

Typical Classic 4 day Inca Trail Trek Itinerary and Trail Description

Day 1 (12km): Travellers are collected early from their hotels and travel by bus, through the picturesque villages of Chinchero, Urubamba and Ollantaytambo, for the 3½ hour scenic trip to kilometre 82 (the start of the trail).

Hikers cross the Vilcanota River and follow the trail to the right as it climbs steeply up from the river. After passing through a small village, the ruins of the Inca hillfort of Huillca Raccay come into view high above the mouth of the river Cusichaca ('happy bridge'). It is a simple descent down to the Cusichaca river.

[Note most our clients now commence the trek at Km82 as this is as far as it is possible to go when travelling by bus along the Vilcanota valley. If travelling by train from Cusco you can get off a little further along the valley at Km88. There is, in fact, very little difference to the total length of the trail whether you start at Km82 or Km88 since the trails join approximately midway between the two.

For a further 7 km the path follows the left bank of the river up to the village of Wayllabamba (3,000m). The name in Quechua means 'grassy plain'. Most tour groups spend the first night here although there are prettier campsites a little further on.

Day 2 (11km): Climbing up from Wayllabamba for about 3 hours through steepening woods and increasingly spectacular terrain brings you to the treeline and a meadow known as Llulluchapampa (3,680m). It is another 1½ hours climb to the first and highest pass of the trail (Abra de Huarmihuañusca or 'Dead Woman's Pass) at 4,200m. During this part of the trail hikers are exposed to the Andean elements: first scorching sun and then, closer to the pass, freezing winds. Once at the top hikers can celebrate having completed the most difficult section of the trail. The descent from the pass is steep although not difficult, following the trail on the left side of the valley to the valley floor and to the 2nd night's campsite at Pacamayo (3,600m). There are toilet facilities here.

Day 3 (16km): From Pacamayo it takes about an hour to climb up to the ruins of Runkuracay. These small circular ruins occupy a commanding position overlooking the Pacamayo valley below. Another 45 minute hike will bring you to the top of the second pass: Abra de Runkuracay (4,000m). At last you'll feel that you are walking along the trail of the Incas with paving, for the most part, being original. The descent down the steps from the pass is steep so take care. This section of the trail, up till the 3rd pass, is particularly beautiful as the path crosses high stone embankments and skirts deep precipices. After about 1 hour from the 2nd pass you'll arrive at Sayacmarca by way of a superbly designed stone staircase. The name Sayacmarca means 'Inaccessible Town' and describes the position of the ruins perfectly, protected on three sides by sheer cliffs. No one knows the exact purpose of these ruins.

You have to backtrack a little to rejoin the trail as it passes Conchamarca, a small Inca dwelling situated in the shadows of Sayacmarca, which was probably a *tambo* for weary travelers on their way to Machu Picchu. From then on the path descends into magnificent cloudforest full of orchids, hanging mosses, tree ferns and flowers, passing through an impressive Inca tunnel, carved into the rock, on the way.

The trail then climbs up to the 3rd pass (3,700m). The view from the pass offers excellent views of several snow-capped peaks including Salkantay (6,271m) and Veronica (5,750m). A few minutes after the pass is Phuyupatamarca, the most impressive Inca ruin so far. The name means 'Town in the Clouds'. Access to the ruins is down a steep flight of stairs passing six 'Inca Baths' probably used for the ritual worship of water.

Leaving the site via an impressive Inca staircase leading from the west side of the ruins (the far end from the baths) you descend a thousand or so steps. Be careful with your knees which will feel the strain by the end of the day. After about an hour of walking through cloudforest you may just be able to see the tin roof of the Trekkers Hostel at Wiñay Wayna, although it probably won't be for another 2 hours until you arrive.

The Trekkers Hostel certainly isn't considered one of Peru's best-looking hotels. It is also usually crowded and cramped, but it is the last official campsite before Machu Picchu, hence it's always full. There is, however, a restaurant where you can purchase food, drinks and even a well deserved beer, as well as hot showers (\$1.5) and toilets. Trekkers on the Classic 4-day trek will camp here. The dormitory beds in the hostel used to be used by trekkers doing the shorter Inca Trail trek but trekkers now have to continue directly to Machu Picchu and spend the night at Aguas Calientes. There are plans to demolish the hostel in 2005 which, most people will agree, will be a great improvement.

A short trail leaves from the southern end of the hostel to the ruins of Wiñay Wayna. The name in Quechua means 'forever young' and is named after a variety of pink orchid which grows here. The ruins comprise magnificent agricultural terraces set in an impressive location. There are also many buildings of good quality stonework and a sequence of 10 baths, suggesting that the site was probably a religious center associated with the worship of water. Ritual cleansing may have taken place here for pilgrims on the final leg of the trail to Machu Picchu.

Day 4 (6km): The trail from the hostel to Machu Picchu is clearly marked and takes about 1½ hours. Most people attempt to wake up at 4.30am so that they can leave Wiñay Wayna by 5.30am to get to Machu Picchu before sunrise. The sky starts getting light by 6am and the first rays of the sun reach Machu Picchu at about 7am. The trail contours a mountainside and drops into cloudforest before coming to an almost vertical flight of 50 steps leading up to the final pass at Intipunku (Sun Gate). Suddenly the whole of Machu Picchu is spread out before you in all its glory - a fantastic sight for all.

p.m. Return to Cusco

Leaders in Quality & Excellence.

- We are recognized as being the specialists in creating tailor-made itineraries and treks in South of Peru.
- Commitment to our Community
- Environmentally Sensitive
- Outfitter & Ground Operators with more than 16 years experience.

Experienced & licensed Peruvian guides.

- Responsible, dedicated and professional, our guides are highly praised by our travelers. They are knowledgeable and passionate about Inca history and culture.

- Our guides are fluent in English Spanish and other languages.
- There is 1 licensed tour guide for up to 8 trekkers; 2 licensed guides for 9 to 16 (max) trekkers.

Full support.

- 11 nutritious and delicious meals made with fresh, high quality ingredients and prepared hygienically to avoid illness. (3 Breakfasts, 4 Lunches, 3 Dinners, afternoon tea & drinks). A combination of International & Peruvian cuisine. We can accommodate vegetarians and specialized diets upon request.
- Packed snack breakfast on Day 1
- Boiled purified water to fill your water bottles each morning.
- Clean, quality equipment: Waterproof, dome igloo tent. 2 people per tent. The tents are oversized (it is designed to fit 3 people) giving you plenty of space for your stuff.
- Thick, comfortable sleeping mattress. Pillow upon request.
- Dining and kitchen tent, with dining table and stools.
- Hot coca tea every morning in your tent for a gentle wakeup!
- Oxygen assistance and first aid kit.

100% Operated by Peru Tourist Information. No hidden extra costs. Also included:

- Free airport pickup upon your arrival to Cusco.
- Day 1 bus transfer to trailhead (km 82)
- Entrance fees to Inca Trail Park & Machu Picchu.
- Bus from Machu Picchu down to Aguas Calientes.
- Return transportation: Tourist train ticket from Aguas Calientes to Cusco
- Safe storage of your belongings while you are on tour).

Fair treatment of our Porters.

- At our Travel, we pride ourselves in our treatment of the porters who carry all the food and equipment that make your amazing experience on the Inca Trail possible. Equipment and tents for our staff.
- Our Travel employs Peruvians and pays them wages. We pay our Porters & Staff more than most other tour operators, and on time. They are not overburdened. We are highly organized to ensure a safe pace for them along the trail.
- We have Health and Insurance for our porters and staff. They are provided accommodation, food, transport and necessary permits and entrance fees.
- We support projects in the Andean communities where many of our porters, cooks and staff come from.

EXTRA INFORMATION:

SUGGESTIONS OF WHAT YOU NEED TO TAKE:

- BACKPACK : Only if you are carrying your own backpack. A comfortable 45L pack is available to rent for **\$15** for the entire trek. If you have hired a personal Porter, We will provide you with a duffle bag.
- DAY PACK
- 5 C SLEEPING BAG : Can be rented at our office.

- WALKING POLES : Very helpful for your knees when descending the Inca steps. Wood walking sticks are readily available to buy in and around Cusco for around 5 soles. Poles with metal tips are not allowed on the trail.
- HIKING SHOES or BOOTS : Broken-in (don't hit the trail in brand new hiking shoes!) Running shoes are not recommended.
- WARM CLOTHES : Layers for variable temperatures, especially at night.
- T-SHIRTS and SHORT PANTS : For walking comfortably during the day.
- TREKKING PANTS : Or similar.
- THERMALS : Wool socks, gloves, scarf, woolen hat for cold nights.
- FLASH LIGHT & BATTERIES
- CAMERA, EXTRA FILM & BATTERIES
- SUN PROTECTION : Sunscreen, hat & sunglasses.
- INSECT REPELLENT : Don't worry too much there is no malaria risk but some mean sand flies on the first day and in Aguas Calientes.
- TOILET PAPER and HAND SANITIZER
- RAIN PONCHO : A good rain jacket to keep in your day pack.
- TOILETRIES / SMALL TOWEL : Helpful tip a small pack of wet/baby wipes works wonders.
- BATHING CLOTHES for the hot springs.
- 2 L WATER BOTTLE
- WATER PURIFYING TABLETS : Optional (use if you take water from the streams).
- PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT
- A foam sleeping pad is provided (weighs 800gms). Feel free to bring your own THERMA-REST mattress as it will be more comfortable.
- ORIGINAL PASSPORT : Imperative to get on the trail.
- ORIGINAL ISIC STUDENT CARD : If applicable.
- EXTRA MONEY FOR SOUVENIRS, DRINKS & TIPS, ETC (Soles or Dollars)

OTHER :

- **\$20** Down filled sleeping bag: weighs 1.8 kg , rated to 10 degrees Celsius
- **\$15** Single Supplement for an individual, or you can share a tent with other group member of the same gender
- **\$15** Comfortable Back Pack with 45 L capacity to rent the entire trek
- **\$36** Upgrade for Vistadome 1st Class Train return to Poroy Station & Shuttle bus to Cusco at 15:25 pm

Unless you hire an EXTRA PORTER you need to carry your back pack, sleeping bag and mattress. **You need to indicate your wish to hire a porter at the time of booking** as porters who carry for the full 4 days require permits in advance in the same manner as trekkers.

PORTERS

The cost is **\$50 for 9kg** or **\$100 for 18 kg** (From April 2009 **\$60 for 9kg** or **\$120 for 18 kg**) . 60% of trekkers hire an extra porter for the full extent of the trek. You will still need to carry a small daypack while you hike for your camera, water, snacks, sunscreen, fleece, poncho in case of rain (unlikely in dry season but as a precaution) and anything else you need with you. The porters do not walk alongside you.

Therefore, anything you need during the day should not go with the porters. The SAS duffle bag with your items, sleeping bag and mattress will be waiting for you at the campsite.

Please note there are fines if you give an excess of 9 or 18 kg so try to underpack rather than overpack, or pay for an extra 9 kg . **On Day 2** the most difficult day with the high pass you can hire a porter from the village of Wayllabamba to carry your pack to the second campsite for approximately **70 soles**. They are not our staff so please pay these porters directly. Please check your pack and belongings before the porter leaves.

TIPPING OF THE PORTERS

As in most countries, tipping is normal and it is a tradition on the Inca trail. Generally groups prepare a collective tip at dinner on the last night which is shared between the porters and cook. The porters will be much better off if you tip them in cash rather than beers in Wiñaywayna.

The porter's protection group states: "Please let your group know that 30 soles per porter is a minimum for general porters, and to deal separately with porters that carry individuals' bags." A group of 16 typically has around 19 - 20 *general porters*. Tipping of porters who carry your personal items is separate and you are asked to tip extra to your *personal porter* directly.

The recommended minimum is **\$10** or 30 Soles for 18kg. A guideline is **\$15** tip per trekker for the general porters. Please do not worry if others tip less or more. This does not account for the tips for *guides* and *cooks* they generally should receive **\$10** **15** more. *Most trekkers take approximately \$30 to cover the tipping tradition.*

ALTITUDE SICKNESS:

It is possible you will feel the effects of altitude upon arriving in Cusco (3,400 m or 11,350 feet).

Remember that arriving from a lower elevation (like Lima) to the Andes, the % of oxygen is less. You will feel tired and weak before adjusting to it. It is best to arrive in Cusco at least two days before setting out on the trail. Don't drink alcohol, smoke or take sedatives. Drink lots of water and coca tea, have a good night's sleep, and eat moderate, light meals high in carbohydrates.

Very Important! We encourage you to allow for at least 3 days in Cusco before your trek; apart from there being so much to see and do (see the other activities we offer), it is possible that your arrival could be delayed due to transport strikes or cancellation of flights due to poor weather, etc. Altitude affects everyone differently and you may need more time to acclimatize. Because there is no way to change your permit to another date you could miss out on your Inca trail experience altogether. So please keep this in mind when choosing the date of your trek and making your travel plans!

Water: We suggest you take a 2 liter bottle of water on the first day and then you can refill this throughout the entire trek. We boil water each night and you can fill your water bottle after breakfast each morning. We suggest you take water purification tablets or filters for water you take directly from streams or waterfalls. You can buy water throughout the first day, for the first few hours of Day 2 and the afternoon of Day 3 at the Hostel in Wiñaywayna.

Temperatures during the day: If you are walking in the sun it is very hot and feels like 26 degrees Celsius, but when you walk through the forest or in the shadow of a mountain it can feel like 14 degrees almost

immediately. On the second night, due to the higher elevation, the temperature is cold, ranging from 0 to -5 degrees Celsius! The third night at 2700 m , "high jungle," is warmer.

The best way to deal with the changes in temperatures is to try and keep your body temperature as regular as possible by wearing layers: put on that extra layer before you get cold and take off a layer if you start to feel warm, before you perspire which will leave you with a chill if it gets cold again. The weather from December through to early March is the wettest on the trail.

Some days it may be drizzly all day or you may have a burst of rain and clear skies for the rest of the day, or it could be wet off and on all day. You need good rain gear for walking as well as something to protect your pack. We have dining tents so you are protected from the elements during meals.

Hot Shower along the Trail: Unfortunately not yet, but a little hot water will be offered to you every morning and before meals for a quick wash. There is a basic timed electric shower at the 3rd night camping in Wiñaywayna for 10 Soles but please do not expect too much!!!

Toilets : In each of the Campsites there are basic toilets constructed and maintained by the Inka Trail Park control. Bring your own toilet paper.

Garbage : There are many bins along the trail. At lunch time and at campsites our porters will always clean the area. Please keep this historical sanctuary clean and cooperate so that we leave no trace! Take all trash with you and don't litter!

PROHIBITED : Alcohol, Drug use, Campfires, Graffiti, Collection of Orchids or Hummingbirds !!

Unexpected : Don't be surprised to find Gatorade, Coca Cola, Cuzqueña Beer and even Snickers chocolate bars at 4,200 meters along the trail.

What happens if I get exhausted or weak in the middle of the trek? : we have a low record of hikers that decide to turn back. Our trekking staff will accompany you back if necessary, but they are prepared to walk at your pace, carry your pack and even you if necessary, for you to reach the top.

Important lessons learnt by some!!

Don't get drunk in Cusco before you start the trek!

Don't get drunk the 3rd night before the walk to sunrise at Machupicchu!

Don't take that Lonely Planet guidebook on the trail you'll be too exhausted to read it. Leave any unnecessary items with our secure luggage area in Cusco.

Do learn some Quechua words and practice it with your porters!

Tours Includes.

Pick up hotel / train station / htl

04 Days treek

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Sleeping Bag & Matress if You don't have them

Train tckt back to Cusco

Bus tckt to the point start of the trek

Entrance to the Ruins

English guide spoken

Personal assistance

Tour Price: **420.00 US\$** per person