

WILD ANDES TRAIL, (ZIC)

Cuzco to Cuzco 7 Days, departing 6th February 2023



TRIP OVERVIEW

Trip Style: Overlanding
Route: Cuzco to Cuzco
Duration: 7 Days
Transport: Private Bus, Local Bus
Accommodation: Comfortable Hotel 3 nights
Multishare Hostel 1 night
Camping 2 nights
Meals: Breakfasts x 5, Lunches x 3, Dinners x 3

Physical Challenge: ● ● ● ● ○

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

Lifestyle Challenge: ● ● ● ○ ○

This trip has a bit of everything. Some areas that you travel through may be physically challenging; for example you may be at altitude some of the time and you may be camping for several nights. The pace of the trip can be tiring at times and some facilities will be basic. However there will also be plenty of time to relax and some comfortable accommodation.



DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1 - Cuzco (6th February 2023)

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 about the Wild Andes Trek, 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.

Accommodation: Hostal Saphi "A" - ZIC trips

Day 2 - Zurite (7th February 2023)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Leaving Cuzco early in the morning, we proceed to the ruined temples of Sacsaywaman for a fascinating tour of the archeological site.

After this visit we will continue to Chincheros, 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.

From Chincheros we will drive to a viewpoint for a picnic lunch, and then on to Quillarumiyoc (the Temple of the Moon). We will start our trek from here, 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 included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 3 - Amaruwatana (8th February 2023)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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 archaeological Inca site.

We will then follow the old Inca Trail 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, stopping for lunch en route and then continue to our first camp in the Sambor Valley where we will spend the night at approximately 4,200m.

Approximate walking distance: 13kms, Estimated time: 8hrs

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4 - Ancascocha (9th February 2023)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

We have an early start this morning, trekking for approximately 3 hours to reach the top of our second pass, at around 4,600m. 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 about another 2 hours, we arrive to 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 a community called Ancascocha.

Approximate walking distance: 10km Estimated time: 6-7hrs

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5 - Ollantaytambo (10th February 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will descend the narrow Silque Canyon, allowing us to observe the tall granite walls on its sides 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 community of Camicancha, where we stop at a magnificent volcanic viewpoint looking towards the snow-capped Mt. Veronica.

From here, it is only a short trek to the community of 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. In the evening there will be a briefing about the following day's visit to Machu Picchu.

Approximate walking distance: 12km Estimated time: 5hrs

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 6 - Cuzco (11th February 2023)

Meals: Breakfast

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 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!

Day 7 - Cuzco - End Date (12th February 2023)

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

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

Accommodation:

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.

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.

THE WILD ANDES TREK - DETAILED ITINERARY

This unique and pioneering trekking route travels through spectacular scenery, passing through some minor Inca ruins and staying close to remote villages. You will be hiking unspoiled trails used only by local villagers and Dragoman passengers, avoiding the crowds of the Classic route. This is the real Andes, trekking pristine trails with spectacular mountain scenery at every turn. After a comfortable overnight stay in Ollantaytambo we head to the ancient citadel Machu Picchu. Although we do not enter the site through the Sun Gate as on the Classic Inca Trail there is plenty of time to hike to the Sun Gate for those who wish.

DAY 1: CUZCO TO ZURITE

Leaving Cuzco early in the morning, we proceed to Sacsaywaman for a 1 hour tour of the archeological ruins. From there we will go to Pisac to visit the ruins, before continuing on to Chincheros, a small village in the Sacred Pampa where the locals speak mostly Quechua, the language of the Incas. There you will see a weaving demonstration that has been unchanged for a thousand years and you will tour the archaeological ruins there for another hour and a half. From Chincheros we will drive an area with great views to have an energizing picnic lunch. We will then drive to Quillarumiyoc, also known as the Temple of the Moon. From there we will hike to Zurite where you will have a picturesque stay in a house that is full of history from the Colonial period. In the house we will enjoy a nice dinner of traditional or contemporary food and you can experience the lifestyle of the locals.

Meals provided: Morning snack, lunch, dinner
 Approximate walking time: 4hrs
 Distance: 8km

DAY 2: ZURITE TO AMARUWATANA

After a hearty breakfast we leave Zurite and head towards Amaruwatana camp. Following the ancient path all the way to the top of our first pass at 4,400 meters, where we will have a dramatic view of both mountain ranges, Vilcabamba and Vilcanota. From here we start walking down on the way to our first camp in the Sambor valley where we will spend the night.

Meals provided: Breakfast, lunch, dinner
Approximate walking time: 8hrs
Distance: 13km

DAY 3: AMARUWATANA TO ANCASCOCHA

Early in the morning after breakfast we trek for 2 hours to get to our second pass; from there we have fantastic views of the rock formations below us. Sometimes it is possible to see Andean ibis, herons, torrent ducks, caracaras, eagles and foxes. After another 2 hours we arrive to a nice highland valley, a place named Kenqo Mayu, or zig-zag river, where glacier water flows through the valley. Our lunch will be at the end of the river, and after lunch we will continue downhill and follow the ancient trail, which goes on a little uphill section which leads us to our campsite in a community called Ancascocha. We will arrive to our campsite in the late afternoon near to a large glacier mountain and glacier stream. If we arrive on time there is an optional hike to the lake, a one hour round trip.

Meals provided: Breakfast, lunch, dinner
Approximate walking time: 6½hrs
Distance: 10km

DAY 4: ANCASCOCHA TO OLLANTAYTAMBO

After eating breakfast and breaking camp we start hiking down the Silque Canyon. We will descend by way of the narrow canyon, following a stream that will gradually get bigger. We can observe tall granite walls on the sides of the canyon, populated by a large variety of orchids and bromeliads, filling the environment with magnificent colours when they bloom. We continue on the trail making zig-zags. After crossing many little bridges we will reach the community of Camicancha, where we stop in a nice volcanic rock area, with magnificent views of mount Veronica, a snow capped mountain. From here we are very close to the Chilca community where we finish our trek. A vehicle will transfer us to Ollantaytambo and our hotel. After showers and a little rest, we get ready for the cultural tour of this incredible archaeological site, which is very well known as the Temple of the Sun.

Meals provided: Breakfast, lunch
Approximate walking time: 5hrs
Distance: 12km

DAY 5: OLLANTAYTAMBO - MACHU PICCHU - CUZCO

Early morning after breakfast, we catch the train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes where a short bus ride takes us to the 15th-century Inca site of Machu Picchu where we have a full day to walk around the ruins with our guide. We arrive back in Cuzco late evening after the return train and bus journey via Ollantaytambo. We spend the night in Cuzco.

Meals provided: Breakfast

WILD ANDES TREK INCLUSIONS

- Guided tour of Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo & Machu Picchu with a professional, bilingual tour guide
- All transport to and from Cuzco
- Return train ticket Ollantaytambo - Aguas Calientes
- Return bus ticket Aguas Calientes - Machu Picchu
- 1 night in Ollantaytambo hotel
- Entrance fee to Machu Picchu
- High quality double-occupancy tents and camping equipment
- Sleeping mat
- Duffle bag
- Hot water in the morning for washing
- Drinking water throughout the trek
- Dining tent, kitchen tent, and latrine tent
- First aid kit and oxygen bottle
- Professional, bilingual guide
- Team of camp staff including cooks, porters and wranglers
- Llamas and horses to carry camping equipment and passenger bags
- Emergency horse for riding in case of illness or injury
- All camping meals with plentiful and nutritious food (vegetarian option available) and snacks

COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED

The communities that we visit 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. These communities typically have small schools that often need support with construction, furniture, materials and teachers. 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. Over the last 7 years, 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 now a pact between the communities, agencies, and tourists.

TRAIL FITNESS

Trekking at altitude should not be undertaken lightly. 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 trek reaches 4,700m in altitude when we cross one of the passes. If you are in any doubt about your suitability to trek please consult your local doctor.

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). Your duffle bag will be carried by pack animals. 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.

PERU NOTES

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 8th March 2021**