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THE DESTINATION IS JUST THE BEGINNING

PERU

A Lodge-to-Lodge Trek to Machu Picchu

November 1 - 11, 2023

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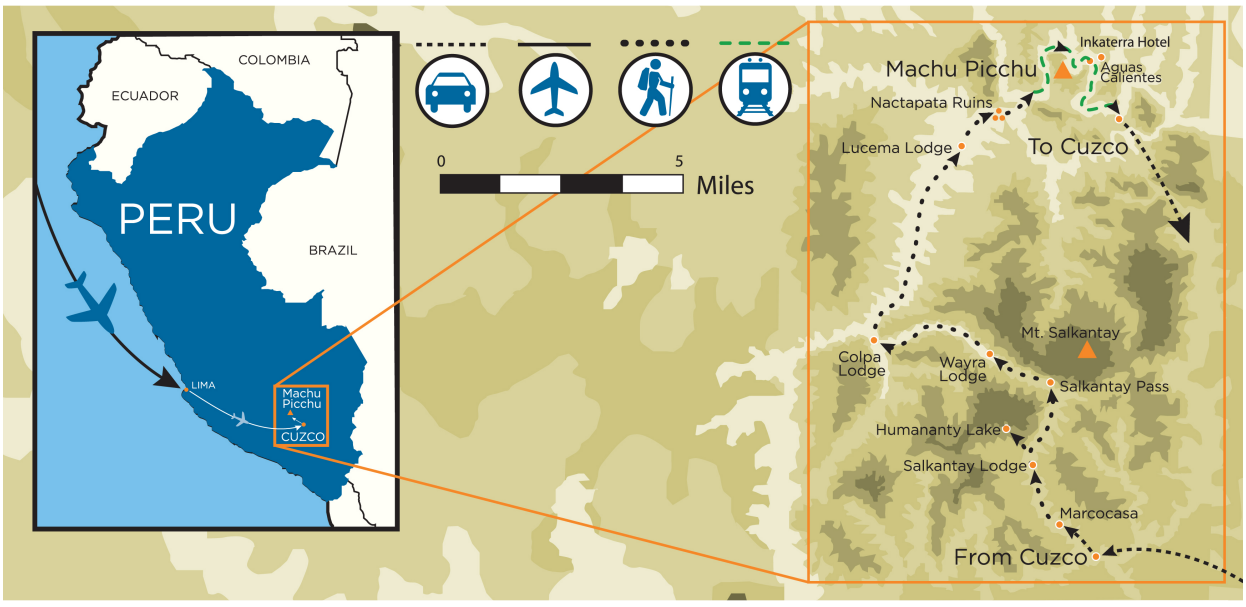
TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Take the route less traveled all the way from Cusco to Machu Picchu on an active trekking challenge
- Explore some of Peru's natural treasures from the Sacred Valley to Mount Salkan-tay to Huayna Picchu on foot
- Stay in delightful mountain lodges at night enjoying the best of Peruvian cuisine and comfort after challenging days of hiking
- Discover Cusco's colorful displays of textiles and Peruvian culture

TRIP ROUTE



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QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

Day 1	arrive in the Sacred Valley, relax at your hotel
Day 2	explore archaeological sites in the Sacred Valley
Day 3	visit Tarawasi and Mollepata, begin your trek
Day 4	hike to Lake Humantay, soak in the outdoor jacuzzi at your lodge
Day 5	cross the Salkantay Pass at 15,213 feet, have lunch on the trail
Day 6	descend along the banks of the Salkantay River
Day 7	hike in the Santa Teresa River Valley, visit a coffee plantation
Day 8	optional trek to the Llactapata Pass or visit to local hot springs
Day 9	explore the ruins of Machu Picchu, optional hike of Huayna Picchu
Day 10	explore Cusco on your own, farewell dinner
Day 11	enjoy the morning and lunch in Cusco, depart Peru

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Challenging

TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: $5,995
Optional Single Accommodations: $900

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your adventure in depth

DAY 1
Wednesday
11/1/23

Arrive in Urubamba

Welcome to Peru and its legendary Land of the Inca! Sheltered by the soaring peaks of Los Andes, forgotten ruins lie in wait of discovery. Ancient whitewashed villages give a glimpse into mountain life as it has been lived for centuries. The seaside capital of Lima looks ahead into a bright future. Exhilarating, awesome, breathtaking, and unforgettable, Peru is an adventure destination like no other.

During your adventure you'll get to know your expert Peruvian trekking guide, who will lead the way and help you reach your goal at the end of your trek: Machu Picchu! You are also accompanied by an AdventureWomen Ambassador, committed to helping make your experience a fun and personally rewarding adventure, and cheering you on as you reach beyond your comfort zone to take on new challenges in your own unique way!

Arrival Information

Arrive in Cusco, Peru (CUZ) today in time for a 3:00pm transfer. Flights from Lima are frequently delayed, so if you are flying from Lima today, we recommend a morning flight.

Pick-up and Transfer

Meet your group at the Cusco airport at 3:00pm. You will be transferred to your beautiful hotel in the Sacred Valley.

If you'd like to come to Cusco early, AdventureWomen would be happy to help you make hotel arrangements.

Welcome Dinner

Enjoy dinner as a group this evening, where you'll get to know your guide and fellow travelers.

Accommodations
Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba
Meals Included
dinner

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DAY 2
Thursday
11/2/23

Urubamba

Once the heart of the Inca Empire, the Sacred Valley is a feast of impressive ruins, gentle mountain slopes, rushing rivers, grazing llamas and alpaca, and enchanting farm towns. In short, it's the perfect introduction to the mysterious world of the Inca, whose stunning civilization thrived until the 16th century.

Hike at Pisac	On the slopes of a mountain, which overlooks the Vilcanota River is the Archaeological Park of Pisac, where you will find different areas and altitudes separated by architectural structures. The most notable of these is the solar calendar Intiwatana. Take a two-hour descending hike towards Pisac town, a beautiful place where Incan and colonial influences have balanced to create the unique local lifestyle. Explore this quaint town, famous for its artisan markets boasting jewelry, textiles, and crafts.
Lunch	Enjoy lunch on a working farm where you can learn firsthand about both life on a hacienda and Cusco's giant white corn and its production. Savor a delicious farm to table lunch while you take in the beautiful surroundings.
Learn about Andean Plants and Herbs	After lunch, meet with a female founder of Aquelarre (The Coven), a brand of botanical brews of herbal potions and magic teas. Visit her cozy home, with her green house and kitchen, where she grows and stores all kinds of plants and herbs from the Andes. All of these plants are said to have beneficial properties - or powers - where each ingredient for her potions is carefully selected for its unique benefits, based on both science and tradition. Prepare a smudge stick as a group in a ritual of healing and positive energy to set a powerful intention for our trip ahead.
Dinner	Have dinner with the group at your hotel tonight.

Accommodations
Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 3
Friday
11/3/23

Urubamba to the Salkantay Route

Urubamba is the largest town in the Sacred Valley of the Incas. It is also located near a number of significant ruins of the Inca Empire, including Machu Picchu. The sparse remains of the Inca palace, Quispiguanca, are within the town.

Tarawasi and Mollepata

Depart for the mountains this morning. The first stop will be the Inca ruins of Tarawasi near the town of Limatambo. Spend some time there before heading to the mountain village of Mollepata for a delicious lunch.

Begin Your Trek

After a short drive on a winding mountain road, you'll arrive at Marcoccasa. Here you will begin your hike to Soraypampa along a picturesque path called the "Camino Real" (Royal Path), which is also a good opportunity to acclimatize to the higher altitude. As you round the final turn of the Camino Real, the Salkantay Lodge will come into view. Standing like a sentry behind the lodge is the glacier peak of Mt. Salkantay, among the most sacred in Inca mythology and the highest in the region at 20,600 ft. (Trekking time 3.5 hours, approx. 2 miles, 1,689′ elevation gain)

Relax at Your Lodge

Settle in your room and relax for a few minutes before meeting your guide in the lounge for refreshments and a briefing of tomorrow's activities.

Accommodations
Mountain Lodges

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 4
Saturday
11/4/23

Salkantay Route

Humantay is a snow-capped mountain, and right at the base of the mountain you'll find a stunning glacial lake. Enjoy the tranquility of being truly in the wilderness.

Hike to Lake Humantay	This morning, go on an acclimatization hike to Lake Humantay. Begin by hiking up the slopes that border the plateau behind the Salkantay Lodge. An hour and a half later, after making your way over the final hill, you will be stunned to see the turquoise water of the lake, made even more spectacular by the sight of the Humantay glacier looming behind it. Here you will have a chance to relax, enjoy a snack, meditate in the tranquility of this magical spot, or admire a traditional offering to Mother Earth, getting an up-close view of the majestic glacier. (Trekking time 4.5 hours, approx. 4 miles, 1,155′ elevation gain / 1,155′ elevation loss)
Lunch	Enjoy a late lunch back at the lodge.
Rest this Evening	Spend the afternoon at leisure. Soak in the outdoor jacuzzi, enjoy a massage, or just relax!

Accommodations
Mountain Lodges

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 5
Sunday
11/5/23

Salkantay Route

The name Salkantay is from sallqa, a Quechua word meaning wild, uncivilized, savage, or invincible, and was recorded as early as 1583. The name is thus often translated as "Savage Mountain." Directly to the north of Salkantay lies Machu Picchu, which is at the end of a ridge that extends down from this mountain. Viewed from Machu Picchu's main sundial, the Southern Cross is above Salkantay's summit when at its highest point in the sky during the rainy season. The Incas associated this alignment with concepts of rain and fertility and considered Salkantay to be one of the principal deities controlling weather and fertility in the region west of Cuzco.

Today's Trek

Today is the longest and most strenuous day, but arguably the most magical day of the trek. After an early start, hike up the Rio Blanco valley, circling Humantay Peak. As you gradually make your way up these mountain trails, you will encounter expansive plateaus dotted with boulders of varying sizes, the remnants of a valley that was once bisected by a fast-flowing river. The final and most challenging part of your ascent is conquering the mountain switchbacks that take you to the Salkantay Pass, the highest point on the trek at 15,213 feet. Celebrate your accomplishment with your group of amazing women at the top! What follows is a dramatic descent through fields of giant boulders, often shrouded in fog. (Trekking time 7 hours, approx. 8 miles, 2,522′ elevation gain / 2,401′ elevation loss)

Picnic Lunch and Descent

Enjoy a hot picnic lunch before continuing your descent through rolling hills and marsh-like plateaus. Arrive at the Wayra Lodge this afternoon. Enjoy a spectacular view of the other side of Mount Humantay, reminding you of how far you've come!

Accommodations
Mountain Lodges

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 6
Monday
11/6/23

Salkantay Route

A cloud forest is a generally tropical or subtropical, evergreen, montane, moist forest characterized by a persistent, frequent or seasonal low-level cloud cover, usually at the canopy level. Cloud forests often exhibit an abundance of mosses covering the ground and vegetation, in which case they are also referred to as mossy forests. Mossy forests usually develop on the saddles of mountains, where moisture introduced by settling clouds is more effectively retained.

Continue Your Descent

After a leisurely breakfast at the Wayra Lodge, continue the descent along the banks of the Salkantay River through increasingly verdant scenery. The warm air begins to rise from the edge of the jungle, accompanied by colorful butterflies and striking orchids. Today you will see more of the local people as the trail takes you past their simple homes and makeshift fences. (Trekking time 4 hours, approx. 6 miles, 3,398′ elevation loss)

Lunch

Arrive at Colpa Lodge for a special lunch. Your Pachamanca lunch is a traditional Peruvian meal cooked in the earth by hot stones that create a natural underground oven.

Afternoon at Leisure

Relax this afternoon. Lounge in the sun or unwind in the outdoor jacuzzi while you take in the panoramic views of the green mountains surrounding you.

Accommodations
Mountain Lodges

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 7
Tuesday
11/7/23

Salkantay Route

Peru is one of the top 20 coffee producers in the world. A coffee plant usually starts to produce flowers three to four years after it is planted, and the coffee cherries appear from these flowers. A coffee plant can first be harvested about five years after it is planted. The cherries are ready to pick when they turn from green to red, about eight months after the flowers bloom.

Hike in the River Valley	Today you will hike in the Santa Teresa River valley where you will hop over small streams fed by waterfalls descending from the glaciers and cross through fruit orchards. After breaking for a hot picnic lunch by the river, you will walk for an hour where you will meet a vehicle for a short drive to the beginning of the Llactapata Inca Trail, which leads you to your lodge. (Trekking time 5.5 hours, approx. 10 miles, 387′ elevation gain / 2,798′ elevation loss)
Coffee Plantation	Visit a local organic coffee plantation. You will notice a shift in the climate - the hot air and increased humidity signal that you are getting close to the edge of the Amazon.

Accommodations
Mountain Lodges

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 8
Wednesday
11/8/23

Salakantay Route to Machu Picchu

The roads of the Inca Empire once stretched from present-day Quito, Ecuador in the north all the way down to Santiago, Chile in the south. The extensive network of roads and trails covered roughly 14,000 miles and crossed 16,000-foot-high mountain passes, winding through the stunning scenery and breathtaking landscapes of the Andes. Since the Inca did not use the wheel, or horses until the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century, these roads were traveled almost exclusively on foot and with pack animals such as llamas.

Optional Hike

For those who have the energy, depart early this morning for an optional hike. During a two to three hour climb up a path mostly comprised of original Inca steps, you will get a sense of what hiking through the rainforest would be like. Your first milestone today will be the top of the peak, the last one before you reach the Aobamaba River valley that connects you to Machu Picchu. When you arrive at the ruins of Llactapata at the Llactapata Pass (8,974 feet), you will be delighted to see a distant southeast view of the "back" of the Machu Picchu ruins, a sight few travelers ever get a chance to admire. At this point you will also take a short break to explore Llactapata, and then have lunch a bit farther down the trail in a meadow with panoramic views. The final descent toward the roaring Aobamba River takes you through lush bamboo forests, as well as more fruit orchards and coffee plantations. (Trekking time 6 hours, approx. 7 miles, 1,971′ elevation gain / 3,165′ elevation loss)

Hot Springs

If your knees need a break, you can hike 30-45 minutes down to a vehicle and drive one hour to the Santa Teresa hot springs. Enjoy a picnic lunch at the springs and some relaxation time.

Take the Train

Take a one-hour train ride to Aguas Calientes at the base of Machu Picchu.

Accommodations
Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 9
Thursday
11/9/23

Machu Picchu

Arriving at Machu Picchu, "Lost City of the Incas" is like stepping into a postcard! The intact maze of empty plazas, chambers and palaces connected by stairways carved out of solid stone helps you understand why it is considered among the Wonders of the World. Built precipitously high, it is surrounded by mountains covered in lush tropical vegetation. Terraced to the edge to provide for Inca domiciles, it stands today as a tribute to Incan ingenuity.

Explore Machu Picchu

Begin your journey to Machu Picchu with a short uphill bus ride. As you enter the "Sanctuary" (as locals refer to it), the morning sun rises over the iconic Sun Gate and washes the structures and terraces with resplendent light. Prepare to be awed by the imposing and skillful architecture of the Watchtower, the Temple of the Sun, and the royal Inca residences, among many others. Take a moment to quietly sit and listen to the wind or to meditate and absorb the mystical energy that envelops you. Your imagination will soar as you contemplate the history of Machu Picchu and its mysterious origins.

Optional Hike of Huayna Picchu

You have the option to hike Huayna Picchu, the iconic towering mountain often seen in photographs, for dramatic views. (Hiking time 4 hours)

Huayna Picchu permits are extremely limited. If you register too close to departure, we are not able to guarantee that you will be able to hike Huayna Picchu.

Afternoon Exploration

Enjoy lunch at Sanctuary Lodge by the entrance. In the afternoon when the crowds dissipate, explore on your own or with your guide.

Accommodations
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Meals Included
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 10
Friday
11/10/23

Machu Picchu to Cusco

Founded in the 11th century and capital of the Inca Empire from the 13th century through the arrival of the Spanish in the mid-16th century, today's Cuzco is a delightful mix of Inca and Spanish architecture. Winding streets, red clay rooftops, tiny peaceful plazas and colorful shops invite exploration. Around the mostly whitewashed city you can still see the remains of Inca buildings and their foundations—many of which have proven to be stronger than buildings constructed in the present day. The stones in the old walls that line the winding alleyways are so closely fitted together, you couldn't even fit a sheet of paper between them!

Transfer to Cusco	Take the train this morning from Aguas Calientes to Ollantaytambo. Drive back to Cusco.
Nilda Callanuapa Weaving Project	Visit a weaving project led by a master weaver. Textile production has profound historic and cultural significance in the Andes, and this project is part of a highly successful initiative to rescue and revive this way of life. Women are the owners and drivers of this activity, and you will see how their gregarious processes of spinning, gathering and use of natural dyes, setting up of looms, and the creation of designs, are fundamental to the family and social bonds of these highland communities.
Explore Cusco	Explore Cusco on your own this afternoon.
Farewell Dinner	Have a farewell dinner with your new AdventureWomen friends. Reminisce over all of the memories you have made and celebrate the end of an incredible trip!

Accommodations
Palacio del Inka

Meals Included
breakfast, dinner

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DAY 11
Saturday
11/11/23

Depart Cusco

Enjoy one last morning in Cusco before departing Peru.

Explore on Your Own	Explore Cusco on your own this morning. Pick up some last-minute souvenirs, or just walk around this unique town.
Lunch	Enjoy one last lunch as a group.
Transfer to the Airport	Transfer to the Cusco airport for your flights home.
Departure Information	Depart from Cusco, Peru (CUZ) after 4:00pm.

Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time, if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch

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Accommodation Details

Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba

Hacienda Urubamba is a contemporary hacienda-style hotel in the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Immersed in the countryside in a gorgeous area, Hacienda Urubamba spans approximately 100 acres surrounded by imposing green mountains. All the rooms feature breathtaking views of the valley, immersing you in open space, serenity, and relaxing solitude.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

Mountain Lodges

In these intimate six-room lodges you will enjoy hot showers, fine gourmet meals, select wines, goose-down bedding, massages, outdoor jacuzzis, and highly personalized service from local staff. Each room is warmly presented with down comforters and amenities. The eco-minded architecture effortlessly mixes traditional heritage with contemporary design. Indulge in inventive menus, which provide a refreshing take on the region's most iconic dishes. All offerings are locally sourced – from organic coffee blends to healthy snacks.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

Located in the heart of Machu Picchu Historical Sanctuary, Inkaterra's boutique Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel is an Andean Garden of Eden. Its natural beauty spreads over 12 acres of low-rise cottages, plantations, and wild forest interspersed by stone pathways. Hummingbirds frolic in a private cloud-forest paradise, while you experience an authentic barefoot luxury hotel at the foot of Machu Picchu.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

Palacio del Inka

A storied mansion dating back nearly five centuries, the Libertador Palacio del Inka stands in the historic center of Cusco. Directly across from the Koricancha, it is a five-minute walk from the main square and less than a mile from an array of museums, markets, and restaurants. The exquisitely appointed guest rooms combine Peruvian art and handcrafted furnishings with contemporary amenities.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

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Accommodation Details

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Included:

- Accommodations as per itinerary based on double occupancy
- All meals as listed in the itinerary
- All ground transportation
- Guided sightseeing and activities as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees
- Professional English-speaking trekking guide throughout the trip
- One group transfer on arrival and departure
- Drinking water available in large jugs to refill personal bottles
- Gratuities for baggage handlers, drivers, and hotel/lodge staff

Not Included:

- International airfare to and from Peru
- Domestic airfare if required
- Excess baggage charges
- Optional activities
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Alcoholic beverages (unless otherwise specified)
- Fees for passport, visas, immunizations, or travel insurance
- Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- Items of a personal nature
- Gratuities for guides

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Cancellations and Refunds

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 61-90 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1 -60 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Travel insurance information will be sent to you once you have registered for your trip.

Switching Trips

Our deposits are nonrefundable and nontransferable. If for some reason you need to switch to a different trip, please call us and we will do our best to accommodate you, but switching is not guaranteed.

No Smoking Policy

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

Health Insurance

You must have your own health insurance to participate in an AdventureWomen trip.

Adventure Travel Today

At AdventureWomen, we want everyone to understand that our excursions are adventure travel vacations and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one actively participates, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to experience an active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends. Most of all, we want our trips to be fun!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a good-natured realist and have a sense of humor! Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self- sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. Being on time is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well-being of both individuals and the group!