



Peru Explorer

10 Days



Day 1 | Lima

The First Taste

Plan to fly into Lima's Jorge Chavez International Airport (LIM) anytime before the 6 p.m. rendezvous time. Once you collect your luggage, head outside to the Arrivals area and look for a private shuttle driver holding a Wild Women Expeditions sign.

At the rendezvous, we will meet our Wild Women guide for a thorough debrief on what to expect over the next few days. We swap stories over dinner at Huaca Pucllana, one of the top restaurants in Lima. It has a cool setting overlooking the pre-Incan ruins that served as a ceremonial center centuries ago. Huaca Pucllana offers a classic Peruvian menu of hyperlocal products from the sea and land.

Today's first big bite out of Peru is a filling one!

Included Meals

Dinner

Accommodations

Antigua Miraflores Boutique Hotel



Day 2 | Into the Amazon

Macaws and Monkeys

In the morning, we fly to Puerto Maldonado, where a Sandoval Lake Lodge representative will welcome us. A shuttle takes us to the boat dock on the Tambopata River where we board a motorized canoe to the confluence of the Madre de Dios River, the source of the Amazon tributary. Thirty minutes downriver, we continue our journey on foot to Sandoval Lake.

A narrow canal boat allows us to navigate the flooded forest of palms to the open waters of Sandoval Lake; motorboats are prohibited here. En route we may see the enormous paiche, an Amazonian fish that can weigh up to 220 pounds (100 kg) or hear the unsettling screams of the giant otter! We should see hundreds of blue-and-yellow and red-breasted macaws and capuchin monkeys.

We return to the lodge at dusk for dinner before an evening boat ride in search of the rare caimans.

Included Meals

Breakfast, boxed lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Sandoval Lake Lodge

The Hike

2 miles (3 km)



Day 3 | Exploring the Rainforest

A Giant Otter Odyssey

Just before dawn we will be on the lake looking for giant otters and hopefully, a spectacular sunrise. The close-knit otter families are most active at this time.

From the boat we observe the fishing skills of birds and an up close opportunity to see the strange and primitive hoatzin. This Neotropical bird is saddled with a poor digestive system: it can take up to 45 hours for them to digest fermenting leaves.

After a late breakfast, we follow the trail through the understory of the immense primary rainforest and giant chestnut trees that surround the lake. In the afternoon we'll strike off to the west side of the lake to explore capuchin monkey territory.

In the evening, we gather for a presentation on the dynamic Peruvian jungle. After dinner, we have the opportunity to search for caimans seeking out their own menu in the lake.

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Sandoval Lake Lodge



Day 4 | Amazonian Delights

The Rainforest's Pharmacy

For the mad birders, we can start early, seeking out new species and giant otters at play. After a late breakfast and some free time, we have an interpretive medical plant walk. We learn about the *pamicho* (a vital plant used to construct thatched roofs in local houses), the ginger candle that is touted for its anti-inflammatory properties and the cinchona tree. The bark of the latter has saved generations from the dire symptoms of malaria. The path slices through both the untamed jungle and a small botanical garden dedicated to the careful cultivation of native species.

After lunch, we walk through the north shore forest, the quietest and most secluded part of the forest. In the evening, we can look for black caimans along the shore or take a short walk through the woods to see who goes bump in the night!

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Sandoval Lake Lodge



Day 5 | Cusco

Bites of Culture

After breakfast, we travel through the palm swamps on the west end of the lake and return to the Madre de Dios river to Puerto Maldonado for flights back to Cusco.

Upon arrival in Cusco we transfer to our hotel before a walking tour that includes all the urban must-sees in Cusco. The fusion of Inca and Spanish influences in the Stone of Twelve Angles at Inca Roca Palace is an impressive sight. We also experience the nerve center of the city, the Plaza de Armas, which is surrounded by colonial arcades and four formidable churches.

Tonight we dine at Mamá Seledonia's, a truly feel-good restaurant that supports young mothers and teens in rural areas with industry training and employment. The restaurant's spectacular

menu offers traditional fare like baked guinea pig, grilled chicken with elderberry sauce, trout ceviche, *yuyo* (sea algae) and grilled alpaca steak in pepper sauce.

Included Meals

Breakfast, boxed lunch and dinner

Accommodations

Novotel Cusco Hotel



Day 6 | Into the Cocina

Bean to Bar

After breakfast, we visit the façade of the sacred Qoricancha temple, which was built over an Incan palace dedicated to worship of the sun.

A two-hour bean-to-bar chocolate workshop at Choco Museo sweetens the day. We learn the scratch chocolate making process and how to make a tisane (tea) from the roasted husks of cacao nuts.

Note: Lunch is independent today (nothing like having dessert first!). There are several tempting options within walking distance to choose from.

At 3 p.m., we join a Peruvian cooking class and learn the generational secrets of traditional recipes. We visit a local market for an introduction to local staples and spices before a practical class led by a professional Peruvian chef. For visual learners, this class is a cinch! At the end of our lesson, we pull up seats to a three-course tasting menu and a quenching local drink.

Included Meals

Breakfast and dinner

Accommodations

Novotel Cusco Hotel



Day 7 | Sacsayhuaman

The Moon Temple

After breakfast we explore the Inca Ceremonial Center of Sacsayhuaman. The rocks are impossibly pieced together like a puzzle—rumor has it that over 10,000 workers labored for 50 years to build it.

At the Moon Temple, we make a ceremonial “payment” to Pachamama (Mother Earth) under the guidance of a Shaman by leaving a gift of coca leaves, *chicha* and seeds that contain magical power.

Later, we travel through the Sacred Valley, patchwork maize crops and terraces thoughtfully stacked into the valley walls. We arrive at our hotel smack-dab-in-middle of the Sacred Valley (Yucay village) in the early afternoon to take advantage of the property. Time for a pisco sour at the hotel’s Apus Bar?

Before dinner, those who are eager for a deep stretch can enjoy a one-hour yoga session at the hotel. Dinner will be convenient—it’s at our hotel!

Included Meals

Breakfast and dinner

Accommodations

Taypikala Sacred Valley Hotel



Day 8 | Ollantaytambo

The Awamaki Community

After breakfast, we follow the Urubamba River to Ollantaytambo. The Inca-era cobblestones and adobe buildings are a magnificent example of Inca urban planning. The upper terraces of this site offer extraordinary photo opps of the tidy square-grid town below.

After exploring the ruins, we make our way to the Awamaki community to learn about traditional Andean life and have lunch in one of the community member's homes. The women share the historical connection of their weaving and heritage. There will be an opportunity to purchase expertly woven items too!

Late in the afternoon, we take the train to Aguas Calientes. It's known for its thermal baths. The rail journey is one of the most tranquil ways to visit Machu Picchu as the train passes along the Urubamba River and disappears into the cloud forest.

Once refreshed, we hit the town for dinner at Indio Feliz, a vibey local restaurant.

Included Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Accommodations

El Mapi Boutique Hotel by Inkaterra

Travel

Train (1 hour 45 minutes)



Day 9 | Machu Picchu

Lost City of the Incas

In the morning, we take a short bus ride up the steep, serpentine road to Machu Picchu. The Lost City of the Incas is an ancient marvel of stone palaces, towers, temples and staircases. Located 7,972 feet (2,430 m) above sea level in the middle of a tropical mountain forest, it wasn't until 1911 that American academic and explorer Hiram Bingham stumbled upon its remains.

Upon arrival, we will explore the upper terrace with our guide and tour the ruins of more than 200 houses, temples, the Intihuatana (solar clock), Sun Temple and the urban and agricultural sector. We have four hours access to the site.

Star-struck and mesmerized by Machu, we will return to the town by bus and for lunch and wandering. In the afternoon, we take the tourist train back to Ollantaytambo town, followed by a two-hour private transfer to our hotel in Cusco.

Included Meals

Breakfast and lunch

Accommodations

Novotel Cusco Hotel

Travel

Train (1 hour 45 minutes), private shuttle (2 hours)



Day 10 | Departure

Soul Satisfied

After breakfast, there will be a group transfer to the airport. Sigh. With the hypnotic charm of Peru, Pachamama, and the arresting wonder of Machu Picchu firmly etched on our hearts, we have to determine where to go next before departing.

Hug your fellow Wild Women goodbye, for now, at least. What a soul-enriching time it's been.

Head's up: Hotel check-out is 12 p.m.

Included Meals

Breakfast



Trip Details

Know Before You Go

For all of the logistical details you'll need to know prior to departure—including the packing list, arrival and departure details and suggested tipping information, click [HERE](#).

Itinerary version as of March 13, 2024.