

2023 IMG Machu Picchu Trek, Peru

An Incan Cultural Adventure!

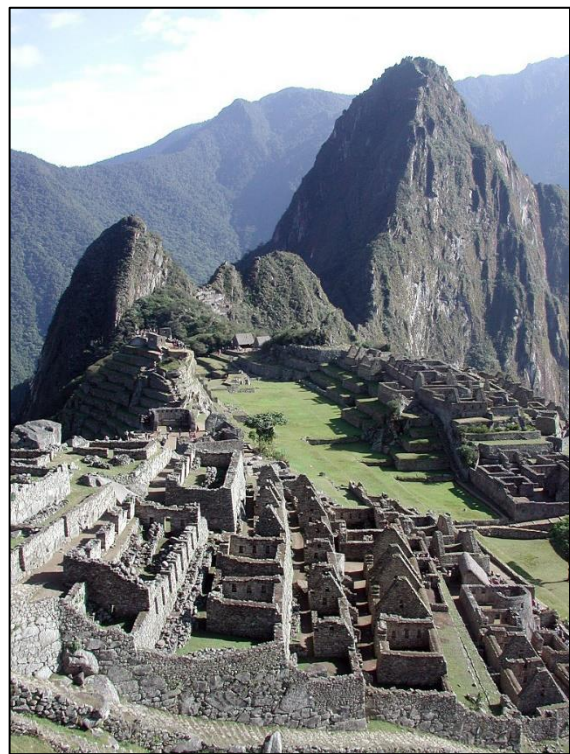
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We restarted our Machu Picchu programs in 2022 and conducted two fun trips. Peru is a great adventure travel destination and we are looking forward to going back in August 2023!

Join us for a fun filled adventure starting in Cusco, Peru. We'll acclimate, explore local ruins and tour the "Sacred Valley of the Incas" for acclimatization. Then, we'll trek for several days to on the Classic Inca Trail Route to Machu Picchu, a nearly indescribable sight of early Incan architecture and ingenuity.

Trip Highlights

- Early morning arrival at Machu Picchu with plenty of time to explore and sightsee during a tour of the area with your guides.
- For motivated individuals, there is an option for revisiting Machu Picchu the next morning and hiking up Huayna Picchu Peak for a spectacular viewpoint.
- A local guide and expert will supplement our own IMG lead guide to lend insight into the area's culture and history
- 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 accompany the trek.
- 3 star hotels (or better)
- Private vehicle with driver for all transfers
- Trekking at high altitude must be taken seriously. IMG carries a hyperbaric ("Gamow") bag and pulse oximeter on every trip, along with an experienced IMG lead guide



The "real" Inca Trail route to Machu Picchu is accessible by permit only. We need to apply for our 2023 permits immediately after January 1, 2023. If you would like to join our 2023 Team, now is the time to get on board!

We hope you can join us trekking to this awesome cultural and adventure experience. Please let us know how we can be of further assistance.

The IMG Team

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."

The Inca Trail Trek with IMG

Our program begins in the 12th century colonial town of Cusco, once the Incan capital and home of Manco Capac, one of the early rulers. Today, Cusco 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 the team 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, dinner and even some lunches.

For motivated trekkers, the easy but steep ascent of Huayna (Wayna) Picchu (the mountain overlooking Machu 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 the ability to tolerate steep exposure are required to make the ascent and descent of Huayna Picchu.

"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.

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

Classic Machu Picchu Trek ("Inca Trail")

2023 Dates: August 22 – August 30, 2023
Landcost: \$3,900
Single supplement: \$500 (in hotels and tents as available)

Costs included: IMG leader and local staff including local lead guide/cultural expert, cook, cook staff, porters (or horse packing); group camping gear; private tours as described in itinerary; transfers to/from Cusco airport and return; entrance fees for all cultural touring sites; shared hotel accommodations in three-star hotels (or better) with continental breakfast; three meals a day except in Cusco (welcome dinner on Day 2 and breakfasts included in Cusco).

Costs not included: airline tickets, trail snacks, bottled water, beverages or alcoholic drinks, lunches and dinners in Cusco (welcome dinner on Day 2 included), single hotel accommodations, required [Travel Insurance](#).

Fitness

Most of the trek days typically require long hiking days, 6-10 hours of effort, with the bulk of our gear carried by porters. All mornings usually start early and the day's journey often takes until dinner time. 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 at least six months prior to trip departure. All participants must consult with their medical professional regarding their personal health and the additional demands of high altitude, well in advance of the trip.

Prerequisites

Participants should have solid hiking experience over steep rugged terrain and good all-around fitness. High altitude experience is not required, but is beneficial, to confirm that your body can reasonably tolerate visits to 10,000 feet and higher. All members must be vaccinated for Covid.

REQUIRED early signup deadline for 2023.

The Peruvian government has placed a daily limit on the number of trekkers allowed to walk the Classic Inca trail. Registration is first come first served.

Schedule for payments and paperwork

To get confirmed on the 2023 IMG Machu Picchu Trek program, please submit your [IMG Forms](#) with application fee and good quality color scan of the first two pages of your passport (please be sure there is at least 6 months of validity from the start date of your program). The [Balance of Fees](#) will be due 120 days before departure and the [Physician's Certificate](#) is due 60 days before departure. We'll follow up with additional information regarding travel and preparations.

Fee Payment Schedule	
Application Fee (due at registration)	\$1,500
120 days before departure	\$Balance of fees

REQUIRED Insurance

IMG requires that all trip participants purchase [Travel Insurance](#) that includes coverage for medical evacuation, repatriation and medical expenses for the duration of their IMG program. Trip Cancellation and Interruption Insurance is strongly recommended.

Machu Picchu Classic Inca Trail EXPANDED ITINERARY

Our trip to Peru will be an amazing experience, 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. *This 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.*

- Travel** Depart from home and fly to Lima, Peru. You can arrive to Lima in the evening and overnight at the airport (at your expense) or arrive early morning on June 29 and wait at the airport for your connection to Cusco. Note: some people prefer to arrive **an extra day early in Cusco** and spend an additional day there. This helps with acclimatization and it's easy to arrange an extra day of touring in Cusco if you wish.
- Aug 22** Once in Lima, we'll transfer to a mid-morning domestic flight to Cusco (10,988') (consult with IMG regarding the flight number) arriving by mid-day. Members will be met at the airport and transported to the hotel. Rest and relaxation will be in order, focusing on acclimatization. Our local guide will meet us after check in, make arrangements at a local restaurant for lunch (not included), and conduct a short afternoon tour. The team will meet at 6pm for a briefing on what to expect in the coming days. A team welcome dinner will follow (included).
- Aug 23** The goal today will be to take it slow and easy, for acclimatization, while taking in the sights around Cuzco. We'll visit the Plaza de Armas at the center of town, the Cathedral, local markets, and the local ruins of Sacsayhuaman.
- Aug 24** Departing Cusco we head for the famous 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.
- Aug 25** Rise around 4:30-5 AM, have a quick breakfast in our hotel, then our bus will take us to the trailhead (2,400m or 7,872'). After meeting and introductions with the porter crew our team will do the check in with the Park where our permits are verified. Then, we are off! The first day is about 8 miles with an hour or more break halfway up for a cooked lunch, and then on to our tent camp at Llullchapampa (3,600m or 11,808'). Figure on 6-8 hours of trekking on this day. There will be awesome views well worth the effort.
- Aug 26** Wake up by 7 latest, then start trekking out of the light woodland. The trail continues to climb upwards beyond Llupachayoc, up steeper trail and LOTS of 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' and then descends down a bit into the small valley of Pacamayo. This is a 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 up the pass and descent down the other side requires good endurance and a steady, all day pace.

- Aug 27** Another early wakeup. 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," (12,200') and, just beyond it, an Inca ruin, Phuyupatamarca ("Cloud-level Town"). We will camp at the high pass with a spectacular 360 degree panorama, or just down on the other side, depending on our camp assignment.
- Aug 28** This morning be prepared for a pre-dawn wakeup and hike to the gate for admittance to the final leg of the hike to Machu Picchu. Our porters will leave us here and carry our personal gear down to the town of Aguas Calientes where it will be waiting for us. 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 steep stone steps leading upwards into a small stone structure. This is **Intipunku**, the famous "Sun Gate" 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 midafternoon to explore the area. Our cultural guide will take us for a general tour of the area, explaining Machu Picchu's highlights. Following the tour, there will be time for individual exploration and photography. After the tour, we'll await a bus for our trip down the mountain and walk to lunch in town, then check-in to our hotel in Aguas Calientes, a tourist mecca below the Machu Picchu ruins. Overnight in hotel.
- Aug 29** A great advantage of this itinerary is that we have a **SECOND** day to tour Machu Picchu if members wish. This is a great time to climb Huayna Picchu in the early morning for those that are willing and able. Others may choose to wander Machu Picchu on their own, for more photo and sightseeing opportunities. Some members may opt for sleeping in and some morning shopping/sightseeing in Aguas Calientes. We'll all meet after lunch then begin the journey back to Cusco, starting on the train for the first part of the journey, then by private bus for the rest of the way to Cusco where we will enjoy a final night on the town.
- Aug 30** Depart Cuzco on flight to Lima, then connect to flight from Lima to USA
- Travel** Flights generally arrive early in the U.S., which leaves plenty of time to make final connections for flight home. Arrive home by mid-afternoon.

"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.

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

Machu Picchu Personal Equipment and Clothing List

Note: During the trek, each member will be allowed 7 Kilos (about 15 pounds) of personal gear to be carried by a porter on the Inca Trail. This normally includes your sleeping bag, change of clothes for Aguas Calientes at the end of the trail, insulated parka, extra snacks, limited toiletries, camp shoes and extra hiking socks.

In your pack each day you will carry rain gear (jacket and pants), extra insulating layers, two water bottles, snacks for the day, sun hat, sun glasses, sun screen, warm hat, gloves and camera.

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 wool/synthetic blend 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. Make sure you have one extra pair of pants on the trek, reserved for your arrival in the town of Aguas Calientes. It is nice to have a clean pair of clothes after checking in to the hotel at the end of the trek!
- Underwear (2-3 pair for trail use)

UPPER BODY:

- Long john top (1 lightweight, 1 medium—zip neck is best)
- Soft shell or fleece jacket
- Waterproof/breathable rain jacket with hood
- Down or synthetic parka (REQUIRED, but reasonably light in weight)
- T-shirt (synthetic is best). Bring at least two, one extra shirt to wear when you arrive at the hotel at the end of the trek.

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 with a compression stuff bag). A down bag is usually much lighter and more compact than an equally rated synthetic bag.
- Sleeping pad. An inflatable, 1 ½” insulated sleeping pad is provided for each member of the trek. This is sufficient for most, no need to bring another. If you really want extra padding underneath, bring a very lightweight inflatable pad like the Therm-a-Rest NeoAir.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Pack (medium size, internal frame, in the range of 25 to 45 liters; 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 1-2 large garbage bags for the same purpose)
- Adjustable ski poles (baskets are NOT required on the poles, but the poles MUST have tip guards (for the Inca Trail only) to help protect the ancient stone steps from wear.
- large stuff sacks (2; for packing clothes and bulk of personal lunch; to keep things organized and dry)
- Small stuff bag (for daily lunch)
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream (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 (1 roll in Ziploc bag; plus personal hygiene wipes)
- Garbage bags (4 large, heavy duty; 30+ gal; use one to line your pack and the others to protect the contents of your duffel; it's an excellent way to keep your gear dry. At camps, put your boots in one. Extra bags are ALWAYS GOOD!)
- Headlight (LED with 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, blister pads, non-prescription pain meds and anti inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen. Pepto Bismol tablets are helpful for dealing with minor stomach distress. Imodium is good for diarrhea. Consult with your doctor about the trip and travel at altitude and bring any recommended prescription drugs **in original prescription bottles**. Talk with your doctor about bringing Acetazolamide (Diamox) in 125mg or 250mg tabs to aid in acclimatization. Required: one course of general antibiotic for the treatment of respiratory and GI problems (for example an Azithromycin "Z-Pak").
- Water purification tablets, Iodine or Chlorine Dioxide (1 bottle or approx. 20 tabs) for backup water treatment. Your trail cook will boil all drinking water issued to the group and your guide will carry a portable water filter just in case.
- Insect repellent (a high concentration of DEET is most effective. The bugs, in general, are not bad, but best to be safe!)
- Travel toothbrush & paste
- Lightweight day pack. Optional, but recommended for air travel & general walking in town and touring the grounds of Machu Picchu—lightweight with few frills, 20 liters or less.
- Lunch (for on and off mountain, to supplement provided lunches). Please bring a variety of non-perishable foods weighing in total no more than 5 lbs. You can supplement this some with local foods, candies, and fresh fruits. 3 bars/items per day X 4 trekking days is sufficient. Lunch ideas include: string cheese, beef jerky, dried fruit, candy bars (chocolate may melt), energy bars, hard candies, nuts, electrolyte replacement drink mix (several quarts repackaged into a Ziploc bag). Salty snacks are often appreciated.

IN TOWN:

- Passport/Visa
- International shot record and proof of Covid vaccination
- Money (\$150 for the local staff tips, plus \$500+ for misc. drinks, some meals, travel, gifts and extras. Bring some smaller bills, like \$5's and \$10's) ATM's are available (but limited) in Cusco and Aguas Calientes. Dispensed money is in local currency. Traveler's checks are no longer recommended.

- Credit cards (alert your card carrier that you will be traveling out of country)
- Money belt/neck pouch
- Running/tennis shoes (use as camp shoes)
- Socks; cotton or synthetic, for travel (3)
- Small vial of liquid biodegradable soap (for clothes)
- Underwear (3-4)
- Toiletries (be sure to keep it light here)
- Cotton pants or synthetic travel pants (2)
- Dress/sport shirts (1-2)
- T-shirts or short sleeve travel shirts (2-3)
- Small to medium size duffel bag, lightweight but durable (for air travel and porter carry during the trek; with small combination TSA lock)
- Large duffel bag or suitcase (for air travel and to store gear at hotel; small combination TSA lock)
- Ear plugs (for the tent)

OPTIONAL:

- Smart phone for quick photos and music
- 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. Cusco 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:

If desired, you can donate your worn out clothing and gear to our local guides and staff after the trek—and make your bag lighter for your flight home. 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.

