

The Machu Picchu and camel conservation experience, Peru

Project Overview

Don't all camels live in the desert?

Shockingly no! The South American camel is native to the Andes Mountains, a far cry from the deserts of India and Africa. On this Peruvian adventure you will spend your first week working with a camel conservation project in the gorgeous Andes Mountains. You will learn to weave camel wool and also be involved with feeding and caring for the animals. The second week is your time to really explore the fantastic history of Peru. You will visit Cusco and the surrounding areas as well as Ollantaytambo, the sacred valley of the Incas. Your tour will conclude with a visit to the stunning Machu Picchu, a world heritage site and recently dubbed one of the new Seven Wonders of the World!



Trip Highlights:

- Wandering through the ancient city of Machu Picchu
- Learning the ancient craft of weaving from the source, the Andean people
- Bonding with the South American camels
- Touring magical Cusco, a city cloaked in history

Day 1: Arrival

Welcome to Peru! Today you will be picked up from Lima airport and brought to your home stay in Lima. Dinner is included.

Day 2: Orientation

Meet the dedicated i-to-i in country team and learn all about what Peru has to offer. Breakfast and dinner are included.

Day 3: Flight to Cusco

Hop on board your flight to Cusco and head to the heartland of Peru. You will be taken to your home stay and have a chance to settle in. Breakfast and dinner are included.

Day 4 to Day 8: Work at the camel project

Over the next few days you will be involved in a variety of tasks including helping to feed the camels, learning to dye, spin and weave the camel wool and preparing the textiles. You will even have a chance to learn some Quechua - the indigenous language of the region. Breakfast and dinner are included.

Day 9: Tour Cusco and surrounding ruins

After breakfast, you will be taken from your home stay to your new accommodation in Cusco. You will have the morning free to get settled and after lunch, you will take a tour of the major sites in the city including the Cathedral and the Qoricancha. You will then hop on a bus and go explore the ruins in the surrounding areas often city including Qenqo, Pucapucara, Tambomachay and Sacsayhuaman. Breakfast and lunch are included.

Day 10: Sacred Valley of the Incas - Ollantaytambo

You will get an early start today and travel to the "Sacred Valley of the Incas". On the way you will stop at a local market to practice your Spanish haggling skills. Your last stop of the day will be at Chinchero to visit a splendid 16th century Church built on an ancient Inca Palace. You will return back to Ollantaytambo to spend the night. Breakfast and lunch are included.

Day 11: Ollantaytambo

You will have this day to explore the famous Incan city of Ollantaytambo. The local market and church are not to be missed. Breakfast and lunch are included.

Day 12: Machu Picchu

Get your camera ready because today you are off to see one of the most famous places in the world. You will take a train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes where you will catch a bus up to the amazing ruins of Machu Picchu. You will have a guided tour of the ruins and plenty of free time to explore this amazing place on your own. You will return to Aguas Calientes for a hardy lunch, you'll need it after climbing all the steps up, down and around Machu Picchu. The afternoon and evening are yours to enjoy in Aguas Calientes. Breakfast and lunch are included.

Day 13: Aguas Calientes - Cusco

Enjoy a nice mellow morning. Have late breakfast and wonder the many shops of Aguas Calientes. After lunch, you will take the train back to Cusco. You will be met at the train station in Cusco and transferred to your accommodation. Breakfast and lunch are included.

Day 14: Cusco

Enjoy your final day in Cusco. Spend the day exploring this beautiful city and do some last minute shopping. Breakfast and lunch are included.

Day 15: End of Tour

It is time to say good bye to the Andes as you board your flight to back to Lima or wherever your wandering feet take you from here. Breakfast is included.

What the project does and why it needs you

This Project was started in order to preserve both the auquenidos (South American camels) and the ancient Andean textile industry which is dependent on their wool. The Project works with rural communities to support the sale of the textile goods and encourage others to learn the craft.

Who is it for?

This Project is ideal for mountain lovers who are anxious to get a first hand insight into the Andean culture and to experience the heartland of Peru. No previous weaving experience is required!!

What you'll be doing

You will be involved in a range of activities including feeding and sheering the camels and dying, spinning and weaving the wool to make textiles. You will also have a chance to learn some Quechua.

Where you'll be staying

Lima: shared twin room in home stay

Cusco: shared twin room in home stay, Patricia Tejada is a nice woman in her late forties who lives her older son Diego, the apartment is a 45 minute walking to the main square of Cusco and there are all types of facilities close by. Internet facilities are available in downtown Cusco

Ollantaytambo: shared twin room at guesthouse

Aguas Calientes: shared twin room at guesthouse

When you arrive

You will need to arrive into Lima (LIM) on your specified arrival date for orientation. You will need to arrange your own flights to Cusco on the Sunday after you arrive, please aim to arrive on Cusco on the Sunday morning, you will be met at the airport by a member of the i-to-i team.

Please note that this tour is guaranteed to run with a minimum number of 1.

Fast Facts

Project Information

- Project Duration: Min 2 weeks
- Project Costs: £879.00 for 2 weeks
- Location of project: near Cusco
- Arrival Airport: Lima (airport code LIM), internal flight to Cusco (airport code CUZ) required on Sunday after arrival date
- Activities: Working with camels, visiting Mach Picchu and the "Sacred valley of the Incas"
- Working Hours: Flexible; Monday to Friday, 4 hours per day, all other time is free
- Getting to the project: Semi private transport included in project fee
- Requirements: Minimum Age 18
- Other: Semana Santa (Latin America Holy week) will be from March 26th to April 4th 2010 and April 15th to April 24th 2011, you may have some disruptions to the placement during this time

What's Included

- Accommodation: Shared room in homestay and guesthouse
- Food: Some meals as per itinerary
- Airport Pickup: Included on arrival date. Ask us for details if you're arriving early!
- Training: In-country orientation
- Support: Pre-departure helpdesk, Local in-country team and 24hr emergency support
- Fees: All entrance fees including entrance to Machu Picchu

What's not included

- Flights, Insurance, Visas, Return Airport transfer, transfer from Lima to Airport on Day 3, meals not specified on itinerary

Country Guide - Peru

A little bit of history...

Home to a myriad of advanced Andean civilisations, Peru is renowned as the centre of the vast Inca Empire which extended its influence through to parts of Ecuador and Chile from the 13th century onwards. The Inca's lost control to the Spanish who colonised the country in the 16th century and exploited the country for gold and silver. It wasn't until 300 years later that Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín achieved independence for Peru. Post-independence, the country was racked by a border dispute with Chile which resulted in Peru losing part of its land. Conflict erupted between Ecuador in 1941 over land ownership and Peru emerged the victor, but not without repercussions in 1981 and 1995; an agreement was made between the countries in 1998.

From 1968 the country was under military rule until it returned to a democracy-led government in 1980. However, its stability was weakened throughout much of the 1980s due to economic woes and the rise of left-wing terrorist organisations. In recent years Peru's political landscape has been tainted with tales of scandal and corruption, and threats from rebels. The country is making strides towards a more stabilised future with the government intending to improve social conditions, develop its export business and grow its economy.



Best time to go...

Peru's southern hemisphere location dictates that its dry summers are from December to March and its wet winter months run between April and November. Its dynamic landscape means there are regional variations to consider. The coastal region is hot and sunny during summer, while the winter period is characterised by cooler temperatures, though still humid, and a hazy mist is a frequent occurrence. Year-round the waters are cool to cold and only get comfortably warm in the most northern coastal areas. In the Andes, the best time to go trekking is from June to September when the area is at its driest though the nights can get distinctively cool. The Amazon jungle is at its best from May to September after the heavy rains have subsided and the water levels have dropped making it easier to access remote areas by boat and catch sight of rare wildlife.

Getting around...

Time-saving but budget busting, flying is a convenient way of crossing Peru's huge distances. Major cities are no more than a two hour flight from Lima and domestic carriers Lan Peru, Aerocondor and Star Peru offer flights to prime destinations. Smaller carriers such as LC Busre provide charter services to more remote destinations. In addition, at Lima's Jorge Chavez airport, the main flight hub, there are also several independent companies that have light aircraft destined for areas off the beaten track. It's essential to confirm flight bookings 72 hours before departure and to get to the airport 2 hours before take off. Airlines have been known to bump people off flights for not arriving ahead of time and giving the seats to those on the waiting list. There is also a departure tax for all domestic flights, currently \$7.

The most popular way of getting around is by bus. The distances can be arduous – the road trip from Lima to Cuzco is 20 hours compared to an hour's flying time – but there are some redeeming features to be had from staring at the open road for hours on end. It's inexpensive and there are regular services between major places of interest. In remote areas, buses can amount to rough and ready trucks but in towns and cities comfort is at hand in the shape of luxurious buses, such as bus company Cruz del Sur, whose fleet are equipped with reclining seats, air-conditioning and other mod cons. It's best to travel by day as armed robberies have been known to occur at night. The existence of police checkpoints en route means it's imperative to have your passport close at hand.

Although expensive and limited compared to the country's bus network, trains in Peru work better as visitor attractions than a means of getting around. PeruRail operates the main scenic routes, including Cusco to Machu Picchu which takes less than four hours. On a comfort level, trains in Peru vary from hard-seated, overcrowded carriages in economy class to expensive, comfortable seating complete with a dining area and waitress service, as well as better security, in its top class carriages.

The main car rental companies such as Avis and Hertz have a presence in Peru but it takes an experienced driver to tackle the country's roads. Driving in Lima or excessively long distances is not advisable. A more practical route would be to fly to your given destination and rent a car for shorter distances.

Getting around the local environs is an easy feat, with an abundance of buses and taxis to choose from. Local buses consist of micros (small buses) and combis (essentially vans that run as private buses), as well as colectivos which are like combis that cover regular routes between towns. Fares are cheap, space is limited and the buses can easily be flagged down from the side of the road. Taxis are readily available but be aware of the flux of unregistered taxis that ply for trade. Also, it's necessary to negotiate a fare before the getting into a taxi.