



Peru Trip 2022 Information Packet

Peru Trip – 2022

Peru Alive is offering a trip abroad from Sept 4th – 12th, 2022, to the “The Sacred Valley” outside of Cusco, Peru. This program is a cultural and spiritual experience, introducing travelers to the traditional life-styles of the Quechuan people of the Andes Mountains. They are the direct descendants of the Inca Empire, surrounded by archeological and ancestral evidence of the past. The itinerary presents multiple opportunities to learn about the spiritual traditions and practices of the Andean People. Each participant can embrace these spiritual teachings to the level in which they are comfortable; respect and open mindedness will always guide the learning process. Here is a list of scheduled adventures included in Peru Trip.

- Explore significant Inca archeological sites and ruins, which includes: Machu Picchu, Moray, Sacsayhuaman, Puca Pucra, Q’enko, Tambomachay and Temple of the Sun;
- Sightsee in Cusco, “The Navel” of the Inca Empire;
- Take a trip to Aguas Caliente before reaching Machu Picchu;
- Visit various cathedrals and plazas, symbolizing Spanish colonization.
- Home-base out of a traditional Quechuan town in “The Sacred Valley”;
- Experience traditional Inca meals and local cuisine;
- Visit local homes and communities, building international relationships.

Traveling Costs

This all-inclusive program lasts 9 days and costs **\$1,350**, which includes all listed activities in the itinerary, all lodging, most meals (see Not Included Section), all ground transportation in Peru, an archeology pass, ruin entrance fees, cultural and spiritual lectures, the excursion to Machu Picchu, hot springs entrance, the Cultural Immersion Workbook and licensed tour guides. This price does not include airfare; each traveler is responsible for arriving in Cusco on the first day.

Ausangate Trek Add-On

Travelers have the option to remain in Peru after the initial Sacred Valley Program ends, for a 6-day, all-inclusive, fully catered and portered trek to Ausangate Mountain in the Vilcanota Range. Ausangate is a sacred mountain to the traditional practitioners of Andean spirituality, sometimes referred to as shamanism. The group will embrace the mystic energy of the region while hiking below 20,000 foot peaks with multiple scenic lakes and glaciers. Along the hike is Jampa Pass, the highest point of the trek reaching 16,666 feet elevation. A fair degree of determination and physical fitness is required. However, to help enjoy the trek, hikers will only need to carry day-packs. Let our Peruvian staff cook all meals/snacks, pack gear, and handle all camp logistics. Due to the pandemic, our economic impact is greater than ever. This trip will employ multiple Quechuan service providers, creating a sense of gratitude and friendship. This all-inclusive, combined program (Sacred Valley Tour plus Ausangate Trek) lasts 20 days from Sept 4th to 18th, 2022 and costs **\$2,250**.

*Included on the trek, is a day-hike to Vinicuna, also known as Rainbow Mountain. In 2015, a newly discovered geological wonder was added to the country’s list of must-see destinations. When the snow covering the area melted, it revealed the natural beauty of the rock beneath, formed by weathering, environmental conditions and sedimentary deposits over time, the mountain’s unique minerology created a marbling effect, with layered hues of gold, lavender, red and turquoise.

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Post-Covid International Travel

The tourism industry has certainly changed since the pandemic. Peru Alive has made some trip adjustments to best accommodate unknown future factors of living in a post-pandemic era. If any member is to contract Covid on the trip, they will be personally escorted to a comfortable hotel, close to adequate medical facilities, in order to quarantine and recover. A staff will be assigned to help you through the healing. However, the traveler will assume all additional costs needed to stay safe. Once again, this is the importance of purchasing traveler's insurance. Reported on April 13, 2022, Peru remains on a Level II Travel Advisory, requiring masks in airports and public indoor establishments. The outdoor mask requirement has been lifted. You can follow more safety information and alerts for Peru at www.travel.state.gov. In the worst case scenario that Peru goes to Level IV, Do Not Travel Advisory, Peru Alive will make their best attempt to recover as much of your payment as possible but recognize there are some uncertainties these days.

- *NO vaccination is required but highly encouraged. You only need a negative Covid test to enter.**
- *A Covid Action Plan will be implemented to assure the safety of individuals and the group.**
- *Traveler's Insurance Policies can cover unexpected cost associated with unforeseeable events.**

Deposit and Payments

Contact Mick Stemborski from Peru Alive for an application packet. Return the completed application packet and start researching flight options. WAIT until Peru Alive verifies the trip will be a 100% go and then you can make your flight reservation. At that point, a deposit of \$450 will be due in a week's time to secure a spot. The deposit is non-refundable once submitted by cash in-person or check to Peru Alive. A final payment balance of \$900 is due by August 1, 2022. After August 1, only 50% of your payment is refundable if you cancel. The only guarantee for a full or partial reimbursement, due to trip cancellation for any reason, is purchasing your own traveler's insurance policy. You can submit this Information Packet to a local travel agency or AAA for a travel insurance quote. This is not required but certainly suggested. Travel insurance has many levels of coverage, review your policy closely. All applicants are subject to screening for the safety and well-being of each participant and the group as a whole. If you are choosing to include the Ausangate Trek, the deposit will be the same as above. Your final payment will be \$1,800. Peru Alive is available to help make your flight arrangements, but ultimately you will purchase your own flights. This allows you to extend your trip, add-on additional excursions, know your refund policy, and receive airline perks associated with your airline. Times are still a little uncertain and Peru Alive wants you to feel confident in your trip investment.

Traveling Abroad

It is a timely and tedious excursion traveling from Montana to Cusco but once you arrive, it will all be worth it. Each participant will need a passport, but not a Visa. The law does not require vaccinations, but those decisions are better to be consulted with your family's physician. You will need to complete a pre-boarding health questionnaire provided directly to you from the airline. Peru also requires a valid negative Covid Test results within 24 hours of flight check-in (subject to change, more info will be provided). Most people living in the United States have already been immunized against various diseases found in Peru. Booster shot against tetanus, measles, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and polio are common recommendations. "Traveler's Flu" and diarrhea are common occurrences with any foreign travel. Antibiotics can greatly improve a possibly miserable situation (like a bus ride). We strongly recommend having your physician prescribe an antibiotic to help. The prescriptions need to be filled in the States prior to departure. Personal health or traveler's insurance is required to participate. Remember, it is fall-time in Peru but daytime temperatures can be pleasant (60-70s). Nights and mornings can get cold, just above freezing temperatures.

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Lodging

The group will be staying in hotels during the course of the trip. Throughout the program, the group will have full access to The Peru Alive traditional hacienda, located in Urubamba, 72 km outside of Cusco. This will be our “home-base” for many meals, group activities, and cultural lectures. This home allows the group to immerse themselves in the Quechuan culture. There is a community kitchen, gathering area, safe storage, and bathrooms. It is a pleasant and convenient hub for exploring the Sacred Valley. Just adjacent to our home-base is a comfortable hotel for participants to sleep, shower, and rejuvenate between tours and activities. Upon request, any and all participants are welcome to stay in the actual home with our host family members, if they wish to have a full cultural immersion experience. In Urubamba, there are internet cafes, Wi-Fi hotspots, a hospital, 24-hour pharmacies, bus transportation, and international phones. The group will take advantage of fresh daily markets, cooking many of the meals with local produce, jungle fruits and international foods. The town is known to be safe for foreign travelers while still possessing a rural, traditional feel. All lodging is based on double and triple occupancy rooms. Single hotel occupancy requests will require an additional \$250 fee.

Traveling in the Andes

There are walking tours, bus transports, and a train rides that access high-elevation mountain regions. These trips provide views of glaciers, lakes, wildlife, condors, mountain scenery and remote villages. In addition, Cusco rests above 10,000 feet elevation. Our licensed guides, who navigate these areas year round, will make all preparations and take precautions to minimize high altitude affects in these regions. Oxygen and emergency medication will accompany the group at all times. Altitude acclimation tips and techniques will be provided, most importantly the value of adequate hydration. All day-tours will require a moderate level of walking (3-4 hours) with multiple steps and stairs. There will be no trekking or camping involved on the Sacred Valley Tour. There will always be times to rest, hydrate, and eat during the tours. If anyone is feeling sick or fatigued, Peru Alive will make arrangements to safely assist each participant through the itinerary or escort back to their lodging. April to October is dry season, with clear skies. However, showers are possible, especially at Macho Picchu. There are certain disabilities and medical conditions that would make Peru an unsafe travel destination. Please, complete the application packet accurately and discuss any physical or mental concerns directly with Mick Stemborski. Peru Alive reserves the right to refuse services to any applicant who presents medical or mental issues that would deem this program unsafe or inappropriate to the individual or group as a whole.

Visiting Machu Picchu

Not commonly known, Machu Picchu is located in cloud forest niche called the Ceja de Selva ("Crest of the Jungle"). This high jungle region is home to both species from the mountains above and the jungle below. The orchid, butterfly and hummingbird species living in this area are unique and heavily populated around Machu Picchu. Participants will travel by train to the town of Aguas Caliente and lodge in a hotel. The Machu Picchu ruins are located atop a mountain that shares the same name. This is a full-day tour, involving climbing and descending stairs for most of the day. Rain or shine, the group needs to prepare for any weather. A group gear list will be distributed.

Alcohol Policy

Due to the spiritual nature of the program, cultural sensitivity, and risks of altitude sickness; alcohol use is not recommended. This has caused multiple problems in the past and never seems to enhance the experience our travelers are seeking. To the consideration of the group, if light sampling of local spirits is necessary, please exercise discretion away from the group during your free-time.

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Additional Costs Not Included

Additional costs NOT included in the program are flights, bottled water, personal gear expenses, gifts and souvenirs, personal snacks, any medical or emergency needs, Covid Action Plan expenses, traveler's insurance, tips for Peru Alive guides and staff, hotel upgrades, single lodging occupancy, and certain meals. The following meals are not covered in program: 2 dinners in Cusco, 2 dinners in Aguas Caliente, 1 lunch in Pisac and Cusco. Food is very affordable in Peru and these meals allow participants to get some free-time and explore on their own.

Trip Facilitator and Lead Guide

Mick Stemborski discovered the wonders of Peru on a personal trip in 2002 where he met Wilbert Yucra while trekking through the Andes. Together, Mick and Wilbert have been developing this unique program that introduces various groups and students to the cultural wonders of the Peruvian people. He has the honor of working with multiple populations in outdoor, international, community and academic settings.

Wilbert Yucra Choqucunsa is a licensed Peruvian guide and a graduate of the University of Peru in Cusco. He speaks several languages, including Spanish, English and Quechua (Inca). He was raised in a small Quechua village rich with Inca traditions and beliefs. He has devoted his life to studying and sharing his heritage. He possesses a deep knowledge of the Peruvian countryside and its relationship with the people who live there.

How to Apply

Step 1: Once you receive the application packet, please complete with all the information requested. All information provided is kept in privacy and is relevant to your safety and well-being while traveling abroad. You can return the application electronically or mail to: Mick Stemborski at 1611 North Fork Rd., Columbia Falls, MT, 59912.

Step 2: Start to research flight itineraries and costs. Peru Alive will be offering some suggestions to help find the best arrangements. Travel agencies are also an option. **WAIT** to purchase flights until Peru Alive verifies your application, and then you can make your reservation. Send Peru Alive your flight itinerary. At that point, a deposit of \$450 will be due in a week's time to secure a spot. The deposit is non-refundable once submitted by cash in-person or check to Peru Alive. Make all checks payable to Peru Alive and mail to Mick Stemborski at 1611 North Fork Rd., Columbia Falls, MT, 59912. Sorry, we do not accept credit cards.

Step 3: A final payment balance of \$1,000 is due by August 1, 2022; OR \$1,750 for Ausangate Trekkers. After August 1, only 50% of your full-payment is refundable if **you** cancel. The only guarantee for a full or partial reimbursement, due to trip cancellation, is purchasing your own traveler's insurance. A Gear List and regular travel tips and updates will be sent by e-mail to help you prepare. Start mentally and physically preparing for the adventure with a regular course of exercise to help with elevation, boosts the immune system, and offers extra energy for long days.

Step 4: Group participants will be invited to an informal meet and greet in Kalispell sometime this summer (TBA). This meeting is highly encouraged but NOT mandatory. Soon after, the entire group will meet in Cusco on September 4th; we will be waiting for you at the airport.

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Final Thoughts

The program requires extensive traveling by plane, train, bus, and van. The lighter the pack, the easier the traveling can be. Please, do not exceed the gear list recommendations unless you have special needs. If you require additional supplies or clothing in South America, local merchants sell high quality goods at extremely low prices compared to the United States. A mild to moderate degree of physical activity is required to participate in the entire itinerary. Please, remember Peru is a “developing country.” The level of traveler’s services, degree of modern infrastructure, time management and local cuisine may not be what Americans are accustomed to. This is all part of the “international experience.” All program meals, transports and sleeping accommodations will be above adequate and reflect the cost of the program. Thank You.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Sept 4 Monday	Arrive in Cusco – Pick-up and transport to hotel Cusco City Tour of plazas, cathedrals, and markets
Sept 5 Tuesday	Inca History and Culture - Sacsayhuaman Ruins Walking tour of Cusco, 4 major ruin sites – all-day
Sept 6 Wednesday	Travel to Urubamba in A.M. - Moray Ruins & Moras Salt Mine Tour Inca agricultural experimentation ruins and walk through ancient salt mine
Sept 7 Thursday	Pisac Artesian Market - Extensive jewelry, pottery, textiles, and artwork Travel by local bus to Pisac through the “Sacred Valley”
Sept 8 Friday	Train from to Aguas Caliente - Spiritual preparation for upcoming Machu Picchu Peru Rail to Machu Picchu in “Cloud Forest” region
Sept 9 Saturday	Machu Picchu Sanctuary – Full-Day Ruins Tour Early morning departure for full-day tour - Soak in hot springs in the evening
Sept 10 Sunday	Aguas Caliente back to Urubamba – Local day-hike Start packing up - Final traditional meal with family
Sept 11 Monday	Final Day in Cusco - Free-time to explore in the afternoon Group gathering in evening for trip closing
Sept 12 Tuesday	Sacred Valley Tour Departure from Cusco – Transport from hotel to airport Ausangate Trek starts early in A.M.
Sept 12-17 Wednesday	Ausangate Trekking – Andes Adventure for 5 nights / 6 days Fully-portered Trek through an epic spiritual mountain range
Sept 18 Thursday	Depart from Cusco – Transport from hotel to airport Consider an extra day or two in Cusco to rest – cost not included

Peru Alive is also available to organize and guide additional excursions:

Amazon Jungle Tours	Puno and Lake Titicaca
Lima Day-Tours	Nazca Lines and Coastal Region
Arequipa / Colca Canyon	Ecuador and Galapagos Islands

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