkantay trek, signups can occur up to 90 days in advance of the trek departure.

The Machu Picchu Experience

Machu Picchu itself is nearly beyond words—a place so immense and so precisely built by the Incans, it is hard to imagine reproducing it nowadays. There are quiet courts and walkways, fountains, and other constructions created by the Inca people for both practical and astrological applications. Archeologists have explained many of these things, and others have yet to be deciphered—or discovered.

Our Machu Picchu adventure explores the area thoroughly, with plenty of time devoted to the area. You'll be armed with an excellent archeological overview of the ruins... and afterwards, there is time to go about on your own to further investigate and contemplate the meaning of the area at a relaxed and enjoyable pace.

For those hearty trekkers, the easy but steep ascent of Huayna Picchu is a satisfying optional challenge, which offers a great "reverse view" of the Machu Picchu ruins. **Please note:** we may not always make this option available to the group, depending on the trail and cable conditions that lead to the precarious summit. There have been fatalities and injuries recorded in the past on this short excursion. Sure footedness and a healthy respect for the exposure are required to make the ascent.

We invite you to join us, and take a journey back in time—to view the incredible sights and views that Machu Picchu and Cuzco can offer. It's an experience that will provide memories for a lifetime!

Background Requirements

Fitness: Most of the trek days typically require 4-8 hours of effort, with the bulk of our gear carried by porters. Because of the trekking portion of this trip and the general high altitude of the area (10-13,000 feet), we recommend that all participants engage in a physical training program for several months prior to trip departure. All participants must consult with their family physician regarding their personal health and the additional demands of high altitude well in advance of the trip.

Experience: Participants should have solid day hiking experience. Overnight backpacking or trekking experience is helpful. High altitude experience is also beneficial, to confirm that your body can reasonably tolerate visits to 10,000 feet and higher.

“I want to compliment both IMG for a great effort on our Machu Picchu excursion... The places we stayed, the quality of the guides, and the overall organization was top notch... I don't think my wife and kids could have had a better overall experience and clearly one that they will cherish for a long time. I purposely booked with IMG because of my experience with your team on Mt. Rainier, and you did not let us down. I am already thinking about a few other trips... and I cannot imagine using any other guide service than IMG....”

—John M.

“All in all, it was an experience of a lifetime. And I thank you for including me in the group...”

—Susan G.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Personal Equipment and Clothing List—Machu Picchu

ON THE TREK

FEET:

- Medium to medium heavy weight waterproof hiking boots – with suitable ankle support; make sure whatever you wear is broken in and very comfortable; if leather, treat the boot multiple times with waterproofing)
- Wool or synthetic socks (2-3 complete changes)

LOWER BODY:

- Long johns (1 pair, lightweight synthetic)
- Stretch nylon hiking/climbing pants, Schoeller type fabric.
- Waterproof/breathable pants (preferable with leg zips)
- Hiking shorts (nylon hiking style is best...avoid very short ones, as it might offend the locals. Best of all are the nylon zip-off hiking pants)
- Underwear (2-3 pair for trail use)

UPPER BODY:

- Long john top (1 lightweight—zip neck is best)
- Expedition long john top (100 weight)
- Soft shell or fleece jacket (200-300 weight)
- Waterproof/breathable jacket with hood
- Down or synthetic parka (REQUIRED, but reasonably light in weight)
- T-shirt (synthetic is best)

HEAD AND HANDWEAR:

- Fleece or wool hat
- Sun hat or baseball cap
- Wool or fleece gloves
- Bandanna
- Chemical hand warmers (2 sets for cold mornings, only if your hands get cold easily)

SLEEPING:

- Sleeping bag (down or synthetic, down to 25 degrees, compression stuff bag)
- Therm-a-Rest (or) Thick closed cell full-length foam pad (or both, for supreme sleeping comfort!)

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Pack (medium size, internal frame, in the range of 3-5,000 cu. in.; Note: test prior to use! Try to keep the weight of the pack down. Top loading works best.)
- Pack rain cover, to protect from mist...and mud! (As an alternative, bring 2-3 large garbage bags for the same purpose)
- Adjustable ski poles (baskets are NOT required on the poles, and the poles MUST have tip guards; to help protect the ancient stone steps from wear. OR, better yet, purchase a wooden walking stick upon arrival in Cuzco. This is perhaps the best bet.)
- Extra large stuff sacks (2; for packing clothes and bulk of personal lunch; to keep things organized and dry)
- Medium stuff bag (for daily lunch)
- Sunglasses (1 pair dark pair; plus retainers, i.e. Chums)
- Suncream (1 full bottle; 35-50 SPF protection)
- Lip protection (with high SPF)

- Water bottles (2; wide mouth 1 qt. Nalgene type bottles; A water hydration system can substitute for one bottle)
- Toilet paper (2 large rolls in zip-lock bag; plus personal hygiene wipes)
- Garbage bags (5-6 large, heavy duty; 30+ gal; use these to line your pack and all of your large stuff bags; it's an excellent way to keep your gear dry. At camps, put your boots in one. Extra bags are ALWAYS GOOD!)
- Headlight (Petzl LED is best; fresh batteries, plus 1 spare set). You'll need a headlight, if we decide to walk in the dark to catch the first sun-rays on Machu Picchu.)
- First aid kit (Personal needs only, Band-aids, athletic tape, moleskin, non-prescription pain meds and anti-inflammatory drugs such as Advil. Pepto Bismol tablets are helpful for dealing with minor stomach distress. Consult with your doctor about the trip and travel at altitude and bring any recommended prescription drugs **in original prescription bottles**.)
- Potable Agua tablets for water purification (1 bottle of 50 tablets, or, Lightweight personal water purification device—make sure you know how to use it, and what it filters; must filter viruses and use iodine to be 100% effective.)
- Insect repellent (DEET is most effective. The bugs, in general, are not too bad, but best to be safe!)
- Toothbrush & paste
- Day pack (highly recommended for air travel & general touring—lightweight with few frills, top loading is best)
- Lunch (for on and off mountain, to supplement provided lunches). Please bring a variety of foods weighing in total no more than 5 lbs. You can supplement this some with local foods, candies, and fresh fruits.

Lunch ideas include:

string cheese, beef jerky, dried fruit, candy bars, energy bars, hard candies, nuts, electrolyte replacement drink mix (several quarts repackaged into a Ziplock bag), 2 quarts worth of powdered power drink mix for your harder days. Salty snacks are often appreciated.

IN TOWN

- Passport/Visa
- International shot record
- Money (\$100-150 for the local staff tips, plus \$300-500 for misc; drinks, some meals, travel, and gifts, and your departure taxes, when flying into/out of Peruvian airports (not included in your airline ticket). Bring some smaller bills, like \$5's and \$10's) ATM's are available (but limited) in Cuzco and Aguas Calientes.
- Credit cards
- Travelers checks (not as useful; could be hard to exchange)
- Money belt/neck pouch
- Running/tennis shoes (use as camp shoes)
- Socks; cotton or synthetic, for travel (3)
- Small bag of liquid biodegradable soap (for clothes)
- Underwear (3-4)
- Toiletries (be sure to keep it light here)
- Toilet paper (1 roll)
- Cotton pants or synthetic travel pants (2)
- Dress shirts (1-2)
- T-shirts or short sleeve travel shirts (2-3)
- X-large tough duffel bag (to fit pack; for air travel and porter carry; with small combination lock)
- Second large duffel bag or suitcase (for air travel and to store gear at hotel; lock)
- Ear plugs

OPTIONAL

- Diary, pen & pencil
- iPod or MP3 player – bring one you are willing to risk losing. Best if it runs on batteries.
- Camera(s), extra storage media cards and extra batteries
- Binoculars, smaller style

Clothing Notes

Easy-wash travel-clothing is convenient, as are jeans and non flashy shirts. Avoid bright colors or logos that mark you as a tourist. Cuzco and the Inca trail are “tourist friendly,” so being a tourist doesn’t create any problems—but it’s a good idea to dress-down, nonetheless. Cotton for trail use, however, is generally DISCOURAGED.

Gear Donations:

We like to encourage our Peru trekkers to bring along some of their used and close-to-worn-out-gear and clothing on this trip. This gear can then be donated to our local guides and staff after the trek—and make your bag lighter for your flight home. Appropriate items include long underwear tops and bottoms, pile clothing, socks, gloves and mittens, outerwear, gaiters, and other clothing items that you've used during your trip but you no longer need—or want. This token is not expected by us or our local staff, but it is a good way to “unload” some of your older gear that you no longer need or want and help out someone who can put it to good use. Extra trek food can also be left for the Peruvian staff after the trek.

We certainly don't want to overwhelm our local staff, and your guides will help coordinate the donation so that all are treated fairly. Our local contacts certainly appreciate anything you can give them, but please don't make any promises along the way.

Lastly mark all personal gear including water bottles clearly in indelible ink with your name. Check the condition of your gear and be sure to test new pieces of equipment thoroughly.

“I had a wonderful time on the trek! The places we stayed and ate in were top notch. The guides were great... Off the top of my head I can't think of anything that could/should be changed. Thanks again for providing a wonderful experience in Peru!...”

—Jason G.

“Every time I go on one of George Dunn's expeditions, I come back saying, 'that was the best adventure I've ever been on'!!... I had the time of my life on each trip...”

—Bruce G.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Machu Picchu Classic Inca Trail Itinerary

Our trip to Perú *will be an amazing experience*, and is designed to give trekkers adequate acclimatization time for all objectives. There are several opportunities in the schedule to allow for shopping, sightseeing and general non-guided touring. Arrangements can easily be made to accommodate non-trekking partners or family members into the program. In many ways, this will be a dream trip for just about *any* trekker. We'll see some of the most beautiful areas in the world and visit culturally diverse ruins. The trekking on this adventure will be challenging but reasonable. Alternative activities include resting, sightseeing, hiking in the area, or just about anything. Enjoy yourself!

Trip itinerary is subject to change, based on the needs of our group, weather and route conditions, and other foreseen and unforeseen circumstances. Alternative routes and/or schedule may be used as warranted.

- Day 1-2** Depart from home mid-day. Arrive in Miami or Dallas during early evening. Depart for Lima around midnight and arrive Lima early next morning.
- Day 2** Once in Lima, we'll transfer to a national flight to Cuzco (10,988'), arriving by mid-day. Rest and relaxation will be in order, focusing on acclimatization. You are on your own for the afternoon, and can stroll around the neighboring market square, change some money and have lunch. The team will meet at 6pm for a briefing on what to expect in the coming days. A team dinner will follow. (Meal included, dinner)
- Day 3** An exciting cultural touring day. We'll first visit the local ruins of Sacsayhuaman on the way out of town. We'll travel on to the Sacred Valley where we will tour the famous Pisak market, a good place to purchase local crafts and goods. Our last cultural visit in the Sacred Valley will be Ollantaytambo, which sits above the town in a beautiful setting. We'll overnight in a hotel here, close to our departure point for the Machu Picchu trek. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Day 4** Rise around 4:30-5 AM, have a quick breakfast in our hotel, then a private bus will take us to the trailhead, at km. 82 (2,400m or 7,872'). We'll continue up the trail for some distance, to our tent camp at Llullchapampa (3,600m or 11,808'), and relax and rest up for the next day. Figure on 6-8 hours of trekking on this day and 13 or so miles: There will be awesome views well worth the effort. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Day 5** Wake up around 7, and then start trekking out of the light woodland. The trail continues to climb upwards beyond Llopachayoc, up steeper trail and rock steps. The woodland gives way to scrub, then to *puna*, bleak grassland and bare slopes. The ascent becomes increasingly steep, and the terrain increasingly rugged. The trail climbs steeply towards the first pass, the **Abra de Huarmihuanusca** ("Dead Woman's Pass"), 4198m, or 13,769'. This is a somewhat tough day by trekking standards. All trekkers are advised to train in particular for this ascent, as it will be the most demanding of the entire trip. While we will not be carrying heavy packs, the ascent will be challenge enough. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Itinerary—Machu Picchu Trekking Expedition (continued)

- Day 6** From the valley of the Pacamayo, the trail climbs steeply up the opposite side of the valley wall, towards the second pass, **Abra de Runkuracay**, 3,998m (13,113'). After the pass, the trail descends towards a valley containing a shallow lake. Here, the trail changes from a dirt path to a narrow stone roadway, the beginning of the “true” Inca Trail. The stones of the roadway were laid by the Quechua people during the period of the Inca Empire. We'll journey along the most classic looking parts of the stone path, so be sure to take plenty of photos as you approach the “Third Pass,” and, just beyond it, an Inca ruin, Phuyupatamarca (“Cloud-level Town”). We will camp at the high pass with a spectacular 360 degree panorama. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Day 7** The final section of the trail to Machu Picchu, from Huinay Huayna to Intipunku, is an easy hike, following a broad level path which winds comfortably through scrub and light woodland. After no more than an hour or two, the trail comes to a narrow flight of stone steps leading upwards into a small stone structure. This is **Intipunku**, and through the rectangular doorway, you can see the ruins of Machu Picchu. From Intipunku, a pathway leads directly to Machu Picchu itself, and a descent of over an hour will take us down to the actual ruins. We'll have until late afternoon to explore the area. Our cultural guide will take us for a general tour, explaining Machu Picchu's highlights. Following the tour, there will be time for individual exploration and photography. At the end of the day we'll await a bus for our trip down the mountain and then check-in to our hotel in Aguas Calientes, a tourist mecca below the Machu Picchu ruins. Overnight in hotel. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Day 8** Some morning shopping/sightseeing in Aguas Calientes, then catch a private train for the journey to Cusco. Get off train half way to Cusco, then private bus the remainder of the way. Overnight in hotel. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Day 9** Departure for Lima, then late flight from Lima to USA (Meal included, breakfast)
- Day 10** Flights arrive in Miami/Dallas about 5 AM, which leaves plenty of time to make connections for flight home. Arrive home by mid-afternoon.

“The thing I like best about George's longer expeditions is how everyone comes together and becomes a tight knit team. It's like having a family away from home. George takes smaller groups, and I think that makes a big difference...”

—Bruce G.

“I was very impressed with how everything was so well organized. It seemed like every little detail was covered. IMG is way better than the others. Way better! You guys are the best in the business...”

—Jim P.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Machu Picchu Salkantay Trek Itinerary

Day 1-2 Depart from home mid-day. Arrive in Miami or Dallas during early evening. Depart for Lima preferably late evening to allow an arrival in Lima early next morning. (If an overnight is required in Lima, this is at your additional expense).

Day 2 Once in Lima, we'll transfer to a national flight to Cuzco (10,988'), arriving by mid-day. The local trip leader will meet you at the airport and transport you to the local hotel. Rest and relaxation will be in order, focusing on acclimatization. You are on your own for the afternoon, and can stroll around the neighboring market square, change some money and have lunch. The team will meet at 6pm for a briefing on what to expect in the coming days. A team dinner will follow. (Meal included: dinner at hotel)

Day 3 An exciting cultural touring day. We'll first visit the local ruins of Sacsayhuaman on the way out of town. We'll travel on to the Sacred Valley where we will tour the famous Pisak market, a good place to purchase local crafts and goods. Our last cultural visit in the Sacred Valley will be Ollantaytambo, which sits above the town in a beautiful setting. We'll return to our hotel in Cusco at day's end. (Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner)

Day 4 Departure from Cusco early in the morning, bus ride for about 4 hours to the start of the trek at Mollepata. We will meet with the rest of the staff including the wranglers and horses and then start the expedition at an elevation of approximately 11500'. We'll hike to Soraypampa and Salkantaypampa, about 6 hours and 1500' elevation gain. Pampa is Quechuan for "flat grassy plain." (Meals included: breakfast at hotel, lunch and dinner on the trek)

Day 5 We take the right side of the moraine and start climbing up to turquoise colored Suyrococha lake at 13,900 feet in elevation. Continuing up to the top of Salkantay Pass at a maximum height of 15,180 feet, we'll enjoy spectacular views of the glacier and the surrounding peaks of the sacred mountain, Salcantay. After an appropriate amount of time resting and taking photos, we descend down to a campsite at Collcapampa hot springs, located at around 14,000 feet. Total walking time is an estimated 8 hours, with a gain of about 2,000 feet, and loss of 1,500 feet. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner on the trek).

Day 6 We head down through valleys eroded by glacier waters. Different ecological zones are passed on the way down following Collcapampa creek, then the Santa Teresa River. We'll be down in warmer zones here, with waterfalls, flowers, fruit trees and exotic birds to view. We climb back up to an Andean community named Paltaybamba, where a bus will be waiting to transfer the group to our campsite named Eco Quechua, located in the small town of Santa Teresa. It's a 7 hour walk this day, with a loss of 2,000 feet. (Meals included, breakfast, lunch, dinner on the trek).

Day 7 Early in the morning we start hiking towards Llactapata the Inca site recently re-discovered. Nice views over the mountains and Machu Picchu's eastern side, finally we arrive at the Machupicchu hydroelectric plant where we will take the local train to the town of Aguas Calientes for a check in to our hotel and much needed showers. (Meals included, breakfast and lunch on the trek, dinner at the hotel in AC).

Day 8 Early wakeup for a dawn bus ride up to the Machu Picchu archeological site with a full tour of the area. There will be additional free time to hike around the site, explore and take photographs. If we leave the hotel VERY early we may climb Waynapicchu peak, rising above Machu Picchu. This hike is limited in number each day to the first 400 visitors. In the afternoon we'll take the train to Cusco and transfer to our hotel for a final celebration dinner and the end of the expedition. (Meals included, breakfast, and dinner).

Day 9 Late afternoon flight to Lima, then flight from Lima to USA. We'll try to book the latest flight to Lima allowed to make our international connections in order to allow a few more hours to shop and sightsee in the city of Cusco. (Meal included, breakfast)

Day 10 Arrive in US early morning, with plenty of time to make connections for final flight home. Arrive home by mid-day.