

## *Machu Picchu & the Ancient Empire of the Incas*

The modern country of Peru is the location of many ancient sites from vanished civilizations; the best known of these is the stunning mountaintop city of Machu Picchu, which was deserted in ancient times and forgotten until it was re-discovered about 100 years ago. Even though it became increasingly accessible to modern tourists in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is still beautifully preserved and is worth the effort and cost it takes to get there. Machu Picchu is located on the edge of the central area of the Inca Empire, and there are other extremely worthwhile sites included on this tour: the “Sacred Valley” of the Incas; the Inca Fortress at Ollantaytambo; Pisac, where the Incas built an astronomical Observatory; and the Capital of the Inca Empire, Cusco.



### *Itinerary*

Note: this tour occurs between two Galapagos Islands cruises which I have organized, so the following details have some special notation designed to provide specific details for people who are taking one of those trips. Meals that are included in the tour price are noted each day.

The tour begins on **March 7<sup>th</sup>** at the Costa del Sol Ramada Hotel at Lima Airport. Because of airline flight schedules all tours to Peru usually begin in Lima, the Capital of Peru, which is located on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, more than 240 miles from Cusco. Travelers coming directly from the Feb 27 – March 7 Galapagos trip will probably arrive at 8:30 PM that night. Travelers who are taking the Galapagos tour March 13 – 22 (following this Inca Tour) can arrive at any time on March 7<sup>th</sup>, because there are more flight choices from the US than from Guayaquil. The hotel is located across the street from the International Terminal; it is new, with the bland but efficient & useful attributes of a purpose built modern hotel. However it provides some welcome comforts and it makes arrival in a foreign country as easy as walking across the street. No meal is planned or included on this night. Lima.

**March 8<sup>th</sup>:** The Ramada Hotel includes a large buffet breakfast. The entire group will depart by plane from Lima to Cusco between 0920 – 1010 AM (depending on which flight can accommodate the group) and arrive between 1040 – 1130 AM. We will be met on arrival in Cusco and assistance is provided with luggage, then we will be transferred to our hotel, the Novotel Hotel, which is one of the top hotels in Cusco (in the “Top End” of the Lonely Planet Guide suggestions, for travelers like me, who often rely on their advice.) We have rooms in the contemporary wing, which have all expected modern conveniences.

After check in and free time for lunch on your own, there is an afternoon escorted sightseeing tour of the Capital City of the Incas, which visits the ancient Temple of the Sun, the Inca Street of Loreto, and the Ahuajpinto, an area of remains of ancient palaces and location of the Cathedral, the Museum of Colonial Art and the archaeological park of Saqsaywaman. After the escorted tour you might want to visit the Barrio San Blas nearby. Our hotel is located away





from the main plaza in an area of cobble stone streets on a steep rise overlooking Cusco, but central enough so that you can walk to most places. A group dinner is planned, then a free evening (but there might be an impromptu voluntary expedition to search for Cusco's best "Pisco Sours", the legendary drink of Peru). Cusco; Breakfast, Dinner



**March 9<sup>th</sup>:** After a buffet breakfast included at our hotel, we leave for a full day tour of The Sacred Valley of the Incas. On our route we'll have an option to stop and see An-



dean weaving and the four types of animals used to provide fur for weaving: llamas, guanacos, alpacas, and vicunas. We visit the town of Pisac, where there is a handicraft market where you are free to bargain with vendors, and we have lunch (included in the tour cost). After lunch we continue to the Inca fortress of Ollantaytambo and the small town at its base which is the best surviving example of Inca town planning and which has been inhabited since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The scenery we see today has a claim to being called the "heart" of the Inca Empire. The purpose and uses of Machu Picchu are not clear, and are still being debated by scholars, with some saying that it may have been a more private retreat for the Royal family, and therefore less well known by the common people. However, the Sacred Valley is known to have been inhabited by the common people, with farming, villages, grazing herds, etc.

After a full day, nothing is planned for the evening. There are numerous excellent restaurants in Cusco, and I encourage you to venture out away from our hotel and try some local food. Cusco; Breakfast, lunch.



**March 10<sup>th</sup>:** After another buffet breakfast included at our hotel, we check out very early from our hotel, then we are transferred to the train station where we board the "Vistadome" train to Aguas Caliente, which is the town at the base of the mountain where the ruins of Machu Picchu are located. For most of the route we will be seeing new countryside until we reach Urubamba, where we re-enter the Sacred Valley of the Incas and continue on to Aguas Caliente. Note that you may only bring one small bag with you from Cusco to Aguas Caliente, which must weight no more than 11 pounds, and can be no more than 62 inches total dimensions (h x w x l). Your main suitcase would remain at our hotel in the locked bag

storage room until we return.

On arrival (about 11:00 AM) we will be met and transferred by coach to Machu Picchu on top of the mountain (approximately 6,180 feet in elevation). Lunch is included at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge, which is located at the top of the mountain near the entrance to the site. (A note on this hotel: it is a deluxe property which costs at least \$250 per person more per night than staying in the Valley. If you are interested in this splurge, please let me know and I will try to arrange it).



Our visit includes a guided tour of the site, and of course free time to explore on your own. Shuttle buses return to the tiny town of Aguas Caliente regularly until the site closes, so you stay as long as you want to and make your own way back using the free shuttle bus. Dinner is included at our hotel, the Machu Picchu Inn, which is again listed as one of the Top End hotels by Lonely Planet, and was very good when I stayed there last time. There are thermal hot springs in the town (usually open until 8:30 PM). Aguas Caliente (Machu Picchu); Breakfast, lunch, dinner



**March 11<sup>th</sup>:** This morning you may decide to opt out of the buffet breakfast in order to have a unique experience: sunrise at Machu Picchu. People who stay overnight in the area sometimes make their 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Machu Picchu at 0530 AM to see the sunrise; the first train of tourists doesn't arrive until 0930, so the opportunity to see it quietly, without 'day trippers' from Cusco, and with tangential light coming across the mountains at an angle is a highlight for some people. Some people with sore muscles from over-exerting themselves have been known to enjoy the thermal baths on the 2<sup>nd</sup> morning in Aguas Caliente.

Lunch is included from 1:00 – 3:00 PM at a local hotel near the train station in Aguas Caliente, and then we re-board the train and return to our same hotel in Cusco, the Novotel. The train will be in the late afternoon but the exact time will not be known until later; after a transfer to the Novotel hotel on arrival in Cusco the rest of the day and evening are free for last minute shopping or sightseeing. Cusco; Breakfast, lunch



**March 12<sup>th</sup>:** A morning flight from Cusco back to Lima (I have requested an 0800 AM flight). We will be met on arrival and will have a half-day tour of the historical center of Lima. This includes the Plaza San Martin and Plaza Mayor, the Government Palace, City Hall, the Cathedral, and the Convent & Church of San Francisco, which is considered by some to be the greatest architectural complex of Colonial art in America. Also included are catacombs which served as a cemetery by Colonial Viceroy, and we'll pass through some residential areas. There will be free time for lunch during our touring. I have requested some flexibility for the length of this tour and I will continue to negotiate to get us the best value for our dollar.



We stay in the night at the Casa Andina Private Collection Hotel in the Miraflores district near the ocean, again one of the best (if not **the** best) hotels in Lima. We'll have an informal end of the trip gathering at the hotel tonight. The Miraflores area is about 20 minutes from the Lima Airport, and it is a nice quiet neighborhood, with some shopping available. Lima; Breakfast

**March 13<sup>th</sup>:** Breakfast is included at the hotel. The group which is taking part in the Galapagos Cruise *following* this trip will fly to Guayaquil, Ecuador, at 10:40 AM (transfers and assistance included). For people travelling home or onwards (such as people who have already been to the Galapagos), airport transfers can be arranged the night before through our

hotel for a reasonable rate. There may be some people who have to return to Guayaquil before heading home, in which case the same assistance and transfers to the airport are included.

**Inclusions:** All of the sightseeing facilitated & escorted by a local English speaking guide, meals listed as included, meeting and transfers to and from flights and the train, Vistadome Train tickets, admission tickets to Machu Picchu for both days and tickets for the other sights, hotel rooms in double occupancy (single supplement not included), pre-trip research and organization, and coordination during the trip by Ken McFarland.



**Not included:** International and domestic airfares, meals not listed as included, personal expenses such as laundry, internet, hotel extras and personal spending, alcoholic beverages, tips to the Tour Guide (probably about \$35) or Hotel Staff, International Departure Tax from Lima Airport (currently \$30, subject to change), Tax on Domestic flights of \$6 per flight, medical care or trip insurance.

**Cost, Terms and Conditions:** The land Tour costs \$1558 per person in double or twin occupancy. A Single supplement upgrade is \$537 (not including the Sanctuary Hotel in Machu Picchu, and subject to availability of enough hotel rooms being available). I will assist to the best of my ability with finding roommates, but in the event that I cannot find one for you, it will be your responsibility to find a roommate or pay the single supplement. Deviations from the group tour itinerary may result in a supplemental charge (for example, should you book an airline ticket that requires a special airport transfer arrangement). A deposit of \$750 is required to save space; the Final payment is due in my office on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009. A Trip Registration Form is also required.

**Airfare from Lima to Cusco:** The airfare from Lima to Cusco will cost between \$323 - \$398 per person round trip. This is still being negotiated in order to obtain the best possible flight schedule and cost, and participants will be advised at the earliest possible opportunity. Payment will be by check or transfer in US funds. If you book an airline ticket from Lima to Cusco on your own and it does not match the group flights, you might be required to pay for your own meeting and arrival transfers.



**Out of the ordinary requirement:** in order to book your space on the Vistadome Train and the airline ticket within Peru, you must send me your Passport information, including your name as it appears on the passport, the country of issue, number, date of issue and expiration date.

**Cancellation:** Payments become non-refundable on the date they are made or due, whichever comes first. Unlike other trips, I am not able to offer a "Transfer" of funds to other Ken-trips from this tour if you have to cancel. Resources for Trip Insurance coverage are provide on my web page: [www.reeljig.com/mcfarland/](http://www.reeljig.com/mcfarland/)

**Additional Airfare information** and suggestions for people travelling on one of the Galapagos trips will be sent directly to those people by email.

**Special diets and food allergies:** These can not be guaranteed, and have to be requested in advance. Vegetarian food is the only special diet that is typically readily available; all other dietary needs are subject to availability (and it has to be said, translation; for example, try explaining “wheat free” in Spanish.)

**Physical condition:** The highest elevation is Cusco, at an elevation of 3,320 Meters; Aguas Caliente is at 2,410 Meters. People with normal constitutions are always encouraged to take it easy, especially when they first arrive. People with compromised breathing ability *must* be willing to pace themselves. There are no long staircases to climb, but long is of course a relative term; if you have trouble getting up more than 5 or 6 stairs at home, the sightseeing on this trip would present you with a problem. At Machu Picchu there are areas of 15 steps / stairs or more, which are accessible even for people with compromised joints, but there are no handrails. If you have doubts, I encourage you to contact me and talk more about this subject. Medical Insurance coverage is not included in the trip price, nor is Medical treatment. However one of the benefits of having a local Spanish-speaking guide included in the tour cost is having that person available as a resource for advice in situations which require consultation and translation.

**Registration:** Because of the large amount of interest in this tour, please send an email to confirm that you want to come to [ken\\_mcfarland@earthlink.net](mailto:ken_mcfarland@earthlink.net) Bookings are taken on a first come basis and priority for space on this trip is given to those people who are participating in one of the Galapagos Tours I am organizing. You may also Fax information to (907) 456-7558.