



The Best of Southern Peru : 20D

from : USD 5068.00

SEASON	March to January
DURATION	20 days /19 nights (Lima-Lima)
FITNESS LEVEL	Very active (high altitude, long distances, occasional narrow paths with sheer drops)
DEPARTURE DATES	Available on request and subject to availability of Inca Trail permits
ACTIVITIES	Culture, history, community stay, hiking, camping, nature exploration & birdwatching

This is a journey through the very best of southern Peru: from one of the world's driest deserts and the country's only marine national park, across the Andes and down into the Amazon basin. We will begin our journey visiting the Ballestas Islands, where the meeting of the warm El Niño Ocean current with the cold Humboldt current has created the world's most fertile seas and abundant marine fauna. In the Peruvian desert, we will fly over the mysterious Nazca Lines, huge geometric and zoomorphic designs created by pre-Inca cultures. From the coast, we will head into the realm of the condor, exploring one of the world's deepest canyons, before our journey takes us to the highest navigable lake in the world. Lake Titicaca is still home to the descendants of the ancient people who first inhabited its fertile shores thousands of years ago. From the sacred lake, we will travel north to Cusco, the capital of the greatest empire ever seen in the Americas. The remains of Inca palaces and temples form the foundations of Spanish churches and mansions. Leaving Cusco, beyond the Sacred Valley of the Incas we will hike the famous Inca Trail to the Lost City of Machu Picchu. Our Peruvian journey will end with four days in the most biologically diverse place on Earth – the rainforest of the Amazon basin. Here we will explore rivers, lakes and forests, on the lookout for macaws, giant otters and many other species of fauna.

Day 1: Lima

You will be met at Lima's international airport and escorted to your hotel, after which you will have the rest of the day free for optional sightseeing excursions.

Overnight in Lima

Day 2: Lima - Pisco

You will have the morning free to explore the beautiful colonial city center of Lima or visit one of its excellent museums. In the mid-afternoon, we will take a three-hour bus ride south along the Pan-American Highway to the small coastal town of Pisco. Upon arrival, there will be time to relax and enjoy a refreshing cocktail on the beach as we watch the sunset over the ocean.

Overnight stay at our hotel in Pisco



Day 3: Pisco - Nazca (Ballestas Islands)

After breakfast, we will walk to the port and board our speedboat. The tour of the islands takes around two hours. On the way to the Ballestas Islands, we will pass the geoglyph known as "El Candelabro". Nobody knows when this design was made, or who was responsible for it.

As we circle the islands in our boat we will have excellent views of the colonies of seals, groups of Humboldt penguins and thousands of seabirds that inhabit the rocky shores.

After returning to the port, we will have lunch in one of the local beach restaurants before continuing our journey through dramatic desert scenery to the small town of Nazca, where we will arrive in the late afternoon, and you will be transferred to your hotel.

Overnight in Nazca



Day 4: Nazca - Arequipa (Nazca Lines)

The morning will be dedicated to the fascinating and mysterious Nazca Lines. We will explore this enigma from the air by light aircraft. The flight takes around 30 minutes. After this once-in-a-lifetime adventure, we will visit the nearby Nazca culture cemetery. You can also choose to relax by the swimming pool before our night drive to Arequipa. A bus ride of close to eight hours will take us south along the Pan-American Highway to the city of Arequipa, where we will transfer you to your hotel.

Overnight in Arequipa

Note: As a group service, the night bus ride will begin at 9.00 pm and end at around 5:00 am



Day 5: Arequipa (Free Day)

Known as the White City, because of the white volcanic stone from which many of its buildings are made, Arequipa is a particularly beautiful city. Today you will have the whole day free to explore Arequipa and get used to the altitude (2400 meters / 7,920 feet) and/or participate in optional excursions within the city. All visitors to Arequipa should see the colonial-era convent of Santa Catalina.

Overnight in Arequipa



Day 6: Arequipa - Colca Canyon

We will continue our journey early today, traveling by bus through the volcanic landscape of this part of southern Peru to Colca, at 3400 meters (11,200 feet) one of the world's deepest canyons. We will pass wild herds of alpacas and vicuñas, and will stop often at several viewing points to admire the surrounding landscape. The night will be spent at one of the comfortable lodges on the edge of the canyon.

Overnight in Chivay



Day 7: Colca Canyon - Puno (Long Day)

We will start our day early with a morning bus ride to famous Cruz del Condor. Standing on the edge of the abyss, we will have mesmerizing views of Colca Canyon. This is the best place to observe majestic condors in their natural habitat, as they rise from the valley on the morning thermals. We will have plenty of time to enjoy this spectacular sight before eating lunch and beginning the seven-hour bus ride to Puno. This drive will take us through a remote and fascinating part of Peru's southern Andean region. Arriving at the city of Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca (3800 meters / 12,550 feet), you will be transferred to your hotel for a good night's rest.

Overnight in Puno



Day 8: Titicaca Lake - Uros And Amantani Islands

After breakfast, we will begin our cruise on the highest navigable lake in the world, heading first for the Uros floating reed islands. From here, it is a two-hour boat ride to the island of Amantani, where we will spend the night in the home of local people. This is a unique opportunity to learn more about the ancestral traditions and daily life of the people who inhabit the Lake Titicaca region. In the late afternoon, we will head to the highest part of the island to enjoy the sunset over Lake Titicaca. On a clear day, it is possible to see the distant peaks of the Cordillera Real in Bolivia.

Overnight in Amantani



Day 9: Titicaca Lake - Amantani/Taquile/Puno

After a traditional breakfast, we will say goodbye to our hosts and start our return journey. After a lake cruise of approximately 90 minutes, we will pay a visit to the neighboring island of Taquile. The inhabitants of this island have retained many of the traditions, customs and laws established by their Inca ancestors. We will have plenty of time to explore the island, visit the community and their handcraft center, and enjoy a local lunch, before boarding our boat again for the return trip to Puno, arriving in the city in the

late afternoon, where you will be transferred to your hotel.

Overnight in Puno



Day 10: Puno - Cusco

After a full day's scenic bus ride across high Andean plains we will arrive in Cusco, the former capital of the Incas. We will have lunch along the way and visit several places of interest, including the charming colonial church in the picturesque village of Andahuaylillas and the temple to the Inca creator god at Raqchi. Upon arrival, we will check in to our hotel and rest, in preparation for your first full day in the imperial city of Cusco (3300 meters / 10,900 feet).

Overnight stay in Cusco



Day 11: Cusco (Free Day)

Today you will have a free day in Cusco for optional visits, shopping, resting, or simply wandering the picturesque streets of this historic city.

Overnight stay in Cusco



Day 12: Inca Trail: Km 82 - Huayllabamba

An early morning scenic bus ride will take us to the starting point of our hike at Km 82. From here, we will follow an easy path along the Urubamba River towards the first archaeological site at Llaqtapata (2650 meters / 8,750 feet). After a short rest, we will continue to the Cusichaca valley, where we will enjoy a delicious lunch. In the afternoon, we will follow the course of the Cusichaca creek via a gentle climb to our first camp at the village of Huayllabamba (3000 meters / 9,900 feet).



Day 13: Inca Trail: Huayllabamba - Pacasmayo

After an early breakfast, we will start the long and steep climb up to Warmiwañusca Pass (4200 meters / 13,900 feet), which is the highest point of the Inca Trail. The ascent takes us through different ecological zones which are home to a variety of flora and fauna, including endemic bird species. From the pass there is a fine view of the second pass and the ruins of Runcuracay. We will reach our next camp in the valley in the afternoon, after a descent of approximately two hours. On a clear day this camp offers fantastic views of the glaciers of Mount Veronica.



Day 14: Inca Trail: Pacasmayo - Wiñaywayna

Today's hike offers many fascinating attractions. In the early morning, we will start our day with a climb to the second pass at Runcuracay (3900 meters / 12,900 feet). In good weather the views of the Vilcabamba range from the high pass are stunning. After a two-hour descent, we will arrive at the fascinating archaeological site of Sayacmarca. After exploring this beautiful Inca settlement, we will continue along stone Inca pathways, passing through the lush vegetation of high cloud forests, and glimpsing waterfalls, deep valleys, canyons and glacial peaks, including Mount Salkantay. In the afternoon we will arrive at the last high pass of our trip: Phuyupatamarca (3600 meters / 11,900 feet). From here we will get our first glimpse of Machu Picchu. In clear weather, there are spectacular panoramic views of the surrounding snow peaks, and it is possible to see far down into the Urubamba Valley. The hike continues with a long and steep descent along an Inca stairway to the archaeological site of Wiñaywayna, considered one of the most beautiful sets of ruins on the Inca Trail, due to its location and architecture.



Day 15: Inca Trail: Wiñaywayna - Machu Picchu

After breakfast, we will say goodbye to our Quechua porters and continue our hike through the high cloud forest with its diverse flora and fauna towards the famous Sun Gate, or Intipunku. From here, we will have a fine view of the Lost City of the Incas: legendary Machu Picchu (2400 meters / 8,000 feet). Sunrise from here is a magical experience, with Machu Picchu in the foreground. Arriving at the ruins, we will explore the site in the company of a knowledgeable guide, before we descend to the town of Aguas Calientes in the afternoon. Here you can choose to relax in the nearby natural hot springs before a good night's rest in a comfortable local hotel. **Overnight stay in Aguas Calientes.**



Day 16: Machu Picchu - Cusco

Today you will be free to do some hiking in the area or simply relax before we board the afternoon train for the journey back to Cusco, where you will be transferred to your hotel.

Overnight stay in Cusco



Day 17: Cusco - Puerto Maldonado - Posada Amazonas

In the morning you will be transferred from the hotel to Cusco airport for the 30-minute flight to Puerto Maldonado, where you will be met and transferred to the river port for the journey by boat to Posada Amazonas. During our trip we may encounter several of the bird species which inhabit this part of the river and the forest. Upon arrival at Posada Amazonas, we will receive a short presentation and a full briefing on the lodge and the Eseja Ecotourism Project. If time allows, we will make an afternoon trip into the forest and visit a local farm. To provide you with further information on the forest, a video about Tambopata will be shown after dinner.

Overnight stay in the lodge



Day 18: Posada Amazonas

We will be up at dawn for our visit to Tres Chimbadas oxbow lake. We will take a long, relaxing canoe ride around the lake, looking out for giant river otters, turtles, hoatzins and wading birds. We will return to the lodge for lunch, and in the afternoon we will hike a short trail to the 35-meter-high observation tower. Access is via a stable stairway with a railing for support. The views from the tower across the forest canopy are excellent.

Overnight stay in the lodge



Day 19: Posada Amazonas

After an early breakfast, we will visit a small parrot clay lick. From the blind, constructed close to the lick, photographers will be able to take excellent pictures of these wonderful birds. Dozens and sometimes hundreds of small parrots and parakeets congregate here on clear days to ingest clay. After lunch, we will visit a local community ethno-botanic center to learn about local culture and its traditional relationship with the forest. We will return to Posada Amazonas in time for our evening meal.

Overnight stay in the lodge






Day 20: Posada Amazonas - Puerto Maldonado - Lima

After an early breakfast, we will return to Puerto Maldonado by boat, where you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to Lima and international connections.



Included

TRANSPORT	All domestic flights, buses, boats and trains
HOTEL	Hotel ***12 / Camping 3 / Jungle Lodge 3 / Homestay 1 / Total Nights 19
TOURS	According to the program
ENTRANCE FEE / PERMITS	To the attractions included in the program
MEALS	 Bx19  Lx8  Dx7
STAFF	Bilingual Guide / Cook / Porters

Not included

TRANSPORT	International flights
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Rates 2024**2024 cost per person in US dollars**

	Service
	Group
	Group with local guides
Low season offers Janu-Feb. March 2024	

Double accommodation

Note: If the Inca Trail is unavailable, we offer an alternative hike to Machu Picchu.

Departure dates 2023

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
12	23	9,23	6, 27	11,25	8,12
JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
6,27	10,24	7,21	5,21	9,23	7,28

In February we provide an alternative hike to Machu Picchu.

Departure on Thursdays.