

Peru: Exploring the Incas' Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu

<http://www.kudutravel.com/tours/peru-walking-tour>

24 April – 10 May 2019

Peru marks Kudu Travel's fifth country in South America and our 17-day itinerary concentrates on the Inca and colonial sights in the Andean highlands.

Having familiarised ourselves with the highlights of Lima's historic centre, we start our high-altitude acclimatisation in the city of Arequipa, known for its scenic setting at the foot of a snow-capped volcano and the wealth of colonial era churches and mansions, built in white volcanic stone sillar.

Our next stop is the Colca Canyon, one of the deepest in the world, before we arrive at Lake Titicaca, the high-altitude lake on Peru's border with Bolivia. We board the luxury Belmond Andean Explorer for an overnight journey to Cusco, the capital of the Inca empire and the starting point for our exploration of the Incas' Sacred Valley.

We will be based in stylish and comfortable mountain lodges, run in partnership with local communities, and walk for two to three hours each day, with more or less energetic activities on offer. The remainder of each day allows immersion in the Quechua history and culture.

Itinerary

DAY 1

After meeting at Lima airport in the evening, we have a road transfer (1 hour) to the fashionable Miraflores suburb and our hotel centred around a 1920s Spanish-colonial style mansion, filled with Peruvian art and antiques.

DAY 2

B, L, D included

Plaza Mayor is the heart of this colonial City of the Kings, founded in 1535, and we start our tour of Lima here, taking in the Palace of Government, the seat of political power in Peru since the 16th century; the Cathedral, containing the tomb of Francisco Pizarro, the city's founder, and the picturesque 17th century San Francisco church and convent, built in the earthquake-resistant *quincha*. After lunch, we visit the National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Peru, housed in a building with historic connections to Peru's liberators, Jose de San Martin and Simon Bolivar.

DAY 3

B, L, D included

We transfer to the airport for a mid-morning flight to Arequipa (alt 2,335 m/7,660 ft), our gateway to the Andes. From our 4-star hotel base on the Plaza de Armas, we explore the UNESCO listed Baroque heritage of churches and mansions of this White City on foot. We wander through the maze of the Santa Catalina Convent complex, decorated in Mudejar style. We dine at a *picanteria* to sample some of Arequipa's regional dishes such as the *Rocoto Relleno* (stuffed pepper) or *Chupe de Camarones* (shrimp chowder).

DAY 4

B, L, D included

We head higher into the Andes and after around a 4 hrs' drive through the altiplano and having crossed a 4,900 m/16,000 ft pass, we arrive in the Colca Canyon, reportedly, the

second deepest in the world and twice as deep as the Grand Canyon. At viewpoints overlooking the canyon, we have good chances of close range views of the endangered Andean Condor soaring. In Yanque (3,400 m/11,150 ft), one of the original twelve settlements in the Colca valley, we enjoy a leisurely afternoon in our stylish country lodge (2 nights), with outdoor hot spring pools to allow for adjustment to the altitude.

DAY 5

B, L, D included

We set off on foot from the lodge on an undemanding circular walk (3 hrs). We have views of pre-colonial terraces on the canyon slopes, still used by local farmers to grow potatoes, barley, beans and quinoa, and the surrounding snow-capped peaks. We encounter flocks of alpacas, llamas and sheep. As we pass through the centre of Yanque, we admire the 16th century Franciscan Church of Immaculate Conception.

DAY 6

B, L, D included

On the drive from Colca Valley to Lake Titicaca, we cross the Salinas and Aguada Blanca National Reserve, established in 1979 for the protection of vicuñas and guanaco, the two wild South American camelids. We may see these shy animals, as they feed during the day in the highland grassy plains. We stop on the shore of Lake Umayo at the Sillustani cemetery complex of the ancient Colla people with its *chullpas*, large circular fortified stone burial towers up to 12 m high. Our base on Lake Titicaca (3,810 m/12,500 ft) is a 3-star central hotel in Puno, with spacious rooms.

DAY 7

B, L, D included

We spend the day on Lake Titicaca, travelling by boat. We first visit the floating islands built by the Uros Indians using the totora reed, a native plant of the shallow areas of the Lake. We continue to the fixed island of Taquile to learn about the traditional lifestyle of the industrious Taquileños, based on production of fine textiles and agriculture. Surprisingly, knitting is reserved for men while women do the spinning and weaving.

DAY 8

B, L, D included

We board the luxury Belmond Andean Explorer train at midday and enjoy our first meal on board. Approximately half way between Puno and Cusco, at the La Raya Pass railway station (4,335 m/14,220 ft), we disembark for a short excursion into the surrounding altiplano landscape. Cocktails and dinner are served as the train continues its journey through the Andes.

DAY 9

B, L, D included

We arrive in Cusco (3,400 m/11,150 ft) and disembark at around 8 o'clock after breakfast. We explore this ancient capital of the Inca Empire, starting in Qorikancha, the remains of the legendary 15th century Temple of Gold, notoriously looted by the Spanish conquistadors immediately on their arrival in Cusco. We see the characteristic Inca mortar-less stone walls with trapezoidal apertures, now forming the base of the Santo Domingo Convent. We spend the night in a 4-star hotel converted from a 16th century mansion.

DAY 10

B, L, D included

The Incas' Sacred Valley, called alternatively the Urubamba river valley, is a fertile region with an agreeable climate and has been supplying agricultural produce to Cusco for centuries. Our Mountain Lodges of Peru adventure starts with a transfer to the start of a 3-hr walk. After a

traditional 'Pachamanca' lunch cooked under hot stones, we visit the Pisac citadel ruins. Our mountain lodge tonight is in Lamay (2,950 m/9,700 ft) and, like the next two lodges, is run in partnership with local communities. The lodges are built and furnished to a high standard using traditional materials and techniques and the restaurants serve modern versions of typical regional dishes.

DAY 11

B, L, D included

Our destination today is Huacahuasi (3,800 m/12,500 ft) in the Lares valley. En route, we visit small villages and an off-the-beaten track archaeological site. Our afternoon walk takes approx. 2.5 hrs.

DAY 12

B, L, D included

This morning's walk (3 hrs) starts at the Lares Pass and follows an authentic paved Inca trail along a canyon. After lunch, we visit Ollantaytambo for individual exploration of its picturesque centre, which preserves the original Inca trapezoid street layout.

DAY 13

B, L, D included

An early start allows us to reach the Pinkuylluna granary ruins above Ollantaytambo on foot (1.5 hr round trip), before we visit the unfinished Temple of the Sun within the urban archaeological site. Around midday, we board the train for the 90-minute journey to Machu Picchu, enjoying a picnic en route. The railway station and our exclusive colonial-style hotel (2 nights), with conservation and sustainability credentials, are located in the town of Aguas Calientes, below the Sanctuary itself. The rest of the afternoon is free for relaxation and bird-watching in the hotel's extensive tropical garden.

DAY 14

B, L, D included

We begin our journey to Machu Picchu at dawn to watch day break over the Sun Gate. You are free to spend the morning wandering the Inca citadel or walking to the top of Huyana Picchu, the mountain towering over the site (2.5 hrs round trip). We return to our hotel in the afternoon.

DAY 15

B, L, D included

We enjoy a leisurely morning in the hotel before returning to Cusco via Ollantaytambo by train and bus. We return to our central historic 4-star hotel. We may treat ourselves to a pisco sour cocktail before dinner to celebrate our journey.

DAY 16

B, L, D included

We take a mid-morning flight from Cusco to Lima and transfer to our original hotel. On our foodie walking tour of Miraflores, we learn about and taste classic Peruvian dishes such as *parihuela* (seafood soup), *ceviche* or *seco de cordero* (lamb stew) in selected small restaurants.

DAY 17

B, L included

We visit the privately-owned Larco Herrera museum, housing an impressive collection of Peruvian pre-colonial art in the equally impressive setting of an 18th century mansion built on a 7th century pyramid. After lunch, we travel to the outskirts of Lima to Pachacamac. This ancient sacred site, active for over 2,000 years, is dedicated to the eponymous god, also

known as the Maker of the Earth. Our visit to Peru concludes with a transfer to the airport for evening flights home.

Activity Level Standard

8 walking days (1 – 3 hours daily). More or less energetic activities will be available on walking days. Waterproof boots with good ankle support and robust vibram soles are essential as the terrain is generally rugged. Walking poles are also highly recommended.

Temperatures

The dry season in the Andes starts at the beginning of April. Average April high/low temperatures are 20°C/4°C in Cusco, 17°C/0°C in Puno, 22°C/8°C in Arequipa and 25°C/16°C in Lima.

Accommodation

- 2 + 1 nights in Lima, in a hotel centred around a 1920s Spanish-colonial style mansion, filled with Peruvian art and antiques
- 1 night in Arequipa, in a 4-star hotel on Plaza de Armas
- 2 nights in Yanque (Colca Canyon), in a stylish country lodge with outdoor hot spring pools
- 2 nights in Puno on Lake Titicaca, in a central 3-star hotel
- 1 night on the Belmond Andean Explorer train from Puno to Cusco
- 2 non-consecutive nights in Cusco, in a 4-star hotel converted from a 16th century mansion
- 1 night in Lamay, in a rural lodge built and furnished to a high standard using traditional materials and techniques
- 1 night in Huacahuasi, in a rural lodge run in partnership with the local community
- 1 night in Urubamba, in a rural lodge with a restaurant serving modern versions of typical regional dishes
- 2 nights in Machu Picchu Pueblo (aka Aguas Calientes), in an exclusive colonial-style hotel, with conservation and sustainability credentials and an extensive tropical garden

Trip Price, per person sharing

£6,465.75 until 23rd July 2018

£6,815.25 until 23rd January 2019

<https://www.kudutrail.com/faq#discounts>

£6,640.50 until 23rd October 2018

£6,990 after 23rd January 2019

£1,350 double for single supplement

£1,000 deposit per person

Please note that the single use supplement is imposed by the hotels and not by Kudu Travel. If you are willing to share but no other suitable guest books on the trip, we regret that the supplement will be payable.

Price includes

- all accommodation for Days 1 through 17, on a twin shared basis
- overnight railway journey from Puno to Cusco on the Andean Explorer in a twin cabin
- all meals (with wine at dinner and soft drinks and beer at lunch) as listed in the daily notation
- all land transportation in a private vehicle as described, except during free periods
- scheduled internal flights between Lima and Arequipa and Cusco and Lima
- boat trip on Lake Titicaca as described
- return Inca Rail train journey between Ollantaytambo and Machu Picchu Pueblo (aka Aguas Calientes)

- all entrance and sightseeing fees, except during free periods
- services of specialist local guides and drivers, plus Kudu Travel tour leader
- gratuities for local guides, drivers, hotel and restaurant staff (appreciation for your Kudu tour leader is at your discretion)

Price does not include

- international transportation to and from Lima
- trip cancellation, medical or other insurance
- immunisations, prescriptions or other medical requirements
- passport, visa and health documentation
- personal expenses (laundry, alcohol, other than wine with dinners, free time activities, etc.)
- meals noted as excepted in the daily notation
- transport and transfer of excess baggage
- Peru departure tax, if any

VALUE FOR MONEY - SO MUCH IS INCLUDED

On Kudu trips, you will only need money for postcards, presents to take home, the odd G & T or an irresistible ice cream. Festival and opera tickets, museum and gallery entrances, National Park fees, all meals (with a very few exceptions specified in individual itineraries), wine with lunch and dinner, access to specialist books carried by the guides, gratuities for porters and hotel and restaurant staff, boat rides, train trips, internal flights, wine tastings, 4WDs with drivers, the services of skilled local guides and trackers etc. are ALL INCLUDED in the cost of your holiday.

We are confident that, like previous very satisfied guests, you will discover that our tours give you excellent value for money.

Off the beaten track

Please be aware that electricity and water supplies may occasionally be erratic and travel arrangements may be disrupted. Kudu Travel will endeavour to do everything possible to ensure a smooth-running tour, but please be ready with your sense of humour and tolerance when travelling in Peru.

Visa and Health Requirements

Visitors from the UK, EU, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand currently require a valid passport, but not a visa, for entry to Peru. If you are a national of any other country, please check visa regulations with your nearest Embassy of Peru.

At present, there are no specific and compulsory health requirements for entry to Peru, but you are advised to consult your doctor **at least 6 weeks before you travel** about updating your immunisation against Hepatitis A, polio, tetanus and typhoid, as they consider advisable.

Insurance

It is essential, and a condition of booking, that you protect yourself with a suitable travel insurance policy as soon as you book a trip. Please ensure that you are specifically covered for walking at high altitude. We can arrange comprehensive cover for UK residents. For further details, please see our website or ask our office.

Size of Party

This trip will run with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 14 guests.