

MYSTERIES OF THE INCA EMPIRE

1300 • LIMA → LIMA

Leisurely ○ ○ ○ ● ○ On the go

Meals

Breakfast: 10 Lunch: 1 Dinner: 5

Transport

Touring by private, air-conditioned motorcoach.
Free Wi-Fi (where available)

Accommodation

Rooms with private bath or shower. Includes hotel taxes, portorage, tips and service charges

HighLights

- Lake Titicaca
- Temple of Sacsayhuaman
- Ollantaytambo
- Sacred Valley
- Lima



DAY 1: LIMA, PERU

Welcome to Lima, Peru. Heralded as the "City of Kings" by Spanish conquistadors, Lima retains vestiges of its opulent past with its colonial buildings and worldclass museums.

DAY 2: LIMA.

Sightseeing today focuses on Lima's colonial heritage. Founded in 1535, Lima was once capital of Spain's South American Empire. Visit the baroque 11th-century SAN FRANCISCO MONASTERY, with Spanish and Moorish architecture throughout. Continue to Plaza Mayor, where you will see the Government Palace that houses the presidential palace and was once the home of Francisco Pizarro, founder of Lima and conqueror of Peru. Nearby, see the cathedral where Pizarro's remains are buried. The remainder of your day is free to explore. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant this evening. (B,D)

DAY 3: LIMA-CUSCO-SACRED VALLEY.

Fly to Cusco high in the Andes and upon arrival, descend into the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Stop at AWANAKANCHA and learn about the importance of camelids (llama, vicuna, alpaca, and guanaco) for Inca cultures. See them up close and learn how their coats are transformed into precious fibres for ancient weaving techniques still in use today. Continue to PISAC, a charming village with a

famous INDIAN MARKET, where you have plenty of time to browse the many colourful stalls selling handicrafts ranging from alpaca sweaters and blankets to painted vases and sterling silver. Later, arrive at your hotel in the peaceful Sacred Valley. (B,D)

DAY 4: SACRED VALLEY.

Start the day with a visit to the village of OLLANTAYTAMBO and the Inca ruins of the same name. Explore the archaeological site that was the scene of the Inca resistance during the Spanish conquest-the only place ever to resist Spanish attacks. See how the temple area at the top of the terraces was the perfect defensive stronghold, then visit a LOCAL HOME in this Incan town to experience life in a traditional village, which has been remarkably well preserved. Next, visit the SEMINARIO CERAMICS WORKSHOP to learn about Peruvian ancient and modern art. End your day at a local chicheria for a taste of a chicha, a typical Inca drink in Peru. (B)

DAY 5: SACRED VALLEY-MACHU PICCHU.

Board the VISTADOME TRAIN that cuts a path through the picturesque Urubamba Valley bound for Aguas Calientes, the quaint town closest to the "Lost City of the Incas." Ascend the mountainside through tropical forest to the sacred refuge of MACHU PICCHU. Listen as your guide recounts the many accomplishments of the Incas as you tour the terraced ruins dating back to the 15th century. Abandoned when the Inca Empire fell to the Spanish, these remarkable ruins remained undiscovered for nearly 400 years. Many mysteries surrounding Machu Picchu remain to this day. (B,D)

DAY 6: MACHU PICCHU-CUSCO.

Enjoy some free time this morning to explore the mountain town of Aguas Calientes; perhaps visit the local market, quaint boutiques, or take a walk along nearby trails. Later this afternoon, return to Cusco, former capital of the Inca Empire. (B)

DAY 7: CUSCO.

Embark on a guided sightseeing tour of Cusco that focuses on the city that was once the political, military, and cultural epicentre of the Incas until the Spanish toppled it. In fact, Inca foundations can still be found in Cusco, with the Spanish baroque structures built on top. Visit the SANTO DOMINGO MONASTERY, where these two forms of architecture are melded together with the temple of both cultures atop one another. Also, see the CATHEDRAL in the Plaza de Armas, housing a magnificent collection of artwork, including a depiction of The Last Supper that portrays the apostles dining on cuy (guinea pig). Continue to the hillside overlooking Cusco for a visit to the TEMPLE OF SACSAYHUAMAN. Some of the best examples of Inca masonry can be found at this fortress, where stones weighing up to 350 tons are pieced together to form a complex that could house up to 10,000 men. Learn about the ceremonies and battles that took place here, then see the ruins of Kenko and Puca Pucara before returning to Cusco. (B,D)

DAY 8: CUSCO-JULIACA-PUNO.

Fly to Juliaca, then transfer to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Legend says the first Inca, Manco Capac, arose from the waters of the lake by the power of the sun god to found the Inca Empire. (B)

DAY 9: PUNO. EXCURSION TO LAKE TITICACA.

Experience fascinating LAKE TITICACA today as you embark on a motorboat tour of the highest navigable lake in the world and its manmade islands. On TAQUILE ISLAND, see how the local people integrate their Inca and Spanish past. This is evident by the Spanish peasant dresses made of Andean textiles-the islanders make some of the finest in all of Peru. Continue to the UROS FLOATING ISLANDS, a group of approximately 40 artificially made islands. Learn how the Uros Indians construct their islands, homes, boats, and many other resources completely of tortora reed, a centuries-old practice. Enjoy a farewell dinner hosted by your Tour Director this evening. (B,L,D)

DAY 10: PUNO-JULIACA-LIMA.

Return to Juliaca, stopping at the pre-Incan burial grounds of SILLUSTANI en route. See the above-ground tombs, chullpas, in which the Aymara Indians buried their high priests. You will be welcomed into a LOCAL HOME for an inside look at life here. Later, a short flight returns you to Lima, where you will transfer to your hotel. (B)

DAY 11 LIMA.

Your holiday ends after breakfast this morning. (B)