

Insights Of Peru

Day 1 Depart UK, Arrive Lima

Today we take our scheduled flight to Lima from the UK. Upon arrival in Lima an English-speaking guide will meet us at the airport and take us to the hotel.

Day 2 Lima (*Treasures Of The Colonial Period*)

This morning we explore the heart of Lima and its colonial old quarter, once the finest in the Americas, and home to several of the finest museums in Peru. To begin with we take a guided Walking Tour of the Colonial Old Quarter, the old administrative capital of Spain's South American colonies, once boasted many of the finest mansions in the hemisphere. During the walk we will view the Casa Riva-Agüero, an impressive 18th-century mansion with a beautiful green-and-red courtyard that now belongs to the Catholic University of Peru. The day continues with a visit to the Convento y Museo de San Francisco, probably the most spectacular of Lima's colonial-era churches. The guided tour will include the Cloisters and a descent into the Catacombs that were dug in the beginning of 1546 as a burial ground for priests and others. The final visit will be The Museo de Oro del Peru, a privately held Gold Museum with a massive collection of ceremonial objects, jewelry, and most of all, gold, from both the Incas and pre-Inca civilizations.

After lunch, you will **visit a school** from a typical middle class neighbourhood in Lima, we will invite them to spend the rest of the afternoon with you. Once they have shown you around their school you will all visit an amusement park, Parque de las Leyendas, which has displays on Peruvian geography and history, this park also has a zoo area. After the amusement park you will share a picnic before you return the children to the school, and you carry onto your hotel.

Day 3 Lima - Morning Flight To Cusco

This morning we transfer to the airport in Lima and take a morning flight to Cusco, the storied capital of the Inca dynasty and gateway to the imperial city of Machu Picchu. Upon the arrival, we will transfer to our hotel for a morning at leisure and to adapt to the high altitude.

The afternoon begins with an **Introductory Lecture** that will provide us with a broad overview **on the Culture of the Andes**. The talk will put the places we will visit into context and allow us to have a greater appreciation and trip experience. A general vision of time and space will put us in touch with the geography of Peru and why Peru is one of the few mega diverse countries on the Planet. The afternoon concludes with a guided walking tour of Cusco, view the many Inca remains, the charming streets, and the Colonial section of the city. During the walk, we also stop for a visit to Qoricancha - Templo del Sol and Santo Domingo that together form perhaps the most vivid illustration in Cusco of Andean culture's collision with Western Europe.

Day 4 Seminar on Andean Medicine

This seminar will cover the following topics:

Traditional Medicine: Traditional medicine in all the ancient cultures encloses a hidden wisdom that challenged the Western world's understanding. Healing practices in the Andes or Amazon rainforest, are millennia old, although they are still a living tradition.

The Understanding of Health with Nature's Energies: The understanding of health as the balance with nature's energies implies a magic and religious concept. Disease is a product of misconduct, therefore healing goes through a ritual procedure of "reconciliation". The introduction will be an approach to the understanding of these traditions.

Day 5 Sacred Sights Of Cusco (*Legacy Of The Inca*)

In the morning we journey to Tambomach'ay where we commence the hiking tour in the Saqsaywaman Park. Today we begin with a visit to Tambomach'ay, a former temple devoted to cleansing rituals and water worshiping. The hike then takes us up the Ancient Trail towards Saqsaywaman. On arrival enjoy breath-taking views of the Andes mountain range above the Cusco Valley. Along the trail, we stop to visit with craftsmen and peasants in their environment, as well as visit a few of the many shrines built by the Incas, as a complex system of worship.

Next we stop at one of the sites and witness a ritual demonstration performed by an apprentice with studies in anthropology. Continue the hike towards the sacred sites of the Incas. The afternoon begins with a visit to Lanlakuyo Laqo (also called Temple of the moon), a series of small caves & labyrinths. Then continue to the temple and amphitheater of Q'enko, where a great limestone outcrop was hollowed out by the Incas and, in the void, they constructed a cave-like altar. The afternoon concludes with a visit to Sacsayhuaman, the greatest of the ruins, and some of the Incas' most extraordinary architecture and monumental stonework.

This evening we head back to Cusco and we enjoy **cooking classes** to prepare and eat a traditional Peruvian meal.

Day 6 Chinchero, Moray & Salinas (*Resources of the Andean People*)

Today we will look at the **resources of the Andean People**. This morning we travel north of Cusco to the traditional village of Chinchero, spectacularly sited above the rest of the valley, with gorgeous views of the snowy peak of Salcantay and the Vilcabamba and Urubamba mountain ranges in the distance. This morning we visit the Church, the archaeological sites and the Agricultural Terraces, as well as Craftsmen in the markets. This afternoon we head up to visit Moray, one of the most unique Inca sites in the region, featuring enigmatic concentric ring terraces. The site is not ruins of a palace or fortress or typical temple, but what almost appears to be a large-scale environmental art installation. Three main sets of rings, like bowls, are set deep into the earth, forming strange sculpted terraces. In the evening we return to Cusco.

Day 7 The Sacred Valley (*Andean Agriculture*)

Today we explore the area outside of Cusco known as the Sacred Valley. The day begins with a visit to the Pisac Ruins, some of the finest, and largest, in the entire valley.

In Yucay, we enjoy a **Picnic Lunch with local farmers**. Farming in the Andes is most interesting, since the process remains very much like it was in the old days. The territory of slopes, hills and valleys, diverse ecosystems, variety of weather and climates have determined the most varied agriculture corresponding to a mega diverse country. We participate in a **demonstration of the Farming Process**, such as the use of the ancient terraces, the ponds and the water channels, as well as plowing, planting and harvesting. During the demonstration we have the opportunity to learn how to manipulate the tools, and taste samples of the crops. Finally we return to Cusco for the evening.

Day 8 Cusco - Puno

This morning we begin our tour of the highlands stopping to explore the isolated villages, which we will find on our way. The houses are traditionally built with mud bricks just as they were centuries ago. This area is generally known as "The Real Peru", never having been touched by Spanish influence. The highest point on our itinerary will be reached today when we arrive at "la Raya" over 4,000 metres above sea level. We will reach Puno in the late afternoon and after checking in to our centrally located hotel we will take an evening orientation walk. Puno, the capital of the "Altiplano", is also considered the folklore capital of Peru, situated as it is by the legendary Lake Titikaka, the highest in the world. Here, old Inca ladies with their bowl hats, knit sweaters of llamas' and alpacas' wool while young musicians blow their rustic "zamponas" or wind pipes, creating the unique sound of the Andes.

Day 9 Taquile - Amantani (*Taquile Cross Cultural Activities, Amantani experience*)

We will make an early-morning transfer to the port, by motor boat we head onto Taquile island south section, inhabited by Quechua-speaking natives who have developed efficient and unique social systems, as well as fine hand weaving techniques down through the generations. We then climb a stairway of more than 567 steps – stone slabs that wind their way among greenery platforms - to arrive at the Town of Taquile where we will have a break to eat. After lunch at a local Taquile inn, we take a walk through the various hills and archaeological sites of this fascinating island and enjoy **cross cultural integration activities** with the local people.

This afternoon we take a motor boat ride to Amantani, arriving late afternoon. Amantani Island is a beautiful, barren place with numerous well preserved terraces and is home to about 800 families of farmers, fishermen and weavers living in a few small villages. Amantani Island is situated on Lake Titicaca at an elevation of over 3800m. It is home to the pre-Inca Aymara people and we can experience the traditional way of life on the island with an **overnight stay with a local family**, our group breaks into smaller groups for home stays.

In the afternoon each host family will take us to the fields of potatoes to plow the land, feel free to help cooking at the home stay. The meals served are simple but wholesome, usually based around potatoes, quinoa (Inca rice) and fish. It is a nice gesture to take fresh fruit, vegetables, bread or candles as a small gift.

Day 10 Amantani (*Community Service*)

After breakfast we start the "**community service**". Be prepared to move mud bricks and make the walls for the future Library. Working together with the community members the building will become possible, as well we will present some book donations for the Library.

Meals and overnight are with the families. Guest rooms tend to be the best rooms in the house (or outbuilding) but they are still quite basic. There may be limited, or no electricity and most families do not have enough room to house more than 2 guests. After dinner we will join in the **celebration and dances with the local families**.

Day 11 LLachon - Uros Reed Islands - Puno

Today we will take a motor boat ride to Llachon. There we kayak by the coast for an hour. We will then take a two-hour motor boat excursion on the waters of Lake Titicaca to the unique Floating "Islands" of the Uros. These ancient inhabitants of the lake, known as the Water Tribe, have built their own "islands" by periodically adding new layers of a type of reed unique to the area called "Totorá". Their homes and boats are also made from this material.

Day 12 Puno – Sillustani, Fly to Lima

The area is rich with breathtaking landscapes, impressive archaeological remains and historical monuments. We will transfer to Sillustani Peninsula and take a guided tour to observe the "Chullpas" enormous funerary towers, while enjoying the unique beauty of the "Umayu" lagoon on the way. We will also visit a very traditional highland family home.

This afternoon we will take a flight to Lima.

Day 13 Craftsmen Interaction, Fly from Lima

We will visit a group of **Craftsmen** in Lima formed by members of families who migrated from the Andes in the city in search of new opportunities after the violent years of Shining Path. Keeping the same social organization, family links and communal survival strategies, they had to use their skills and best abilities to face a huge market, and competitiveness became part of their learning. After a time they succeeded and the production grew. They will share with you the testimony of their lives. We'll visit them either in their shops or alternatively in their workshops.

We will enjoy lunch together, before we journey just south of the city to visit the finest ruins in the area, Pachacámac, in the Lurín valley, which was inhabited by several pre-Columbian cultures prior to the Incas.

In the evening we return to Lima for dinner, before transferring to the airport for the late evening flight home.

Day 14 Arrive Back In The UK

Today we arrive back in the UK from an overnight flight.