

BACKBONE OF THE INCA EMPIRE, (JTS)

Cartagena to Santiago 79 Days, departing 15th October 2021



TRIP OVERVIEW

Trip Style: Overlanding

Route: Cartagena to Santiago

Duration: 79 Days

Transport: Overland Expedition Vehicle, Jeep, Boat, Private Bus, Train

Accommodation: Comfortable Hotel 15 nights
Hammocks 2 nights
Basic Hotel 19 nights
Multishare Hostel 18 nights
Camping 16 nights
Guesthouse 2 nights
Homestay 1 night
Wild Camp 5 nights

Meals: Breakfasts x 65, Lunches x 31, Dinners x 26

Physical Challenge: ●●●●○

The trip may include multi-day treks at high altitude, walking for 5-8 hours per day.

Lifestyle Challenge: ●●●●○

This is a fairly challenging trip; you may well be travelling at high altitudes, across deserts or through cold and windy or hot and steamy areas. The terrain and roads may be rough and the facilities can be very basic or non-existent. There may be some long drive days followed by wild camps, and physically and mentally it can be tough, but there will be some rest days and time to relax as well.



DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1 - Cartagena (15th October 2021)

Border Information: if joining in Cartagena, you will most likely enter Colombia at Cartagena Rafael Núñez International Airport (IATA code: CTG).

There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Cartagena before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Cartagena.

If you are continuing on from Panama, then your leader will have assisted you with airport transfers for your included flight to arrive in time for the joining meeting.

Accommodation: Hotel Villa Colonial "A"

Day 2 - Cartagena (16th October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a full day in the beautiful coastal colonial city of Cartagena.

In the morning we will have an included walking tour of the city, and then the afternoon will be free to explore the city further, enjoy the many optional activities on offer, or simply relax on the beach.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Explore Cartagena on a guided walking tour

Included

Optional Activities

Discover the brutal history of the Spanish Inquisition at their former headquarters in Cartagena the Palace of the Inquisition

Entrance: 15,000 COP

Guide: 10,000 COP

Days diving or snorkelling trip out to Islas del Rosario, Cartagena

Boat trip (speed boat): 70,000 COP

Learn all about Cartagena's naval tradition and history at the Naval Museum of the Caribbean

Entrance: 15,000 COP

Day 3 - Tayrona NP (17th October 2021)

Today we have a short drive to the stunning Tayrona National Park.

In Tayrona we will sleep in Hammocks, no food is provided, but there are restaurants and cafes nearby by. There is an hour walk from where we park our truck to our campsite.

Day 4 - Tayrona NP (18th October 2021)

Today we have an included walk in the National Park.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Explore some of Tayrona National Park's scenic walking trails including a hike to the mysterious ancient ruins of Pueblito hidden in the jungles high above the coastline

Included

Day 5 - Lorica (19th October 2021)

This morning we will walk back to our truck and leave Tayrona National park. We will head south for the pretty colonial town of Santa Cruz de Lorica on the Sinu River.

We will have a free day to relax and discover the historic centre, learn about the traditional Vueltiao hat or head to the coast and soak up the sun in San Bernardo del Viento.

Day 6 - Lorica (20th October 2021)

We will have a free day to relax and discover the historic centre, learn about the traditional Vueltiao hat or head to the coast and soak up the sun in San Bernardo del Viento.

Day 7 - Medellin (21st October 2021)

Today we have a full days drive to vibrant city of Medellin. the following morning we will have a guided walking tour of the city. We then have plenty of time to relax or take part in some of activities available here.

Day 8 - Medellin (22nd October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

This morning we have an included half-day city tour of Medellin using our overlanding truck.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Head out on a fascinating guided tour of Medellin and learn all about it's tumultuous past

Included

Optional Activities

Take the pioneering Metroline cable car up to Santo Domingo to see a very different area of the city and the revitalising effect the Metroline has had on the communities there

Cable car ride: 1,750 COP

Visit the colossal Catedral Metropolitana in the city centre built using over a million bricks between 1875 and 1931

Entrance: Free

Head out and discover some of Medellín's vibrant and unusual nightlife at the Dulce Jesus Mio club

Entrance: 10,000 COP

Day 9 - Medellin (23rd October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Free day to explore Medellin.

Day 10 - Manizales (24th October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will head into the heart of the coffee region to stay at a Hacienda near the town of Manizales.

Day 11 - Salento (25th October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today we will continue our journey south to the small town of Salento, the gateway to the spectacular Valle de Cocora.

Salento will be our base to take a guided trek through the Cocora Valley to see the Quindio wax palm trees, the largest palms in the world and the national tree of Colombia and also to do a coffee plantation tour.

Day 12 - Salento (26th October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will take a guided trek through the Cocora Valley to see the Quindio wax palm trees, the largest palms in the world and the national tree of Colombia.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Head out on a half-day guided trek through the spectacular Cocora Valley and see the incredible 50m-tall Quindio wax palms the tallest palm trees in the world!

Included

Day 13 - Salento (27th October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we have time to explore the coffee plantation and learn about coffee.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Learn about Colombia Coffee and wander the plantation

Included

Day 14 - Popayan (28th October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will drive to the beautiful town and former colonial capital of Popayán.

On the following day we will have a free day to explore Popayán or take part in some excellent treks or other optional activities in the surrounding area.

Day 15 - Popayan (29th October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a free day to explore Popayán or take part in some excellent treks or other optional activities in the surrounding area.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Relax in the volcanic thermal springs near the village of Coconuco dramatically set in a steep-sided valley

Thermal springs trip: 60,000 COP

Trek to the 4650m summit of the towering Puracé volcano near Popayán

Hike: 130,000 COP

Day 16 - Ipiales (30th October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a full day drive to the border town of Ipiales.

Day 17 - Otavalo (31st October 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

We will leave Colombia behind today and cross the border into Ecuador, we will have time for an included visit to the beautiful Santurio de las Lajas, before heading to Otavalo.

Border information: Exit Colombia at Ipiales, enter Ecuador at Ipiales.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Visit the jaw dropping Santuario Las Lajas on the outskirts of Ipiales

Included

Day 18 - Quito (1st November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

We will head south for the final leg of our journey to the bustling capital, Quito. En route into the city we will have an included visit to Mitad del Mundo, the monument that marks the Equator.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Visit the equator at Mitad del Mundo

Included

Day 19 - Quito (2nd November 2021)

Border Information: if joining in Quito, you will most likely enter Ecuador at Quito Mariscal Sucre International Airport (IATA code: UIO).

There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Quito before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Quito.

A note on altitude: If you are joining in Quito, we strongly recommend arriving at least 24 hours before the trip begins to allow additional time to acclimatise.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Take a walk around Quito's incredible Botanical Gardens, which showcases all of Ecuador's various ecosystems and their flora

Entrance: 4 USD

Visit the Museo Mindalae, the extremely original project showcasing Ecuador's rich cultural diversity

Entrance: 3 USD

Visit the Museo Nacional del Banco Central showcasing the country's largest collection of Ecuadorian art and housing an impressive gold collection

Entrance: 2 USD

Day 20 - Ecuadorian Amazon (3rd November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today our journey begins with a drive to a village on the edge of the Amazon basin, near the town of Tena, where we head to our lodge for an incredible 3-night stay.

Our lodge is a great example of eco-tourism, built and run by the local community and volunteers, who work to re-forest the reserve land at the lodge with native trees and medicinal plants. The lodge is set in secondary and primary rainforest, an area at risk of deforestation.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Spend 3 nights at our fantastic Ecuadorian ecolodge taking in many activities such as boat trips on the Napo River visits to local communities and treks through the jungle to some spectacular waterfalls and bat caves!

Included

Day 21 - Ecuadorian Amazon (4th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Over the next two days we will head into the Amazon jungle, enjoying rainforest treks exploring the nearby waterfalls and caves, and trips down the Napo River in motorised dugout canoes, hopefully spotting plenty of wildlife on the way. We will also see some ancient fossils and petroglyphs, and visit a local Quichua community.

Day 22 - Ecuadorian Amazon (5th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Second full day in the rainforest.

Day 23 - Rio Verde (6th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will drive through the highlands of Ecuador, arriving in Rio Verde near the famous Tungurahua volcano.

Day 24 - Rio Verde (7th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

We will have two full days of free time to take part in a range of optional activities in Rio Verde, such as white-water rafting, trekking, canyoning, cycling, and other options. We will also have the opportunity to visit the nearby town of Baños and its popular volcanic thermal springs.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Head out for an exhilarating half-day canyoning trip through the gorges near Baños

Canyoning (half day): 25 USD

Take out some quad bikes on a tour around the winding trails near Baños

Quad biking: 36 USD

Go on an adrenaline-fuelled half-day rafting expedition on the Rio Pastaza near Banos one of the best rafting experiences in South America

Half day rafting: 25 USD

Go out on a half day rock climbing trip to the walls of natural lava rock just outside Banos

Half day rock climbing: 30 USD

Explore the stunning gorges forests and landscapes of the Baños area by foot

Machay waterfall entrance or Pailon del Diablo entrance: 2 USD

Take the famous zip-lining course through the Puntzan Canyon near Bañ

Zip line: 25 USD

Spend some time soaking in the hot springs

Entrance: 3 USD

Day 25 - Rio Verde (8th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Second free day for optional activities.

Day 26 - Chugchilán (9th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will drive to the remote village of Chugchilán, via the spectacular highland scenery along the road of the 'Quilotoa Loop'.

Day 27 - Chugchilán (10th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today is a free day to enjoy optional activities such as mountain biking or horseback riding.

Day 28 - Cuenca (11th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will drive along the remainder of the Quilotoa Loop and then head south to the beautiful colonial town of Cuenca. We will pass through the stunning landscape of the Cajas National Park en route.

Day 29 - Cuenca (12th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a free day to explore the colonial city of Cuenca. The town is the birthplace of the famous Panama Hat, and we will have the opportunity today to visit one of the factories to learn about the manufacturing process.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Visit some of the volcanic thermal baths near to the colonial town of Cuenca

Entrance: 20 USD

Take a day trip out of Cuenca to visit the site of the Ingapirca ruins the largest known Inca ruins in Ecuador

Day trip: 25 USD

Visit the Museo Pumapungo in Cuenca featuring an impressive range of artistic historical cultural and ethnological exhibits and most famously housing a collection of shrunken heads from the Shuar civilisation

Entrance: Free

Visit one of the many factories that produce the ever-stylish Panama Hats Cuenca's most famous export!

Entrance: Free

Day 30 - Punta Sal (13th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Border information: Exit Ecuador at Huaquillas, enter Peru at Tumbes.

Today we will have a long drive day south, crossing the border into northern Peru.

Day 31 - Punta Sal (14th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we have a full day to relax on the beach and enjoy some activities in and around the stunning coastal area of Punta Sal.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Try your hand at surfing in the ideal waters of the Pacific Ocean near Punta Sal or Mancora

Surfing: 20 USD

Explore the coastlines of Punta Sal by foot or head out trekking through the nearby hills and farms of Canoas

Trekking: 10 USD

Day 32 - Huanchaco (15th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will have a full day's drive to Huanchaco, near the city of Trujillo.

Day 33 - Huanchaco (16th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will have an included guided trip to explore the enormous adobe ruins of Chan Chan and the world-famous Moche archaeological site of Huaca de la Luna (Pyramid of the Moon).

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Guided tour of Moche Pyramids and the Chimu city of Chan Chan

Included

Optional Activities

Visit the fascinating Cassinelli Museum in Trujillo, a private collection of many exquisite examples of ancient pottery

Entrance: 15 PEN

Day 34 - Huaraz (17th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a spectacular drive up the winding roads of the 'Casma Route' into the Cordillera Blanca section of the high Andes, reaching the mountain town of Huaraz.

Day 35 - Huaraz (18th November 2021)

We have two days in the spectacular area of the Cordillera Blanca for exploration and optional activities such as visiting the incredible pre-Inca ruins of Chavín de Huantar or trekking and climbing to the nearby lakes and glaciers.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Go canyoning in the waterfalls and gorges of the Huaraz region

Canyoning: 90 PEN

Explore the incredible ancient ruins of Chavín de Huantar the religious centre for the Chavín culture which flourished in the area from 1200BCE-500BCE

Tour, guide and entrance: 45 USD

Take a horse riding trip from Huaraz to the incredible viewpoints of the Cordillera Blanca

Horse riding: 27 USD

Trek out to the phenomenal turquoise glacier lake of Laguna 69 in the shadow of Huascarán Peru's highest mountain

Trekking: 45 USD

Learn all about the area's incredible pre-Inca civilisations at the Museo Regional de Ancash

Entrance: 15 PEN

Day 36 - Huaraz (19th November 2021)

Enjoy a second free day in Huaraz

Day 37 - Lima (20th November 2021)

Today we will have another full day's drive back to the coast via the 'Paramonga Route' and then on to the enormous Peruvian capital of Lima.

Day 38 - Lima (21st November 2021)

Border information: if joining in Lima, you will most likely enter Peru at Lima Jorge Chavez International Airport (IATA code: LIM).

There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Lima before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Lima.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Visit the Gold Museum & Catacombs of Lima

Entrance: 40 PEN

Take a ceviche and pisco sour class at one of the top restaurants in Miraflores a lively district of Lima

Ceviche class: 40 USD

Explore the Rafael Larco Herrera Museum in Lima containing the largest private collection of pre-Colombian art in the world

Entrance: 30 PEN

Day 39 - Huacachina (22nd November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a very early start to leave Lima before the rush hour, and drive 270kms south to Paracas. There we will board one of the local boats for an included trip to the Ballestas Islands to view its incredible array of resident wildlife and birds.

After lunch, we will continue south to arrive at the stunning desert oasis town of Huacachina, where we have the option to head out for an evening of sand boarding and dune bugging.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Boat trip to see the seals & seabirds on the Ballestas Islands

Included

Optional Activities

Dune bugging or boarding in the spectacular sand dunes of Peru Desert

Dune buggy and sandboard: 20 USD

Day 40 - Nazca (23rd November 2021)

Today we continue south to the world-famous village of Nazca, the location of the mysterious Nazca Lines. On the drive, we will stop at a viewing platform to get a glimpse of some of these lines. The Nazca Lines are a series of figures, lines, and geometric shapes that were etched into the ground of the desert plateau over a thousand years ago by the ancient Nazca culture, and their purpose is still unknown to this day.

In the afternoon, we will have the opportunity to take an optional 30-minute flight over the Nazca Lines in a small aircraft - this is by far the best way of seeing the figures, and we use a local operator with an excellent safety record.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Visit to the Nazca Lines viewing tower

Entrance: 3 PEN

Fly over the Nazca lines

Scenic flight (not incl 35 PEN airport tax): 120 USD

Day 41 - Puerto Inca (24th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning we head south of Nazca, and have an included visit to the nearby ancient sites of the Chauchilla Cemetery and the Cahuachi Pyramid, thought to have once been the religious centre of the Nazca civilisation.

In the afternoon we will continue our drive to the coastal resort of Puerto Inca.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Visit the incredible ancient Nazca sites of the Chauchilla Cemetery

Included

Day 42 - Arequipa (25th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today we will start our drive inland, and head uphill to the beautiful 'White City' of Arequipa.

Day 43 - Arequipa (26th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a free day to explore the colonial city of Arequipa, or for some optional activities in and around the city.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Take a fascinating cooking class in Arequipa learning how to create some iconic Peruvian cuisine and taking a tour of the nearby food markets

Class and market tour: 150 PEN

Explore the Museo Santuarios Andinos

Entrance: 20 PEN

Take a 'Reality Tour' of Arequipa - a walking tour with an alternative focus on the daily lives of the local people and contemporary issues facing modern Peru

Tour cost for 1 pax (75 PEN per pax if 2 pax, 70 PEN per pax if 3 or more pax): 150 PEN

Guided tour of Arequipa's Santa Catalina convent

Entrance: 40 PEN

Head out for an exciting morning of white-water rafting on the Chili River near Arequipa

Rafting: 35 USD

Day 44 - Chivay (27th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

We will have some more free time to explore Arequipa this morning, before continuing our drive to the highland town of Chivay after lunch.

Day 45 - Chivay (28th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

This morning we will head out on a short drive to some of the best viewpoints along the spectacular Colca Canyon, one of the deepest canyons in the world! The canyon is famous for its resident condors, and we will spend a good amount of time at the viewpoints to give ourselves the best chance of spotting them. We will also visit a couple of local communities on the way back to Chivay.

We will have a free afternoon to explore Chivay, and possibly take an optional trip to the nearby hot springs.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Guided trip to see Colca Canyon and Andean condors

Included

Optional Activities

Visit the thermal springs in Chivay

Entrance: 15 PEN

Day 46 - Raqchi (29th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today we will drive through the stunning landscapes of the Peruvian highlands to the small village of Raqchi. Here we will stay at a homestay as guests of the local villagers in their traditional family homes. The houses are very clean and have basic facilities. This evening the villagers will invite us to take part in a traditional Quechua religious ceremony, and we'll have some lively music from some of the village's musicians.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Quechua Indian homestay and community crafts project

Included

Day 47 - Cuzco (30th November 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning we will visit the Inca ruins of the Temple of Wiracocha at Raqchi, and then see a pottery demonstration at a local artisan centre.

In the afternoon we will drive to the incredible historical city of Cuzco, the former Inca capital.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Guided visit to the Raqchi ruins

Included

Day 48 - Cuzco (1st December 2021)

Border information: if you are joining in Cuzco, you will most likely enter Peru at Cuzco Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport (IATA code: CUZ).

There will be an important group meeting at 10:00am at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting. There will be a further meeting this evening for our Wild Andes and Classic Inca Trails, where we will have a full detailed briefing from our local trekking guides about the next few days!

The rest of today will be free to explore the wonderful city of Cuzco, discover its many historical gems, or to take part in number of optional activities near the city.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Cuzco before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Cuzco.

A note on altitude: If you are joining in Cuzco, we strongly recommend arriving at least 24 hours before the trip begins to allow additional time to acclimatise.

Day 49 - Inca Trail (2nd December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

These four days will be spent either trekking in the Andes, on our pioneering Wild Andes Trek, on the Classic Inca Trek or for those not wishing to hike, free time to explore and a guided tour of the Sacred Valley on our Train package.

Option 1 - Wild Andes Trek

Leaving Cuzco early in the morning, we visit the ruined temples of Sacsayhuaman for a fascinating tour of the site. We then head on to Chinchero, a small Quechua-speaking village in the Sacred Valley. Here we will see a traditional weaving demonstration that has been unchanged for a thousand years, and explore their beautiful archaeological ruins. We will drive to a stunning viewpoint for a picnic lunch, and then visit the Quillarumiyoc temple (the Temple of the Moon).

We will start our trek from here in the afternoon, heading by foot to Zurite where we have a picturesque stay in a colonial house. Tonight we will enjoy a traditional dinner and get a taste of the local village lifestyle.

Approximate walking distance: 8km, Estimated time: 4hrs, Meals provided: Lunch and Dinner

Option 2 - Classic Inca Trek

This morning we go for a guided tour of the Sacred Valley, followed by a visit to the market town of Pisac, where we will have an included lunch. We then head to Ollantaytambo, where we have free time to explore the impressive archeological site. Tonight we stay in a comfortable hotel.

Please note that we have the evening to ourselves in Ollantaytambo, our Guide will meet us in the morning. No Meals are included in Ollantaytambo.

There is no trekking today. Meals provided: Lunch,

Option 3 - Train Package

You will leave Cuzco with your fellow passengers who will be trekking the Wild Andes Trek. You will visit the fortress of Sacsayhuaman, followed by a beautiful scenic drive over mountains and through valleys, via the ancient city of Pisac and on to the Sacred Valley of the Incas. After lunch you will head back to Cuzco where you will stay at our nice, centrally located hotel for a further 3 nights.

Meals included: Lunch

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Trekking Options:

Option 1 - Trek the Classic Inca Trail up the Royal Inca Road.

Option 2 - Hike unspoilt Inca Trails in remote stunning Andes scenery away from tourist treks on our exclusive Wild Andes trail.

Option 3 - Take a Sacred Valley Tour, visit Ollantaytambo and take the train to Machu Picchu without trekking.

PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST ADVISE AT TIME OF BOOKING IF YOU WISH TO BOOK THE CLASSIC INCA TRAIL OR THE NON TREKKING OPTION, OTHERWISE YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE PUT ON OUR WILD ANDES TREK.

Included

Visit the incredible remains of the Inca temple of Sacsayhuaman and the Sacred Valley on a guided tour

Included

Day 50 - Inca Trail (3rd December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Option 1 - Wild Andes Trek

Zurite to Amaruwatana

After a hearty breakfast we leave Zurite and head towards Amaruwatana camp. The walk will take us through Qenteqentiyoc (the Hummingbird Temple), where we will visit and admire this Inca archaeological site. We will then follow the ancient path all the way to the top of our first pass at 4,400m, where we will have a dramatic view of both the Vilcabamba and Vilcanota mountain ranges. From here we start walking down on the way to our first camp in the Sambor Valley where we will spend the night camping.

Approximate walking time: 8hrs, Distance: 13kms, Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Option 2 - Classic Inca Trek

Ollantaytambo to Wayllabamba

After breakfast, we catch a bus to Piscaycuscho and the start of the Classic Inca Trek - the railroad KM82 marker (at 2,700m altitude). Here we are joined by our crew of local porters and cooks. We will cross the bridge over the River Urubamba and following a trail along the left-hand shore of the river, enjoying stunning views of the snow-capped Mount Veronica (5,830m) and the Incan archaeological remains at Llactapata. Continuing through lush farmland and woodland, we gradually climb for approximately 5 hours to our first campsite at Wayllabamba (3,000m).

Approximate trekking time: 5-6hrs, Distance: 12kms, Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks

Option 3 - Train Package

Today is a free day to enjoy Cuzco, with its museums, churches, incredible colonial architecture, beautiful restaurants and a vast array of shops, selling textiles and handicrafts.

Day 51 - Inca Trail (4th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Option 1 - Wild Andes Trek

Amaruwatana to Ancascocha

We have an early start this morning, trekking for approximately 2 hours to reach the top of our second pass at 4,700m. From here we have fantastic views of the rock formations below us, and if we're lucky we may spot Andean ibises, caracaras, eagles or foxes up here!

After descending for approximately 2 hours, we arrive at a stunning highland valley with a glacial river named Kenqo Mayu (meaning "Zig-zag River") flowing down it - which makes an idyllic stop for lunch!

After lunch we will continue trekking downhill following the ancient trail, which leads us to our campsite in the Ancascocha area.

Approximate trekking time: 6-7hrs, Distance: 10kms, Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Option 2 - Classic Trek

Wayllabamba to Pacaymayo

This is the most challenging day of the trek as we ascend a long steep path (approximately 4 hours) through Andean cloud forest and highland puna to reach the highest point of our trek, Warmiwañusca (meaning "Dead Woman's Pass") at a height of 4,200m. During our ascent, we can appreciate the wide variety of plant, flower and bird species supported by this unique eco-climate. On reaching the pass, our challenge is rewarded by an astonishing panoramic view of the Vilcanota and Vilcabamba mountain ranges. From here we descend for 2 hours into the Pacaymayo Valley (3,650m altitude) and to our second campsite.

Approximate trekking time: 6-7hrs, Distance: 11kms, Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks

Option 3 - Train Package

Today is a free day for you to enjoy Cuzco, with its museums, churches, incredible colonial architecture, beautiful restaurants and a vast array of shops selling textiles and handicrafts.

Day 52 - Inca Trail (5th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Option 1 - Wild Andes Trek

Ancascocha to Ollantaytambo

Today we will descend the narrow Silque Canyon, allowing us to observe its tall granite walls which are populated by a large variety of orchids and bromeliads, filling the environment with magnificent colours when they bloom. After crossing many little bridges we will reach the Camicancha area, where we stop at a magnificent volcanic viewpoint looking towards the snow-capped Mt. Veronica.

From here it is only a short trek to Chilca, where our trail ends. We'll be picked up by our vehicle and head to Ollantaytambo, taking a well-earned shower and rest at our hotel.

In the afternoon we will have an included guided tour around the incredible archaeological site of Ollantaytambo and its world-famous Temple of the Sun. Please note that we have the evening to ourselves in Ollantaytambo, our Guide will meet us in the morning. No Meals are included in Ollantaytambo.

Approximate trekking time: 5hrs, Distance: 12kms, Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch

Option 2 - Classic Inca Trek

Pacaymayo to Wiñay Wayna

Today we follow ancient stone paths and steps to ascend the well-preserved Inca remains of Runkurakay, Sayacmarca, and Phuyupatamarca (the "Town above the Clouds") where we can appreciate the Incas' complex architectural style and reverence of natural geography and beauty. Heading down the Andean slope, we reach our final night's camp by the Wiñay Wayna (meaning "Forever Young") ruins, with panoramic views of the valley below.

Approximate walking time: 8hrs, Distance: 16kms, Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks

Option 3 - Train Package

After being picked up from your hotel in the morning you will be driven to the fortress city of Ollantaytambo and our hotel for the night, the Tunupa Lodge. Here you will rejoin the Wild Andes Trekkers and your tour leader who will be arriving from their trek this afternoon.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Take a guided tour of the fantastic Inca temples at Ollantaytambo

Included

Day 53 - Cuzco (6th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Option 1 - Wild Andes Trek

Ollantaytambo - Machu Picchu - Cuzco

Today we will have an early start to catch the train to the small town of Aguas Calientes. From there, we will take a bus up the winding mountainside to the legendary ruined city of Machu Picchu - one of the world's most iconic sights! We have a guided tour with our expert local guide and there will be plenty of free time to explore this magical place.

In the afternoon we will head back to Ollantaytambo and then on to Cuzco, where we return to our joining hotel at the end of a long but phenomenal day!

Meals provided: Breakfast

Option 2 - Classic Trek

Wiñay Wayna to Machupicchu

Leaving Wiñay Wayna, we descend gradually further through the highland jungle to our destination - Intupunku (the "Sun Gate") leading into Machu Picchu. Arriving at daybreak, we catch our first breathtaking view of this historical wonder. As with the Wild Andes Trek, our local guide will show us the most important constructions as well as explain the history and the mythology of this magnificent place. There is also some free time to explore the ruins further at your own pace or just chill out and watch the hummingbirds or vizcachua. In the afternoon we head back down to Aguas Calientes and take the train back to Ollantaytambo and return to Cuzco for a well-deserved rest.

Approximate walking time: 2hrs, Distance: 4kms, Meals provided: Breakfast, Snacks

Option 3 - Train Package

After an early breakfast and walk to the train station, your stunning 2 hour train ride to Aguas Calientes begins. The journey takes you through several different micro-climates, past Inca terraces, lookout posts, ancient river bank reinforcements and small towns. You will get a glimpse of different temples and the beautiful Mount Veronica (5,750m). Passing through 8 tunnels, the train journey finally comes to an end in the busy pueblo, Aguas Calientes. From here you take a local bus that winds up the mountainside for about 30 minutes until you arrive at the entrance to Machu Picchu (2,400m), the awe inspiring 'Lost City of the Incas'. The guide will take you around the immense, mystical ruins for about 2 hours to 2 hours 30 minutes, explaining the rich history of the ancient site. Afterwards, you will have time to explore on your own before returning down the mountain to Aguas Calientes.

In the afternoon you will catch a train from Aguas Calientes to Ollantaytambo and a private transfer will take you back to your hotel in Cuzco.

Meals provided: Breakfast

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Guided visit to the fabled Incan citadel of Machu Picchu

Included

Day 54 - Cuzco (7th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today is a free day to relax after the treks, further explore the historical city of Cuzco, and take part in some optional activities around the city.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Take a Spanish class in the beautiful city of Cuzco (suitable for all levels)

1hr private Class: 20 USD

Visit the Cuzco Chocolate museum and take part in a workshop

Workshop: 70 PEN

Take part in a Peruvian cooking class in Cuzco learning how to make a variety of local dishes

Class: 79 USD

Explore Cuzco on a free walking tour

Tour: Free

Day 55 - Puno (8th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will leave Cuzco and head through the highlands of Peru to the town of Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca.

Day 56 - Isla del Sol (9th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Border information: Exit Peru at Yunguyo, enter Bolivia at Kasani.

This morning we will cross into Bolivia and head to the lakeside town of Copacabana, before boarding a boat to the stunning island of Isla del Sol.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Stay overnight on Lake Titicaca's Isla del Sol and take a guided walk across the island

Included

Day 57 - Copacabana (10th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will take an included day trip across Isla del Sol in Lake Titicaca, one of the holiest sites in ancient Inca mythology and supposedly the birthplace of the Sun God Inti. We will take a 14km walk across the length of the island, taking in the incredible and serene scenery and soaking up the calm atmosphere of the island (this walk can be skipped by anybody who does not want to do it).

We will return to Copacabana for the evening.

Day 58 - La Paz (11th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will drive to the famous city of La Paz, Bolivia's seat of government and the highest administrative capital in the world!

Day 59 - La Paz (12th December 2021)

Border information: if you are joining in La Paz, you will most likely enter Bolivia at La Paz El Alto International Airport (IATA code: LPB).

Welcome to La Paz, Bolivia's seat of government and the highest administrative capital in the world! There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

A note on altitude: If you are joining in La Paz, we strongly recommend arriving at least 24 hours before the trip begins to allow additional time to acclimatise.

Day 60 - La Paz (13th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a free day to make the most of the extraordinary city of La Paz, explore the witches market or take a mountain biking trip down the World's Most Dangerous Road.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Take a trip out to the mountain resort of Chacaltaya and the other-worldly landscape of the Moon Valley near La Paz

Full day tour: 130 BOB

Downhill "gravity assisted" mountain biking from La Paz to Coroico

Full day tour (not incl 50 BOB road fee): 125 USD

Discover Bolivia's history art and culture in some of La Paz's many museums such as the San Francisco Museum and the Museum of Ethnography

Entrance: 20 BOB

Take a guided tour of the main sights and viewpoints around La Paz

City tour: 150 BOB

Guided tour to explore Tiahuanacu Inca Ruins

Full day tour: 220 BOB

Day 61 - Uyuni (14th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will drive south to Uyuni, the gateway to the incredible salt flats of the Salar de Uyuni.

Day 62 - Uyuni (15th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today we will venture out onto the salt flats of the Salar de Uyuni, spending a full day exploring this phenomenal location by jeep and on foot. En route we will explore the nearby train graveyard and the cactus-filled 'Fish Island', and take all the time we need to get plenty of perspective-bending photographs!

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Take jeeps out onto the dazzling Uyuni Salt Flats

Included

Day 63 - Altiplano (16th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will head off across the wilds of the Altiplano, a surreal and desolate desert landscape that stretches all the way into Chile. We will make plenty of stop for photographs on the way and at the end of the day we aim to cross the border into Chile, making camp soon afterwards. Tonight we will bush camp in a remote spot with no facilities!

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Take the epic journey across the Altiplano - an incredible high-altitude adventure through a surreal desert landscape taking in bizarre rock formations and stunning lakes

Included

Day 64 - San Pedro de Atacama (17th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

After breakfast we will break camp, and drive through the stunning Reserva Nacional Alto Loa on the Chilean part of the Altiplano, stopping off en route for photographs and a lunch stop at the famous El Tatio Geysers, the worlds highest Geysir field at 4300m. Afterwards descending down to San Pedro de Atacama.

Please note: The weather in this region can be unpredictable and has been known to close the road to the border. On these occasions we will take an alternate route across the Altiplano, crossing into either Chile or Argentina at a different border point. Your trip leaders will keep you informed of any changes that may be necessary.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Experience the incredible El Tatio geysers in the mountains high above the Atacama Desert

Entrance: 10,000 CLP

Day 65 - San Pedro de Atacama (18th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a free day to explore the incredible highlights of the Atacama desert surrounding San Pedro. In the evening we will take an included trip out to the extraordinary Moon Valley, where we will hopefully see an incredible sunset. At night we will also have the chance to go stargazing, in one of the world's premier regions for astronomy (please note that this is only possible when there is not a full moon).

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Explore the dramatic landscape of the Moon Valley

Included

Optional Activities

Discover some of the interesting ancient ruins near San Pedro and the artifacts found in the area on an archaeological tour

Tour: 25,000 CLP

Hire a bike to explore the incredible deserts surrounding San Pedro de Atacama at your own pace

Half day: 5,000 CLP

Discover the incredible deserts of San Pedro on horseback

Riding: 13,500 CLP

Take a tour of the stunning Lagunas Altiplánicas backdropped by the incredible deserts and volcanic scenery of the region

Entrance: 35,000 CLP

Observe the night skies at a Chilean observatory

Tour: 25,000 CLP

Visit the incredible salt plains of the Salar de Atacama and take a swim in the salty pools of Laguna Cejar

Entrance: 15,000 CLP

Day 66 - Salta (19th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a long drive day to cross the mighty Andes, cross the border into Argentina, and reach the beautiful town of Salta.

Day 67 - Salta (20th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a free day to explore Salta, visit its many museums, or explore the beautiful surrounding hills on foot or by mountain bike. We will also have the chance to take the cable car to the viewpoint on San Bernardo Hill overlooking the town, or take the famous 'Train to the Clouds' through some of the incredible mountain scenery nearby.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Explore the beautiful mountains and forests near Salta on a mountain biking trip

The Bull circuit: 1,300 ARS

Rainforest Circuit: 900 ARS

Downhill Cuesta del Obispo: 2,000 ARS

Bike Rental (full day): 600 ARS

Day 68 - Cafayate (21st December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today we will drive through the spectacular rock formations of the Quebrada de las Conchas, and reach the serene town of Cafayate.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Visit the impressive rock formations of 'El Amphiteatro' and 'La Garganta del Diablo' en route through the primeval landscape of the Quebrada de las Conchas

Included

Day 69 - Cafayate (22nd December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Free day to explore Cafayate. This small unassuming town is the centre of one of Argentina's principal wine producing regions, famous for the quality of its Torrontes and Tannat wines! We will have the opportunity to go to a few of the vineyards nearby to see how the wine is made, and of course to try them!

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Discover the bodegas and stock up on wine in Cafayate

Wine tasting: 150 ARS

Day 70 - Recreo (23rd December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will drive south through spectacular mountains and arrive in the pampas that Argentina is famous for. We will visit the ancient ruins of the indigenous city of Quilmes en route.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Visit the Quilmes ruins

Included

Day 71 - Estancia (24th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we drive to a unique Anglo-Argentine Estancia, where we will stay for 3 nights.

During our time at the Estancia, we will head out horseback riding. This is a magical experience in a beautiful and many people's highlight of the trip! Please note that some of these activities are subject to weather conditions.

Please also note that there is a strict weight limit of 15 stone (210lbs) or 95kg to partake in the horse riding - if you should weigh more than this, then unfortunately you will not be able to participate in the horseback riding.

Daily Activities

Included Activities

Spend 3 unique days at an Anglo-Argentinian estancia to experience the Gaucho way of life

Included

Day 72 - Estancia (25th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Full day at the Estancia.

Day 73 - Estancia (26th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Full day at the Estancia.

Day 74 - Cordoba (27th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a leisurely start after breakfast to the city of Cordoba, where we will enjoy a free afternoon to explore the city.

Day 75 - Mendoza (28th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a very early start for a full day's drive to the stunning town of Mendoza, nestled in the dry flats underneath the shadows of the largest mountains of the Andes.

Mendoza is the centre of Argentine wine production, and one of the nine 'Wine Capitals of the World' - it is especially famous for its Malbec, grown at some of the highest-altitude vineyards to be found in the world.

Day 76 - Mendoza (29th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today will be free time to explore the region, head out on various adventure activities, or of course take a tasting tour of the incredible wineries in the region.

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Take a mountain biking trip through the dramatic landscapes of the Andean foothills near Mendoza

Biking: 1,000 ARS

White water rafting on the Mendoza River

Full Day Rafting: 1,750 ARS

Half Day Rafting: 700 ARS

Mendoza Trekking

Half Day Trek: 500 ARS

Half day trek with abseil: 700 ARS

Explore the vineyards of the Mendoza and Maipu region either on an organised tour or by cycling between the bodegas

Bike tour: 950 ARS

Day 77 - Santiago (30th December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will drive over the stunning Cristo Redentor pass in the high Andes, passing Aconcagua (the highest mountain in the Southern Hemisphere) and heading to the Chilean capital of Santiago.

Day 78 - Santiago (31st December 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today is a free day to explore the cosmopolitan Chilean capital.

Day 79 - Santiago (1st January 2022)

Meals: Breakfast

Border information: if you are finishing in Santiago, you will most likely exit Chile at Santiago Arturo Merino Benítez International Airport (IATA code: SCL)

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Santiago. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact the Sales Team if you are interested in booking extra nights of accommodation in order to fully explore and take part in some of the optional activities listed below.

Accommodation:

Daily Activities

Optional Activities

Santiago Museums

Entrance : 3,500 CLP

Learn more about Santiago and its history on a free walking tour of the centre from a knowledgeable local guide

Tour: Free

ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

The routes, activities and places visited described in these notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed and it sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons; climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Changes to the itinerary may occur with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to your trip.

Drive Times

Drive times are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. These are the approximate number of hours that the vehicle will be in motion, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors.

Accommodation and Meals Included

The type of accommodation and included meals are listed for each day of the itinerary. These listings show our intention and on most departures the listings will be accurate. However due to the flexible nature of overland itineraries, climatic, bureaucratic or road conditions may demand changes to our listed intentions or groups may simply decide to amend the plans from time to time.

Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Certain activities may not be available on your particular visit and it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. It is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there. Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. The prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator, and therefore any prices listed are a guide only and cannot be guaranteed. If you partake in any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities. For more information around activity safety and insurance, please see the Essential Information document.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of a real emergency once you have left your home country, please contact us on our out of office hours number. If you cannot get through on the phone, please leave a message with your name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you. Please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours, depending on the issue.

If your flight is delayed, please inform us as soon as you can and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in the Joining Point section of these notes.

Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564

A FEW RULES

We expect all group members to act respectfully towards our staff and other group members. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, or carrying weapons may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

ISSUES ON THE TRIP

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk.

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

IMPORTANT NOTES

OVERLANDING LIFESTYLE

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity.

On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc. Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out! For more details of how an overlanding trip works, please see the Essential Information document.

SAFETY STANDARDS

We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards. For more information, please see the Essential Information document

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN REMOTE AREAS

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available, and communications may be sparse. We do not carry satellite phones on our regular trips. Therefore, if you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

VISAS, HEALTH, INSURANCE & MONEY

Before you travel there are vital things to consider such as:

- Any visas needed for your trip
- Any vaccinations needed (please consult your GP or travel clinic)
- Organising your local payment (the kitty)
- Buying travel insurance (insurance is compulsory to be allowed to join our trips)

For more information on these topics, please see the Essential Information Document.

ALTITUDE WARNING

Warning - this trip goes above 2800m.

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). Because of this it is very important that you make yourself aware of the cause and effects of travelling at altitude and monitor your health during this trip.

For further information please [download our AMS information sheet](#) or refer to the following website: www.high-altitude-medicine.com. If you are starting your trip in a destination above 2800m/9200ft we strongly advise reading this information prior to arrival. Your leader will also hand you a copy of the AMS information sheet during your trip as well as holding a short meeting prior to travelling to altitudes above 2800m/9200ft for the first time.

Some travel insurance companies will stipulate a maximum altitude limit. Please ensure that you are covered and if necessary pay the additional premium of extended cover.

HIGH ALTIPLANO NOTE

Because of its nature, this itinerary may vary - occasionally the road conditions are too adverse during the rainy season (January-February) to make the crossing from Uyuni to Argentina, and we may have to change the route.

During the winter months in Argentina and Bolivia, we will spend a higher proportion of nights in hotels and less time camping. Kitty may be higher than expected and you should allow extra funds for this and personal funds for more meals out. There may well be snow and you should be aware that it can get very cold at night. Please ensure that you bring a decent sleeping bag and adequate clothes, including thermals.

We will also be travelling to very high altitudes (over 5,000m if you take the crossing from Uyuni to Argentina or vice versa), so please be aware of the effects of altitude sickness.

THE WILD ANDES TREK, CLASSIC INCA TREK AND TRAIN PACKAGE - MORE INFORMATION

THE WILD ANDES TREK

Dragoman first developed and launched their pioneering **Community Trek**, the **Tarpuy Yachay project**, in 2006 - a fantastic, award-winning alternative to the Classic Inca Trek, the project also helped several educational and sustainable development initiatives in the Andean villages of Quishuarani and Cuncani.

After almost a decade of this successful venture, we decided that our support could be better used in a new area. In 2013, Dragoman developed an exclusive, brand new Community Trek to take our passengers really off the beaten track, to enjoy pure, unspoilt Andean trails, explore remote Inca ruins, whilst at the same time finding new ways to 'give back' to the people of the area. We have done this by funding the release of alpaca herds, offering training to local people in animal husbandry and weaving to provide a source of income. Another aspect of this project has been reforestation, which is crucial for preventing landslides to protect the local area.

In 2016, we decided to rename our Community Trek "the **Wild Andes Trek**", because we feel it better represents the trek we run. However, nothing has changed but the name - Dragoman's firm commitment to genuine, responsible tourism continues as it always has, so rest assured that whilst you take to the mountains your money is supporting local people. The Wild Andes Trek follows the same route that we have been following since 2013, which boasts some of Peru's most spectacular and remote mountain scenery.

THE CLASSIC TREK

Of course if you prefer, there is also the option to complete the Classic Inca Trek, so called, because the trek follows the old royal route to Machu Picchu. Over the course of four days you will trek over 40km through farmland, cloud forest and mountain scenery, the trek culminates on the final morning where you will rise early to trek to Intipunku, better known as the Sun Gate, where you will catch your first glimpse of Machu Picchu. Here we can take our time to watch the mist clear over the Citadel, and walk down to the site and have some time to enjoy it before we have our guided tour.

THE TRAIN PACKAGE

For those of you who would prefer to take Machu Picchu at a gentler pace, we offer our non-trekking, Train Package. As part of this package you will enjoy a guided tour of Sacsayhuaman and the Sacred Valley, followed by 2 days to relax or explore Cuzco at your own pace. Finally you will transfer to Ollantaytambo where you will spend the night in a lovely hotel and have time to explore the fascinating and impressive fortress here. On your final morning you will take the train to Aguas Calientes, and then onwards to Machu Picchu for your tour and free time to explore.

GENERAL

Whichever option you choose, you are sure to have an unforgettable experience at one of the most impressive and iconic World Heritage Sites.

The kitty has been budgeted to include the cost of the Classic Inca Trek as this is the most expensive option. This means that you will receive a small kitty refund if you do the Wild Andes Trek, and a substantial kitty refund if you do the Train Package.

All three trekking groups will return to Cuzco by train and private transfer. Please note that during high season or in the case of late bookings, some trekkers may be booked onto a later train. You will always have a Guide to accompany you back to Cuzco but you should be prepared for a later arrival.

PLEASE NOTE: You must tell us at the time of booking if you want to book the Classic Inca Trek or the Train Package. If you do not tell us this you will automatically be booked onto the Wild Andes Trek.

In order to book the relevant permits and tickets, it is vital that you provide the following information at the time of booking:

- Full name (EXACTLY as it appears in the passport you are travelling on)
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Passport Number
- Passport Expiry Date

Please be sure that all the details are correct and are for the same passport on which you will travel to Peru - any changes made after your application is submitted may not be granted and will involve fees being charged to you. Changes to name and nationality after your application is submitted are absolutely not allowed, so please ensure no changes of this sort will be needed.

There is an overlap for the Inca treks. This means a group starting a trip in Lima or La Paz will do the Inca trek at the same time as a group starting their trip in Cuzco. This means there could be several groups on the Inca trek at the same time.

INCLUSIONS

Wild Andes Trek	Classic Inca Trek	Train Package
Professional bi-lingual Guides	Professional bi-lingual Guides	Professional bi-lingual Guides
Guided tour of Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo and Machu Picchu	Guided tour of Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo and Machu Picchu	Guided tour of Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo and Machu Picchu
All transport between Cuzco and Machu Picchu	All transport between Cuzco and Machu Picchu	All transport between Cuzco and Machu Picchu
Return Train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes	Return Train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes	Return Train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes
One night accommodation in Ollantaytambo	One night accommodation in Ollantaytambo	Three nights accommodation in Cuzco and one night accommodation in Ollantaytambo
Entrance to Machu Picchu	Entrance to Machu Picchu	Entrance to Machu Picchu
High quality double-occupancy tents, sleeping mat and camping equipment	High quality double-occupancy tents, sleeping mat and camping equipment	
Hot water in the morning for washing	Hot water in the morning for washing	
Drinking water throughout the trek	Drinking water throughout the trek	
Dining tent, kitchen tent, latrine tent	Dining tent, kitchen tent, latrine tent	
First Aid Kit and Oxygen	First Aid Kit and Oxygen	
Team of Camp staff, Porters and Cooks	Team of Camp staff, Porters and Cooks	
All camping meals (vegetarian and gluten free meals can be catered for)	All camping meals (vegetarian and gluten free meals can be catered for)	
Pack animals and emergency horse in case of injury		

BENEFITS OF THE WILD ANDES TREK

- Protecting the environment - reducing the number of people travelling on the Classic route to minimise the impact on these ancient paths.
- Responsible Tourism - providing funding for reforestation of the area, to reduce landslides.
- Sustainable - providing funding to introduce Alpacas and training in animal husbandry and weaving to create a sustainable source of income from the animals
- Trekking virtually deserted routes, with no other tourists - so you are free to enjoy the surroundings without feeling rushed or crowded
- Arriving to Machu Picchu well rested and refreshed after a comfortable night in a hotel in Ollantaytambo - ready to get the most out of the visit to this unforgettable site. (NB we do not trek into Machu Picchu, we arrive by train and bus from Ollantaytambo)
- Time to explore the citadel of Machu Picchu, many group members chose to trek up to the Sun Gate to see the famous view, after their tour.
- Trekking a unique route in the Andes

BENEFITS OF THE CLASSIC INCA TREK

- The original Royal route is still the most popular trek because of its history (trekking is limited to 500 people per day departing on the trek, which still can feel crowded at times)
- The Classic Trek is not quite as challenging as the Wild Andes Trek as the passes are not quite as high. That said, it is still a pretty tough and you will need to be reasonably fit.
- There are fantastic views of varied terrain from cloud forest to mountains.

- The Classic Trek culminates with a morning trek to the Sun Gate, where you will experience your first glimpse of Machu Picchu (this is the only trek to do this).

TREKKING FITNESS

Trekking at altitude should not be undertaken lightly. Regardless of which trek you choose, you need to be in good health with good physical fitness to enjoy the experience. It is not about speed; trekking slowly is far better at altitude but you do need to have the stamina to keep going and altitude can have a negative impact on your general condition and physical performance. For your own safety you must accept that it is at the complete discretion of the professional trekking guides to decide if you are not fit enough to trek, whether it be before or during the trek. The Wild Andes Trek reaches 4,700 m in altitude when we cross one of the passes. The trail can be steep and rocky but has few steps. The Classic Inca Trek has lots of steps and the highest pass is Dead Woman's Pass at 4,200 m. If you are in any doubt about your suitability to trek please consult your local doctor. We recommend arriving in Cuzco at least 24 hours prior to your trip starting (if you are joining in Cuzco). It is also important that you inform your trekking guides and Tour Leaders of any pre-existing medical issues, as well as any medications you may be taking, especially medication for altitude sickness.

TREKKING - WHAT TO BRING

Tents, sleeping mats and all food and drinking water during the trek are provided, as well as duffle bags for your personal gear that you don't need to access during the trekking hours (such as sleeping bags and extra clothes). On the Wild Andes Trek your duffle bag will be carried by pack animals and on the Classic Trek your duffle bag will be carried by porters. Please note that there is therefore a strict weight limit of 6 kgs per bag. You will have to carry your own daypack with any items you need during the day.

You will need to be prepared for 4 seasons' weather in one day. Basically it will be cold after dark and in the mornings. During the night you will need to layer up with thermals and warm socks. In the morning when you've walked for a little while you will warm up and gradually strip off. Think layers! Wild Andes trekkers, you should also bring a set of clean clothes for the night you will spend in Ollantaytambo where you have hot showers and the evening meal out in a restaurant.

Some very useful things to bring:

- Daypack (less than 30 litres)
- Waterproof bag(s) to keep your stuff dry (bin liners or similar are fine)
- Warm sleeping bag (also available to rent from our local supplier)
- Sleeping bag liner (for extra insulation)
- Sleeping mat (only if you want extra insulation/padding as a mat will be provided)
- Walking stick (basic wooden sticks will be available to buy)
- Water bottle(s) with a total capacity of at least 2 litres
- Head torch or normal torch
- Small towel
- Camera (also charger, extra batteries and memory cards)
- Walking boots
- Light shoes or sandals (to allow your feet to relax and breathe during the evenings)
- Waterproofs
- Thermal underwear
- Warm socks
- Fleece or other warm sweater
- Woolly hat & gloves
- Sunglasses
- Sun hat
- Basic toiletries (lip salve, sun block, insect repellent, wet wipes, hand sanitizer, etc)
- Toilet paper + plastic bags to carry your used toilet paper with you (only needed during the trekking hours, at night a dug toilet with toilet paper will be provided)
- Basic medical kit (any personal medication, plasters, painkillers, etc)
- Pack of cards / book / game for evenings
- Money (for souvenirs, snacks, drinks, food, etc + tip for the guides and porters)
- PASSPORT + passport photocopy
- Cuzco Visitor's Ticket (this will be arranged for you by your tour leader)

We recommend a tip of US\$20 for your guide and perhaps US\$30 for all the rest of the staff.

RESPONSIBLE TREKKING

Frostbite, altitude sickness and even death can be the cost for the guides and trekking staff. Tourism Concern has a campaign aimed to put a stop to the abuse of trekking staff's human rights. Equally pack animals suffer abuse and mistreatment. Mountain trekking is exhilarating and challenging, but how could many of us do it without the assistance of trekking staff? Once they have started a trek, trekkers are often horrified by the reality of the working conditions for the staff.

The prices that tour operators charge for trekking does vary enormously, mainly due to the rates of pay and conditions that the trekking crew receive. It is easy to book a trip based purely on price, but in the case of trips involving Inca trails, this will probably be because the tour operator is using local suppliers without regard to the treatment of porters and guides.

In keeping with our Responsible Tourism Policies, Dragoman has a strict Suppliers' Policy, which also covers our trekking partners. We follow Tourism Concern's policies on trekking companies and the way that guides, porters or animals are looked after. We therefore use a local Cuzco-based trekking company called Andina Travel to run all our Inca trails trekking trips. They have an excellent trekking record and good, knowledgeable guides. They have been at the cutting edge of developing codes of responsible tourism practice and involving the local Quechuan communities in the development of their various treks. They supply us with evidence of their code of practice concerning their guides, staff and pack animals.

Please bear this in mind when deciding which travel company you will travel with. Remember many of the trekking organisations, as well as many overseas tour operators who use these suppliers, are happy to promote low cost trips, even if it is at the expense of the welfare of the guides and porters that they use.

COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED

The communities that we support are remote Andean farming communities with traditions dating back to the Incas. They are primarily Quechua speaking, with some Spanish, and little contact with the general population. Their daily lives consist of potato cultivation, weaving, and the herding of llamas, alpacas, and sheep. Considered by the Peruvian government to be living in extreme poverty, they often face malnutrition, severely cold weather, poor hygienic conditions, and little medical or health assistance. Villagers live in thatched-roof stone huts and cook with firewood. Because of the disproportionate supply and demand of native trees and bush, there is a great need for an effective reforestation project in the area. Since 2006, Dragoman has worked with Ecoam (who helps us with our reforestation project) and thanks to the support from Dragoman and our passengers, the area we used to visit around Quishuarani, Cuncani and part of the mountain range of Lares has been declared a Private Landscape Reserve.

The fairly recent introduction of tourism to the region has brought some needed assistance and economic development to the communities, but there is still much more to do. Our local trekking operator working within the guidelines of sustainable tourism has met with the communities and discussed the pros and cons of tourism in the area. Together they have established still unofficial guidelines for trekking and tourism through the Cordillera such as: established campsites to avoid contamination of community areas, use of community animals and personnel on treks, training of community members through workshops on camp maintenance, hygiene, client service to enhance their economic viability, maintenance of camp trails, camp sites, and environmental conservation. Many agencies respect these guidelines, but because making things official often brings on unwanted government intervention, they are an informal agreement between the communities, agencies, and tourists.

COLOMBIA NOTES

ECUADOR NOTES

PERU NOTES

BOLIVIA NOTES

CHILE NOTES

ARGENTINA NOTES

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 24th November 2020**