

Machu Picchu Trek

Itinerary dates: October 14 - 22, 2018

Tour Escort: Beth Whitman

HIGHLIGHTS

- Choose from either the one-day trek OR the four-day Inca Trail **trek to Machu Picchu**
- Take an early morning **guided tour** of Machu Picchu once you've accomplished trekking to the top
- Enjoy a **walking tour of Cusco**, an ancient town central to the Inca Empire
- Soak up the **Sacred Valley** and see **traditional handicrafts** at a local farm/shop and at markets
- Returning WanderTours participants receive a **5% discount on land cost**

The adventure starts in Lima on October 14. Consider arriving a day or two early in case of flight delays, to explore Lima on your own, to shake off jet lag and to start getting acclimated to the altitude (Lima is 5,080 feet). We can book additional nights at the hotel for you.

ITINERARY

Day 1

Sunday, October 14, 2018 – Lima

Meals: n/a

Upon arrival in Lima, you'll be met by our driver and taken to the hotel.

Overnight at [Casa Andina Select](#) in Lima.

Day 2

Monday, October 15, 2018 – Lima – Cusco

Meals: Breakfast

After an early breakfast, we'll head to the airport for our short flight (1.5 hours) to **Cusco**, considered by the Incas to be the **belly button of the world!** Upon arrival, we'll be met by our driver and taken to the hotel to check in and grab a bite to eat (lunch is on our own as there are many restaurants near the hotel).

In the afternoon, we'll take a **walking tour** of Cusco, the **ancient capital of the Inca Empire** with its fascinating fusion of **Inca and Spanish cultures**. We'll visit **La Catedral**, the most important **religious building** in the city, before visiting **Koricancha Temple** (also spelled Qorikancha or Coricancha), an ancient Inca palace once covered with gold. A short walk through the streets brings us to the **San Blas neighborhood**, home of Cusco artists, craftsmen and our hotel!

Overnight at [Hotel San Agustin](#) in Cusco.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** Visiting Koricancha will be a highlight of this day, considered the **most important temple of the Inca Empire**. Gold sheets weighing more than four pounds each lined the walls at the height of its popularity.

Day 3

Tuesday, October 16, 2018 – Cusco

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today we'll head through the **Sacred Valley of the Incas** on our way to the village of **Pisac**. Along the way, we'll visit **Awana Kancha**, a handicrafts store specializing in beautiful **handmade wool products**. The store is located on a farm where we'll see llamas, vicuña and guanaco, as well as both suri and huacayo alpacas. In Pisac, we'll visit the **local market** and have a chance to soak up the **enchanting atmosphere** of the Andes.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we'll go onward to **Ollantaytambo**, an Inca military, religious and agricultural center built on a mountain summit. Here, we'll see the narrow streets of the eponymous village, together with canals unchanged since the Inca Empire.

Overnight at [Pakaritampu](#) in the Sacred Valley.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** **Ollantaytambo** (also known as Ollanta) was the royal estate of Emperor Pachacuti who conquered the region in the mid-15th century. While the **ruins are well worth a visit**, the area is best known for its gateway to Machu Picchu.

On Day 4, the group will split up between those wanting to trek the four days to Machu Picchu (Group 1) and those wanting to take the train and trek for just one day (Group 2).

Day 4 (Group 1)

Wednesday, October 17, 2018 – Cusco – Huayllabamba

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Route: Sacred Valley – Piscacucho – Huayllabamba – Pacaymayo – Wiñaywayna – Machu Picchu

This route follows the **trail of the Incas** that leads toward Machu Picchu Sanctuary. During our **four days of trekking**, we'll feel as though we're part of the Andean world as we'll visit archaeological sites while also experiencing the region's varied ecosystem. Our **highest pass will be 13,779 feet** before descending through the cloud forest (low hanging fog found in tropical mountain forests) and the entrance to Machu Picchu.

In the early morning, we'll drive to the trail head (commonly referred to as KM 82) at the Cusco-Machu Picchu railroad. This is the start of our journey by foot on the **Inca Trail** to Machu Picchu! We'll begin by following the Urubamba River to the first archaeological site, **Llaqtapata**. We'll have lunch and a rest here in a beautiful setting before continuing into the valley where we'll start to gain altitude in the **Piscacucho Valley**. We'll stop for the day in **Huayllabamba** where we'll camp for the night at 9,694 feet.

Overnight in a tent at Huayllabamba.

Altitude at camp: 9,694 feet, Hiking time: 5 – 6 hours, Distance: 7.5 miles

Day 5 (Group 1)

Thursday, October 18, 2018 – Huayllabamba – Pacaymayo

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After a hearty breakfast, we'll start our ascent to the highest pass on our trail: **Warmiwañusca** at just under 14,000 feet. The climb up will take us most of the morning. This is where we'll have some of the best views of the **Vilcabamba and Vilcanota Ranges**. We'll have lunch along the way before descending about two hours down to the valley and on to our next camp, Pacaymayo at 11,480 feet.

Overnight in a tent at Pacaymayo.

Altitude at camp: 11,480 feet, Hiking time: 6 – 7 hours, Distance: 6.84 miles

Day 6 (Group 1)

Friday, October 19, 2018 – Pacaymayo – Wiñaywayna

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today is going to be our most diverse day on the Inca Trail. We'll start in the morning with the **ascent of our second pass, Runcuracay**, at 12,303 feet. It will then take us about two hours to descend to Sayacmarca, a stunning archaeological site.

We'll have some time to explore this area before we continue on a stone path originally used by the Incas. We'll pass through semi-tropical cloud forest and over our **third pass, Phuyupatamarca**, at 11,712 feet. With good weather, we'll have **spectacular views** of the surrounding snowy peaks as well as the valley below. From this pass, we'll descend to our camp at Wiñaywayna. This is one of the most **beautiful sites** that we'll visit.

Overnight in a tent at Wiñaywayna.

Altitude at camp: 8,692 feet, Hiking time: 8 – 9 hours, Distance: 10 miles

Day 7 (Group 1)

Saturday, October 20, 2018 – Wiñaywayna – Machu Picchu – Cusco

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we'll have an early breakfast and then hike another two hours through cloud forest to the famous **Sun Gate**, Intipunku. This is where we'll have our first breathtaking view and best panorama of the **iconic Machu Picchu**. A short walk brings us down to the site (yay!). We'll then have the chance to wander (and celebrate our accomplishment) around the **lost city of the Incas** before we board our bus for Aguas Calientes where our hotel is located.

We'll join Group 2 for dinner and overnight at [Casa Del Sol Boutique Hotel](#) in Aguas Calientes. Highest altitude: 8,964 feet, Hiking time: 2 hours, Distance: 2.5 miles



HIGHLIGHT! Your first view of Machu Picchu will be **all that you had expected** after so many years of seeing it in photos or on TV. In person, it just might take your breath away.

At the end of Day 7, both groups will meet up in Aguas Caliente at the hotel.

If you'd prefer the **one-day trip to Machu Picchu**, this is for you! Rather than four days of trekking and three nights of camping, you'll have a chance to **tour around Cusco and the Sacred Valley** before taking the **train and short hike** to the Sun Gate and Machu Picchu. Note that this group will be with a local guide only and not the Tour Escort (Beth).

Day 4 (Group 2)

Wednesday, October 17, 2018 – Cusco

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

After breakfast, those not hiking the full Inca Trail will set off for the geometric salt pans of **Maras**. The salt in this region has been harvested since the time of the Inca Empire. It continues to produce what many consider to be the finest salt in the world. To this day, it is only sold in small batches by local families at the nearby market.

On this day, we'll also visit the **terraces of Moray**, where several circular depressions are found (the deepest is 98 feet) that provide a view of the **Urubamba Valley**.

We'll have lunch at a local restaurant before going onward to the village of **Chincho**. This picturesque village was an important Inca center and is known for **traditional Andean weaving techniques** still used to this day. In the town square, we'll find the locals wearing traditional clothes and selling local handicrafts.

Tonight we'll have dinner on our own with the chance to explore the area where there are many options.

Overnight at [Pakaritampu](#) in the Sacred Valley.

 **HIGHLIGHT!** Each layer of the concentric circles of Moray has its own **microclimate**. It's theorized that these were used as a **botanical laboratory** by the Incas to determine the best conditions for which grow specific crops.

Day 5 (Group 2)

Thursday, October 18, 2018 – Sacred Valley

Meals: Breakfast

Today, we'll limber up our legs and take an **easy half-day hike** in preparation for our Machu Picchu climb. We'll first drive to the town of **Yucay** where we'll begin our hike to the **Incan terraces and aqueducts**.

Once there, we'll be able to appreciate the enormous Incan **walls surrounded by aqueducts**. We'll follow the path that reaches the highest point of the citadel and another path that will take us to **ancient wall paintings**. We'll then return to Yucay.

Tonight we'll have **dinner on our own** with the chance to explore the area where there are many dining options.

Overnight at [Pakaritampu](#) in the Sacred Valley.

Day 6 (Group 2)
Friday, October 19, 2018 – Sacred Valley
Meals: Breakfast

On this day, you'll have the opportunity to **choose from several optional activities**. The full list is coming soon but your choice(s) don't need to be made until a few weeks prior to the tour.

Tonight we'll once again have **dinner on our own** with the chance to explore the area where there are many dining options.

Overnight at [Pakaritampu](#) in the Sacred Valley.

Day 7 (Group 2)
Saturday, October 20, 2018 – Sacred Valley
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today is the big day to hike to **Machu Picchu!**

After an early breakfast, we'll depart the hotel for the short ride (about 35 minutes) to the Ollantaytambo station to board the 8 a.m. Vistadome train that goes to **Aguas Calientes**. About 1.5 – 2 hours in, we'll disembark to find beautiful views of the Urubamba River and mountains. We'll cross a hanging bridge by foot and continue onward to the **Chachabamba ruins**, believed to have functioned as a secondary gate guarding the entrance to Machu Picchu.

From Chachabamba, we'll continue for about two hours until we descend into a valley where the cloud forest begins to appear.

After lunch at this stop, we'll reach the ruins of **Wiñaywayna**. These are some of the most spectacular ruins on the Inca trail as well as one of the **most important spiritual sights** on the way to Machu Picchu.

Leaving Wiñaywayna, we'll join the classic Inca Trail route and after a few hours walk, arrive at the famous **Sun Gate, Intipunku**. This is where we'll have our first breathtaking view and best panorama of the **iconic Machu Picchu**. A short walk brings us down to the site (yay!). We'll have the chance to wander (and celebrate our accomplishment) around the **lost city of the Incas** before we board our bus for Aguas Calientes where our hotel is located.

We'll join Group 2 for dinner and overnight at [Casa Del Sol Boutique Hotel](#) in Aguas Calientes.

Starting elevation: 7,381 feet, Ending elevation: 7,970 at Machu Picchu, Distance: 8 miles,
Highest elevation: 9,350 feet, Time: 7 – 8 hours

 **HIGHLIGHT!** Your first view of Machu Picchu will be **all that you had expected** after so many years of seeing it in photos or on TV. In person, it just might take your breath away.

Day 8 (Groups 1 and 2)
Sunday, October 21, 2018 – Cusco
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

After breakfast, both groups will return to Machu Picchu (about a 25-minute drive) for a **two-hour guided tour**.

Lunch will be on our own as there are cafes at Machu Picchu as well as in Aguas Calientes. After lunch, we'll take the train (about two hours) back to **Ollantaytambo** and transfer via vehicle another two hours to our hotel in Cusco.

Tonight will be our last evening together so we'll enjoy a final dinner at a local restaurant with a plentiful buffet (including local and international foods) and a lively **folklore show!**

Overnight at [Hotel San Agustin](#) in Cusco.

Day 9 (Groups 1 and 2)
Monday, October 22, 2018 – Cusco – Home
Meals: Breakfast

After breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport for our flight back to Lima.

**** Itinerary subject to change without notice.**