

Peru Classic Tour

Peru Classic – 15 Days – 14 Nights

Peru Classic Tour was designed to help you discover more of Peru – not only the natural beauty of the Andes, geoglyphs in the desert, and a sky-high lake, but the deeper part, too: the culture and soul of Peru. Our tour travels to world-famous **Machu Picchu**, the Sacred Valley of the Incas, Lake Titicaca, and the enigmatic Nazca Lines. In addition, the tour takes in the Peruvian desert in Ica with its stark beauty, the surprising Ballestas Islands (teeming with marine life), breath-taking Colca Canyon, and the sophisticated southern Peruvian city of Arequipa. We also explore the more modern side of Peru in metropolitan Lima, which will surprise you with its colonial style and the exclusive Museo Larco. And we take one large step back in time with visits to Amantani, Taquile, and the Uros Islands of Lake Titicaca – to see ancient traditions blending with 21st century life!



Tour dates and Prices (per person) USD\$: 2,099

- Available ALL YEAR LONG

DAY 1. Welcome to Peru

Your adventures in Peru begin at the Jorge Chavez Lima international airport. One of our staff members will meet you and you will be transferred to your hotel. This first day in Peru is a day to relax and prepare for the beginning of the tour. If you would enjoy a supplementary tour of Lima (not included in the tour), we can arrange this for you. Simply inform us in advance.

DAY 2. Lima Tour, "The City of the Kings"



After breakfast, we set off to see the colonial side of Lima. We begin our 15-day tour with a panoramic view of Plaza San Martin and the main square where we will see the Cathedral. We continue on to the Convent and Church of San Francisco – truly, one of the great monumental complexes of colonial art. During this portion of the tour, our guide explains the history of surrounding buildings: the Government Palace and City Hall. A visit to Huaca Pucllana is next. Amazingly enough, this archaeological site sits in the heart of Lima – built in the 4th century AD (!) and considered holy by the Incas.

Our tour of Lima finishes at the world-class Museo Larco. Built atop a 7th century, pre-Columbian, archaeological site, the museum's new galleries house the finest and most comprehensive Peruvian pre-Columbian gold and silver collection in the world – as well as a renowned erotic pottery collection.

Early afternoon, we leave for Paracas (a three-hour ride, more or less). Lunch served on the bus. On our way to Paracas, we enjoy stunning views of the legendary Carretera Panamericana (the Panamericana Highway). The Pan-American Highway is an eye-catching roadway that runs between the lunar landscapes of the desert pampas and high sand dunes, interspersed with fertile valleys, with the Pacific Ocean as a backdrop. Stunning!

Upon arrival, transfer to the Posada, where you spend the night.

DAY 3. The Peruvian Galapagos: Ballestas Islands and Paracas National Reserve



Today is a day full of sightseeing; have your camera ready! After breakfast, we begin our boat excursion to the Ballestas Islands: astonishing scenery, intense colours, and a cobalt-blue sea. Here we observe sea lions, boobies, penguins, pelicans, and other sea birds. En route to the islands, we catch a glimpse of the prehistoric geoglyph called Candelabro, carved (so to speak) into a coastal hillside.

Our day continues with a trip to the Reserva Nacional de Paracas. Located just beyond the village of Paracas, we see here La 'Catedral', la Playa Roja, and various fossils. La Catedral is a rock formation, but eroded by the sea and wind, which has a concave shape that is reminiscent of the domes of cathedrals. La Playa Roja is laden with reddish rocks that give it its famous name, the Red Beach. The fossil site is a small area adjacent to the entrance of the reserve where one can easily see small mollusk fossils in excellent condition, yet millions of years old.

We take a late-afternoon bus to Nazca, where we spend the night.

DAY 4. The mysterious Nazca Lines



After breakfast at the hotel, we visit an archaeological museum, Museo Antonini (with an original pre-Columbian aqueduct running through the back garden, as well as reproductions of burials and a scale model of the Nazca Lines), and later head to a viewpoint to observe a portion of the Lines: the lizard, a tree, and hands. Optionally, you can take a small-airplane flight over the Nazca Lines (approximately 30 minutes in duration). We stress that the flight is optional; please let us know when you make your reservation and we will book a flight for you if so desired.

After the Lines, it's time to visit the popular Cementerio de Chauchilla, which displays bones, skulls, and mummies. For the remainder of the day, you are free to wander, relax, and prepare yourself for the remainder of the trip. In the evening, we board a luxurious bus for a nighttime trip to Arequipa.

DAY 5. La Ciudad Blanca (The White City)



Welcome to the colonial and refined city of Arequipa. Today is a day to acclimatise before heading into the Andes. After we check in at the hotel, you have the entire morning to rest and sip some mate de coca, which helps one acclimatise to the 2,400 meters of elevation (7,874 feet). In the afternoon, we

are accompanied by a local guide for a visit to one of the most important religious monuments in Peru: the Santa Catalina Monastery. The Monastery, founded in 1580, is a rather large and rather fascinating site. In colonial times, it received nuns from wealthy families in Spain. Our local guide shares with us some intriguing stories about the lifestyle of nuns at that time. In the evening, we urge you to take some time and simply enjoy the beautiful lights and sights of Plaza de Armas (the main square), and you are free to frequent the local bars and many fine restaurants that are found in Arequipa's downtown district.

DAY 6. Arequipa traditions



After breakfast, we head to a sillar "workshop" – a demonstration and overview of working with the pearl-coloured volcanic stone that gives Arequipa its nickname, the White City. We then continue our tour with a visit to the Alpaca Museum. (The alpaca is a South American cameloid from which we get one of the finest fibres in the world; it's very similar to cashmere). Here, we can see a demonstration of how alpaca fibre is traditionally woven – a method still alive and well even today. The day continues with a cooking demonstration featuring some typical Arequipeño dishes, where you can show off your cooking talent and/or learn a few new skills!

In the afternoon, you are free to relax and simply acclimatize to the altitude. Too, you can wander about the city centre and do some shopping. This is a good opportunity, in fact, to buy some alpaca garments. Arequipa is the centre of alpaca yarn production in Peru – and the world! (More than 80% of the world's alpaca yarn is produced here). There are numerous shops to choose from and we can advise you on where to buy your alpaca garments.

DAY 7. Tour of the Andes and Colca Canyon



After breakfast, our tour continues with a trip to the Colca Canyon (3,191 meters, or 10,460 feet), the second deepest canyon in the world (twice the depth of the Grand Canyon in the U.S.). On the trip, around four hours in length, we drive across Pampa Cañahuas in the Aguada Blanca National Reserve, inhabited by vicuña and alpaca. Various lakes, altiplano birds, and herds of alpaca are easily observed. The view will take your breath away – metaphorically and in actuality, owing to the altitude. En route to Chivay (the provincial capital), we pass one of the highest points on our tour at 4,830 meters above sea level (approximately 15,800 feet!). Here is the Mirador de los Volcanes (Viewpoint of the Volcanoes); one can see the Arequipa volcano chain: Hualcahualca, Sabancaya, and Ampato – all above 6,000 meters (about 20,000 feet).

In Chivay, we enjoy Andean cuisine: quinoa, alpaca, and mazamorra. Lunch is hosted by Perú InsideOut.

In the afternoon, you can stroll around Chivay or relax in the local hot springs. In the evening, we have another opportunity to sample the delicious cuisine of the Andes, while attending a traditional music performance.

DAY 8. Cruz del Condor – Puno and the Altiplano



Following an early breakfast, we head to “Cruz del Condor” (Condor’s Cross) and – with just a little luck – watch as majestic condors soar above the rim of the canyon.

Next, en route to Lake Titicaca, we visit several Andean communities: Yanque, Achoma, and Maca. Mid-day, we stop again in Chivay for a buffet lunch. Following our meal, we continue on our journey ... to Puno!

The trip to Puno offers us astounding natural scenery: stained-green steppes, intriguing rock formations (caused by erosion), and the snow-covered volcano Chachani, as well as wild vicuña, alpaca, and llama. We pass through several small towns, and skirt a beautiful lagoon, Lagunillas, where trout farms can be seen, and – if we’re lucky once more – Andean Flamingos, too. Then it’s on to Juliaca, an important commercial city situated between Peru and Bolivia, and finally on to Puno, where we spend the night in a very comfortable hotel.

DAY 9. Lake Titicaca Tour – Uros Islands, Amantani Island



Today, we visit world-famous Lake Titicaca. We first enjoy breakfast, and then transfer to the port of Puno where our excursion by boat begins (a trip that is about three hours in length). Covering 8,400 sq. km and sitting at 3,810 metres, Lake Titicaca is (as you might already know) the highest navigable lake in the world. The overall area here is magical; we have the deep, sparkling, crystalline waters of the lake; the bright blue sky; and a sun that always seems to be shining.

Our lake excursion begins with a visit to the famous Floating Islands. There are approximately 50 floating islands, all of them built using layers of reeds (totora) that grow in the lake. Today, descendants of the Uros tribes have mixed with the Aymara, and now speak their language. In the latest census, around 2,000 descendants of the Uros were counted, but only a few hundred still live here.

Next, we move on to Amantani – another local island. Upon arrival, we walk to the house of our host family, where we rest and eat. Amantani is not unlike a journey back in time. With no electricity, our host family prepares simple but delicious meals, and believe us when we say that the experience will stay with you for a very long time. Also on Amantani, we tour some Tiwanaku ruins and hike to the top of the island for a ritual called Pachamama (mother earth). Islanders perform a traditional dance ceremony in the evening, and visitors are offered traditional clothes and invited to participate. Before bidding farewell to Amantani, we buy a few staples as a gift for the host family: cooking oil, rice, sugar, and so on – or school supplies for the children.

DAY 10. Titicaca Lake Tour – Taquile Island



On Lake Titicaca, it's an early-morning sunrise; warm, wonderful sunlight envelopes the island. And, after breakfast, it's finally time to say goodbye to our host family.

En route back, we travel to Taquile (about thirty minutes from Amantani). Here, Quechua-speaking islanders have lived almost untouched by so-called modern-day life for thousands of years. Our guide shares with us very entertaining stories regarding the use of different huts and their social significance. In Peru, Taquileños are famous for their hand-woven textiles and clothing. Oddly enough, knitting is performed exclusively by males, starting at age eight. And only women make yarn and weave. In 2005, UNESCO proclaimed "Taquile and its Textile Art" as "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity". Following lunch and a relaxing stroll, we board our boat one last time. Our destination? Puno! Upon our arrival back in Puno, it's time to rest.

DAY 11. Puno to Cusco: The Manco Capac's Route



Our tour of Peru continues with a series of small excursions that take us from Puno to Cusco. Aboard a very comfy bus, we enjoy both snacks and warm drinks throughout the journey.

Our first stop is Pukara, located at 3,876 metres above sea level (12,716 feet). A town of potters, Pukara is the cradle of one of the first civilizations in southern Peru (200 BC – 200 AD). This Aymara-speaking culture flourished in the Collao Plateau region of Lake Titicaca. Pyramid-shaped buildings are typical in this pre-Hispanic city. While here, we next visit the Pukara Museum Lytic.

Later in the day, we arrive at La Raya mountain pass, 4,310 metres above sea level (14,172 feet), the highest point in our tour. Here, we can stop, breathe the somewhat rarefied mountain air, take photos of grazing llama and alpaca, and gaze out across the altiplano horizon. This point is, in fact, the junction of the cordillera and the origin of the Vilcanota knot. The sacred River Vilcanota has its origins here.

We enjoy the amazing view from the pass, but then travel on just a bit and stop to have a buffet lunch at a restaurant in Sicuani.

Next, we move to Raqchi, also known as the "Temple of Wiracocha". The archaeological site is home to an enormous rectangular two-story roofed structure that measures 92 by 25.5 meters (300 by 84 feet).

Our last stop for the day is Andahuaylillas, considered by some to be the "Sistine Chapel of Peru". This particular church, dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries, was constructed by Jesuits. The church is adorned with a large number of frescoes, as well as ceiling features, the highlight being a painting entitled "Virgin of the Assumption", belonging to the Cusco School.

We arrive, at day's end, in the imperial city Cusco. A free night!

DAY 12. Cusco City Tour and Inca sites



After breakfast, we set off on a private tour of Cusco with our local guide. The sites we see include: "Hatun Cancha Rumi" – in Quechua, "of the Great Stone Fence" – where we see the famous "Stone of twelve angles", an exceedingly large block of granite with 12 perfectly cut corners, set in a rather famous stone wall. We will then continue the tour with a view of the main square and the majestic cathedral. We also visit Korikancha, the "Temple of the Sun". At the time of the Incas, this was the most important place of worship. The Spanish later built their own structure atop the Inca foundation, called the Convent of Santo Domingo. And later, we drive outside of the city proper and visit these Inca sites:

- Kenko ceremonial centre, considered holy by the Incas.
- Tambomachay, an Inca site known as El Baño del Inca, "The Bath of the Inca". This spectacular site hosts series of aqueducts, canals, and waterfalls that run through the terraced stonework. The exact function of the site is unknown; historians speculate that it may have served as a military outpost or a type of spa for Incan political elite.
- Puca Pucara, a military ruin or fort, made of large walls, terraces, and staircases – and a part of the defence of Cusco, known as the Red Fortress.
- Sacsayhuaman, a rather impressive fortress, strategically built on a hill overlooking Cusco. It's famous for its gigantic carved stones – some of which stand over 9 meters high (30 feet) and weigh in excess of 350 tons.

Our Cusco tour finishes here. The remainder of the day is open. Overnight stay in Cusco.

This day programme is different in occasion of the Inti Raymi – June Tour

DAY 13. Sacred Valley of the Incas: Pisaq and Ollantaytambo. Night in Aguas Calientes.



Early in the morning, we begin our excursion through the Urubamba valley, “The Sacred Valley of the Incas”. Our first stop: the Inca Ruins of Pisaq, which sit atop a hill at the entrance of the valley. The ruins, sitting along a ridge, are divided into four sections: Pisaq, Intihuatana, Q’allaqasa, and Kinchiracay. Once we have taken in the breathtaking scenery, we visit the rather picturesque Pisaq market. Here, we see many talented artisans at work, and you can also practice your bartering skills – a practice that is alive and well in contemporary Peruvian culture. The market is open every day, but on Sundays it is more alive and more picturesque with locals arriving from other villages to sell their wares.

We continue on to the city of Urubamba next, where we enjoy a buffet lunch. Following lunch, we travel further along our scenic route to the fortress and citadel of Ollantaytambo – the best surviving example of Inca city planning and also the most “atmospheric”. The terraces which lead up the hills above town are superb, as are the views of the valley below. This was one of the last areas under construction by the Incas prior to the arrival of the Spanish.

Late in the afternoon, we travel by train to Aguas Calientes, and transfer to our hotel. Your tour of Machu Picchu begins from here! Overnight stay in Aguas Calientes.

DAY 14. Tour to *Machu Picchu*. Return to Cusco.



Today marks the day we enter ***Machu Picchu***, and it will be – quite possibly – the highlight of your travels and your experience in Peru. Many, many writers have written about this unique place, but to experience it in person, as you will ... is truly, without exaggeration, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

We arrive at the entrance gate by 6:00 am, in time for a spectacular sunrise, known as IntiPunku – a phenomenal experience that everyone enjoys. Under surreal clouds, as the sun rises, our guide shares with you the secrets and the architecture behind the Lost City of the Incas. For those intent on climbing Huayna Picchu, your effort will be rewarded with a commanding view of Machu Picchu.

In the afternoon, though, our tour of Machu Picchu ends and we head back to Aguas Calientes. There, we can take a well-deserved soak in the local hot springs (optional).

At the end of this amazing tour, at the end of the day, it's time to take our train back to Ollantaytambo and transfer to our hotel in Cusco.

DAY 15. End of the Tour

It's time to pack, and prepare to enjoy our final breakfast together!

Transfer to Cusco Airport for your flight Cusco-Lima.

The Tour Includes

- Flight Cusco-Lima with Star Peru
- Private transfers in and out from the airports and bus terminals
- Public VIP bus between cities: from Lima to Arequipa
- Touristic transportation during the excursions
- All entrance fees mentioned in the programme (optional excluded):
- Private services:
 - **Lima:** Lima City Tour, Larco Museum, Convent of San Francisco
 - **Nazca:** Antonini Museum, Mirador of the Nazca Lines, Chauchilla Cemetery
 - **Arequipa:** Santa Catalina Monastery, Alpaca Museum, cuisine demonstration, sillar excursion
 - **Cusco:** Kenko, Tambomachay, Puca Pucara, Sacsayhuaman
 - **Machu Picchu**
- Group services:
 - **Paracas:** Ballestas Islands, Paracas Natural Reserve
 - **Colca Canyon:** entry ticket to the Canyon
 - **Lake Titicaca:** Uros, Amantani, Taquile Islands
 - **Puno-Cusco:** Lytic Museum in Pukara , Wiracocha Temple, Andahuaylillas church
 - **Sacred Valley:** Pisac, Ollantaytambo
- Shared boat to Lake Titicaca
- Accommodation in 3 star hotels, 4 star in Puno, Posada in Paracas, homestay in Amantani
- All tours with professional English-speaking guides
- Breakfasts
- Lunches: Lima (on the bus), Arequipa, twice at the Colca Canyon, Amantani, Taquile, Sicuani, Urubamba
- Dinner: Amantani

Single supplement: USD \$390

Not Included

- International airfares to and from Peru
- International departure taxes at airports
- Nazca Lines over flight USD\$ 125
- Nazca airport tax USD\$ 10
- Huayna Picchu USD\$ 12
- Other meals

- Personal expenses such as telephone bills, laundry expenses, beverages, etc.
- Insurance against theft, loss
- Other extras not specified

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Tel: +51 54 257093

Cel: +51 964 720 600

Email: info@peruinsideout.com

Arequipa - Perú

Tour Link

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