

THE INCA TRAIL CHALLENGE

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DIFFERENT TRAVEL

About Peru

At 1,285,215 square kms, Peru is the third largest country in South America and five times larger than the UK. Geographically, Peru can be split into three regions: the Andes Mountains, the Amazonian lowlands and the Pacific coastal strip. Peru borders Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and the western strip hugs the



Pacific Ocean. The country possesses an enormous biological diversity and the flora and fauna are largely determined by the Andes and the Amazon River. Peru's population of 28 million can be said to be bi-cultural in that there are two distinct cultural groups. The mestizo (indigenous and mixed Spanish descent) and the campesinos (rural Indian highlanders) are culturally quite different. Peru is unequalled in South America for its archaeological and historical wealth and has witnessed many key cultures and civilisations although the most well known is the Incas, even though it was only dominant for around 100

years. The Inca Empire was brought to an abrupt end when the Spanish invaded in 1532 and by 1535 Lima had replaced Cuzco as the capital. The 2007 elections saw Alan García take the presidency for a second time (having previously led the country in the 80s) when he replaced Alejandro Toledo (Peru's first democratically elected Indian leader). Peru is still crippled by high unemployment, poverty and strikes.

The Inca Trail Challenge promises a journey into magnificent lost cities, astounding natural diversity and the opportunity to make a positive contribution to one of the world's poorer countries.

Lima

Built on the banks of the Rio Rimac, Lima was founded by the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535. The city is one of stark contrasts where sprawling slums encroach on splendid colonial buildings; a city of colonial charm and the vibrant vitality of an oriental bazaar. The city's climate is no less dramatic as melancholic cloud covered winters contrast with light warm summers.



Cuzco and the Sacred Valley



Cuzco, once the head of the mighty Inca Empire, is one of the most fascinating and mystical cities in the world. Full of history, dramatic scenery and the host of many fiestas and carnivals, it is the gateway to world heritage listed Machu Picchu. Situated at an altitude of 3,310m it requires time to acclimatise. The city is an eclectic mix of Inca and Spanish architecture. Everywhere you look are remains of original Inca walls, doorways and arches. The Urubamba Valley lies just 15-30 km from this magnificent city. Here one can visit the market town of Pisac with its thriving colourful Indian market. Nearby in the Sacred Valley is the small town of Ollantaytambo nestled at the foot of the spectacular Inca ruins and terraces.

Machu Picchu

For many visitors to South America Machu Picchu tops the list of must-see destinations. The awe inspiring Inca site is instantly recognisable throughout the world and reaching Machu Picchu by foot at a height of 2,380m and first setting eyes on the scene is one of the most tremendous and exhilarating feelings you will ever experience. The lost city of Machu Picchu was hidden by the lush vegetation of this region until 1911 and is probably one of the best-preserved ancient kingdoms in the world. The quality of the buildings and their inaccessibility has inspired numerous theories about their purpose over the years. But perhaps you need to make up your own mind.



Itinerary

Day 1: UK / Lima

Fly from London to Lima. Upon arrival you will be met by your guide and transferred to the hotel. We will have a welcome dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Day 2: Lima – Cuzco

Today we fly to Cuzco (approx 1 hour) and head straight to our hotel. As we are now at an altitude of approx 3399m, it is important to take things easily today. Ideally you should allow the rest of the day for rest, and if you feel up to a gentle stroll later this afternoon, take a slow, gentle walk around Cusco's attractive main square (Plaza de Armas) where you will find many good restaurants and bars, as well as the Cathedral and 'Iglesia de la Merced' church. A cup of coca-leaf tea is also helpful with acclimatization, and it is important to stay well hydrated generally by drinking lots of bottled water.

Days 3-5: Community Project Work

We will be taking part in project work in a small community called Chillipawa, where we will camp for two nights with the community. All your meals will be provided and activities will include assisting in the construction of a medical centre.

Day 6: Cuzco – Inca Trail

We depart Cuzco early this morning (4-4.30am) and drive to Piskacuchu, the starting point of the Inca Trail for a four day hike to Machu Picchu. We set out on foot crossing the bridge over the Urubamba River and walk along its left bank as it flows northwest through the Sacred Valley. The terrain is flat as we arrive in Miskay (2800m/9184ft), before climbing to a perfectly placed vantage point to see the impressive Inca city of Llactapata (2650m/8692ft). The group continues trekking along the Kusichaca River Valley gradually climbing for about five hours until reaching the community of Wayllabamba (3000m/9840ft), where we set up our first camp.

Day 7: Inca Trail

Today our hike takes us to Pacaymayo. After an early breakfast (approx. 6am) we begin the most difficult part of the trek consisting of an abrupt and steep 9 km ascent. On the way to the first mountain pass (the Abra Warmihuañusca, or 'Dead Woman's Pass' – 4200m/13776ft) we should be able to see domesticated llamas and alpacas grazing on ichu, one of the few plants growing at high altitude. We traverse an area of the so called 'cloud forest', home to a variety of birds as well as the Andean bear. Immediately after the pass we descend into Pacaymayo Valley (3600m/11808ft), where we make camp after a taxing 7 hours hiking.

N.B. Trekkers are advised that on this day you should stock your daypacks with sweets and chocolates in order to keep your sugar levels high and help with altitude sickness.

Day 8: Inca Trail

From our camp site at Pacaymayo we climb to the second pass, the Abra Runkurakay (3970m/13022ft), stopping halfway to visit a small oval structure believed to be an ancient watchtower. We then descend towards Yanacocha (Black Lagoon) and enter the cloud forest to finally arrive at Sayacmarca (3624m/11887ft). This is a beautiful complex made up of a semicircular construction, with enclosures at different levels, narrow streets, liturgical fountains, patios and irrigation canals.

Continuing up an easy climb, we arrive at the third pass, the Abra Phuyupatamarca (3700m/12136ft). Here one can appreciate the magnitude of the Incas' ancient craft by walking along paths carved from the

mountain. We then pass through an Inca tunnel to arrive at the aforementioned pass and down to the complex of the same name. This is one of the most complete and best-preserved archaeological complexes along the Inca Trail, and is located on the highest point of the mountain. Curiously, Phuyupatamarca means 'town above the clouds'. From above, one can observe a sophisticated and sacred complex made up of water fountains with solid foundations, and also impressive views of the Urubamba River Valley. We continue our trek down the stone steps to Wiñaywayna (2650m/8692ft), an impressive Inca complex made up of an agricultural centre with numerous terraces, a temple complex and an urban area. This campsite hosts a trekker lodge, a bar and bathrooms with hot shower facilities. After visiting the impressive archaeological site we enjoy a farewell dinner at our camp.

Day 9: Inca Trail – Machu Picchu

Another early start as we set out for Machu Picchu at 4am. After an hour's climb we reach the amazing Intipunku, or Sun Gate. From this fabulous spot, we can watch the sun rise over the sacred citadel of Machu Picchu. We then walk down in to Machu Picchu and 40 minutes later enter the citadel from the highest point through the 'House of the Guardians'. From here we go to the reception area to register, leave our backpacks and embark on a comprehensive 2-hour guided tour of the Inca citadel. Later there will be free time to explore the Temple of the Moon or the fabulous Inca Bridge. You can also climb the Huayna Picchu Mountain that overlooks the site. It can be reached by climbing steps that take around 90 minutes and the view is superlative.

In the afternoon we regroup in the town of Aguas Calientes where we can have a city tour or simply relax in its hot springs. We spend the night at a hotel in Aguas Calientes.

Day 10: Machu Picchu - Cuzco

This morning is free to either relax or explore the ruins of Machu Picchu further. In the afternoon we return to Cuzco by train arriving after nightfall and transferring directly to the hotel.

Day 11: Cuzco – Lima - London

Today we transfer to Cuzco airport for our flight to Lima where the rest of the day is at leisure for personal activities, shopping and sightseeing until it is time to transfer to the airport for the return flight to London (arriving the following day).

BEFORE YOU GO: AN A-Z OF INFORMATION ON PERU

A is for Arrival. Upon arrival visitors are normally given permission to stay for up to a maximum of 90 days. You should keep the immigration paper given to you on arrival in a safe place as you will need to show this upon departure. We recommend that your passport should have a remaining validity of at least six months after departure.

A is also for Altitude. Most people will encounter some symptoms to varying degrees including: headache, nausea, vomiting, lack of appetite, insomnia, fatigue, dehydration. When you arrive at a place of high altitude you should have lots of rest, and avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and heavy food. Keeping hydrated is very important with acclimatization.

B is for Begging. You can expect to be asked for '*propina*' (pennies) from very persistent children (and occasionally adults) in Peru. Groups of children around the Plaza de Armas in Cusco will try to sell you postcards or finger puppets. However, please do not hand out money and gifts to the children it can lead to reliance on tourists for income.

C is for Communications. The country code from UK to Peru is +51. The country has a comprehensive mobile phone network across the country. It is thus quite likely that your mobile phone will work. Remember your charger and to switch to the international roaming option with your phone provider. Whilst in the hotel you may access the internet and e-mail and cyber cafes have sprung up in major towns and cities usually costing around US\$1 / hour.

D is for Dehydration. This is a potential problem and you must bring a good supply of rehydration salts with you. Walking in the heat and at high altitude puts you at greater risk of dehydration. You can buy the small packets from chemists in different flavours and just add the powder to quantity of water mentioned on the packet.

D is also for Day pack. Throughout the trek your day pack is your responsibility. What's more you will carry

your own so please don't make it too heavy. We recommend a 25-30 litre pack with your essentials inside. Even with essentials, your daypack could weigh up to 10kgs. You will not have access to your main pack, so will need to pack waterproofs, fleece, sun hat, gloves, warm hat, sun cream, 3 litre water bottle, tissues and packed lunch. You may also wish to bring your camera, memory cards and spare batteries.

D is also for Dietary Requirements. The majority of special diets, such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, etc, can be catered for. Please ensure that you notify us of any dietary requirements at the time of booking or as soon as possible.

D is also for Discount. We have teamed up with [Nomad Travel and Outdoors](#) to offer you a 10% discount on travel kit and vaccinations from any of their stores nationwide, or for kit online. The code will be given to you upon booking.

D is also for Departure Tax. Peru charges tourists leaving the country a departure tax of US\$31.00 which must be paid, in cash, at the airport (price correct at time of writing).

E is for Etiquette. Always endeavour to be polite and respectful and take your lead from the local people around you in terms of what is acceptable or not. Peru is a bicultural society where what may be culturally appropriate for the 'mestizo' is rude or offensive to the 'campesinos' so you need to be extra sensitive. When in public places or during project work, long shorts and a t-shirt would be fine but you should respect the preferences and cultural norms of those around you – i.e. no bikinis, hot pants, halter neck tops etc! If you show respect then it will be reciprocated.

E is also for Expenses. In particular porters' tips (min 175 Peruvian Soles per person to share between the porters/guides), laundry, drinks, food for meals not included, personal spending money, personal equipment, souvenirs and tips.

F is for Food. Peruvian food can be characterised along the lines of the diversity of climate: along the coast seafood is highly desirable; in the highlands there are many local delicacies from corn and potatoes as well as wonderful soups. In both hotels and on the street there will be a wide variety of food although during the trek the food will be more limited. The experienced team of chefs are all restaurant-trained and able to prepare both local and international dishes. The porters carry both a kitchen tent and dining tent with tables and chairs.

F is also for Fitness. This tour is classified as moderate to challenging and a good general level of fitness is required. You should start a programme of body conditioning before your departure including walking and cardiovascular workouts to improve both your stamina and your ability to walk up and down gradients. DTC has the right to refuse anyone who they feel is not fit enough for the challenge.

H is for Haggling. Whilst you are working with the local community this should not be an issue. However if you are considering someone's financial request you should have a chat with DTC ground staff before committing.

H is also for Health. You must seek medical advice at least 8 weeks before travelling and to ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up to date. You may also need anti-malarials. For further information, contact your GP.

See <http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk> or visit the Department of Health's website at: www.dh.gov.uk for general information about travel health.

I is for Insurance. Different Travel will do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. However, certain risks are involved and should be recognised by participants. Thus, we highly recommend the purchase of short-term travel insurance for our expeditions. Travel Insurance is a cost effective way to protect yourself and your equipment in the event of problems due to canceled trips, delays, medical problems, baggage loss or damage. **Medical insurance** is an absolute necessity. Ensure you inform the insurance company concerned of your intention to trek in Peru as some policies have a different rate for treks.

L is for Language. The main languages of Peru are Spanish and Quechua (the preferred indigenous language of the Highland areas). You could also consider taking up a short Spanish language course before your trip. Here are a few useful phrases & numbers in Spanish:

Hola, como esta/estas? - Hello how are you?

Muy bien gracias - I'm fine

Por favor - Please
Bueno - Good
Malo – Bad
Permiso - Excuse me
Muchas gracias- Thanks a lot
Adios/ chao- Goodbye
Si - Yes
No – No
Lo siento mucho - I am very sorry
1 – uno/una, 2 – dos, 3 – tres, 4 – cuatro, 5 – cinco, 6 – seis, 7 – siete, 8 – ocho, 9 – nueve, 10 – diez.

M is for Money. The unit of currency is the Nuevo Sol which is divided up into 100 centimos (cents). Try to break down notes wherever possible as there always seems to be a shortage of smaller denominations. The US dollar is the other main currency but only crisp, clean notes will be accepted so do take good care of them. ATM machines are generally available and dispense both Soles or Dollars and you might consider using this method of payment rather than a credit card as the commission is often 8-12%. Travellers cheques (American Express is widely accepted) are safer than cash to carry around but also have high commission rates (1-3%).

P is for Porters and horsemen. These members are an essential element of any trek party. The porters carry all the collective equipment and often depart before the main group to ensure the campsite is prepared for the group's arrival. In total porters carry no more than 20kg which is stipulated in the regulations. They are provided with accommodation, food and a life insurance policy. They are trained in first aid and rescue techniques.

R is for Religion. The Inca religion was displaced by Roman Catholicism from the 16th century onwards. Today the official statistics are that around 93% of the population is Catholic. In reality for the majority religious life means a mixture of Catholic beliefs and indigenous beliefs based on animism and deity worship.

S is for Safety. Peru recognises that tourism plays an important part in its developing economy and has taken great steps in the last few years to change its poor security record. You'll find a lot more police, especially plain clothed officers, in the towns and cities most frequently visited by tourists. Although assaults are rare, theft can be prevalent. What Peruvian thieves are expert at, however, is making the most of a good opportunity – a moment's lapse in a tourist's concentration is their business. Long bus trips, crowded streets and packed trains are all their territory. So the message is – be alert and exercise common sense.

T is for Tipping. It is recommended you tip your porters a minimum of 175 Peruvian Soles and your tour leader at your discretion.

T is also for Trek Equipment.

- **Sleeping bag.** A sleeping bag is not provided so you will need to bring your own. You need a sleeping bag with a comfort range of -10°C to 5°C is suitable for most people as nights can fall below freezing but also be as warm as 5°C depending on the altitude. A fleece liner is also recommended in combination with the sleeping bag. This gives extra warmth to those who get cold and night, and for those who get hot at night, they can unzip the sleeping bag slightly and still be covered and keep warm.
- **Insulation Mat.** A foam sleeping pad is provided by the trail company but you should consider bringing your own. A blow up variety or 'Thermarest' is a great idea.
- **Jacket.** Your jacket for the trek should be windproof and fleece-lined if possible. An outer waterproof breathable jacket is also advisable along with waterproof trousers. Plastic ponchos can be bought cheaply in Cuzco.
- **Tents.** These will be provided by the tour operator. 4-person capacity tents will be used to sleep 2 people for extra comfort and for safe storage of your rucksack. The tents are highly maintained to ensure excellent performance.
- **Torch/head torch.** This is an absolute necessity. An LED head torch is best as the ones which use standard bulbs are not bright enough. Remember to also bring spare batteries.
- **Kit bag.** You will need a trek kit bag which will be carried by the porters. This will contain all your luggage required for the trek. It must be strong, light and waterproof. The North Face Base Camp 70litre duffle bag is an example of a decent kit bag. It is also handy to bring some big plastic

bags to put particular items inside (such as your sleeping bag) in case of poor weather. The weight limit for the porters to carry is 15kg per person including sleeping bag and mat.

- **Gloves.** You should consider taking a pair of gloves for the trek as the nights at high altitude are very cold.
- **Nibbles.** High energy snacks, chocolate and sweets are essential during your trek. Dried fruit, nuts – especially walnuts and almonds, Kendal mint cake, bananas, popcorn, energy bars such as Mulebar, Clif bars, etc.
- **First Aid Kit.** See First Aid Kit list at end of itinerary.

W is for Water. You should bring water purification with you for your trek. By refilling bottles with purified water you are also making less of an impact on the environment because you are not throwing away lots of plastic bottles. A highly recommended purification is 'Biox Aqua Drops' which contains chlorine dioxide. This leaves water free of any chemical taste and is extremely effective at killing 99.9% of all known bacteria, cysts and other water-borne parasites.

If you are considering using a filter method of purification, please bear in mind that you cannot measure how many litres you are purifying, and if you are not careful, your filter could run out, and you could end up drinking dirty water.

Please also note that the use of iodine as a purification method has now been restricted due to long term impacts on health. Please do not use iodine to purify your water. You may also wish to consider taking some powdered fruit juice, as this will make the water taste nice and encourage you to keep hydrated.

W is for Weather. Peru is divided up into three distinct geographical regions: the coast, the mountain highlands and the jungle. For our purposes we only need concern ourselves with the first two categories. The highlands, that include Cuzco, have a wet and dry season. The dry season lasts from mid-April to October and the wet from November to mid-April. The coastal region enjoys summertime from December to April. Temperatures on average range from 25 – 35°C. From May to November the temperature drops a bit and you'll find blankets of sea mist engulfing the coast from the south right up to about 200 km north of Lima.

Packing List

Essentials

- Tickets (or e-tickets)
- Passport & copy
- Money
- Sunglasses
- Diary/Notepad and pen
- Sewing kit
- Adaptor - two flat pins (USA) and two round pins (European)
- Head torch
- Spare bulb/batteries
- Books/Playing cards

Clothing

- Flip flops /Trekking sandals
- Trainers
- Walking boots/shoes
- T-shirts/Vests x 2
- Long (or convertible) trousers x 2
- Long sleeve top/shirt x 2
- Shorts
- Long sleeve thermal vest
- Long thermal trousers
- Warm Jacket
- Breathable waterproof jacket
- Breathable waterproof trousers
- Underwear/socks
- Swimwear
- Sun hat

Eating and Drinking

- 2-litre personal water bottle (e.g. Platypus)
- Energy snacks (dried fruit/nuts/glucose sweets etc)
- Powdered fruit juice
- Water purification (Biox Aqua drops recommended)

First Aid Kit

- Prescription medicine
- Painkillers
- Plasters
- Blister spray/blister plasters
- Insect repellent containing 50% DEET
- Anti-histamine
- Kaolin/lomotil/ Imodium (loperamide)
- Rehydration mixture
- Lip balm with SPF protection
- Scissors/tweezers
- Calamine lotion
- Antiseptic cream/powder
- Antifungal cream/powder
- Throat lozenges
- Decongestant

Hygiene

- Wash bag & kit
- Personal toiletries
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Multi purpose travel wash
- Travel towel
- Wet wipes
- Antiseptic hand gel
- Sun cream (high SPF)
- Sanitary towels/tampons/MoonCup
- Spare glasses/ contact lenses

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag with a comfort range of at least -10
- Sleeping bag liner (preferably thermal)
- Ear plugs
- Eye mask

Luggage

- Large rucksack (50-70 litres)
- Daypack (25-30 litres)

Optional

- Camera
- Video Camera
- Chargers
- Films/batteries/memory stick
- Binoculars
- Mobile phone + charger
- MP3 player/walkman
- Work gloves
- Protective footwear

If there are any questions or queries regarding the items on this list, please feel free to contact on info@different-travel.com

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