JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

PERU: BEYOND THE SACRED VALLEY WITH THE LARES ADVENTURE

11 days from **£4,470pp**

PERU / LIMA / CUSCO / SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS / MACHU PICCHU



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

Travel to traditional areas of Andean Peru close to the highlights Machu Picchu and Cusco. Guided lodge-based trips to remote rural communities and little trodden mountain landscapes, strolling, hiking or travelling by road: it's up to you.

DAY 1	**Arrive Lima, walk to airport hotel.**
DAY 2	**Fly to Cusco, Inca capital, high in the Andes.**
DAY 3	**Guided walking tour of Sacsayhuaman and the historic centre of Cusco.**
DAY 4	**Chocolate, coffee and pisco tasting tour.**
DAY 5	**By road to the Sacred Valley, visit Pisac and isolated Viacha community.**
DAY 6	**Explore the Lares valley; hikes and weaving villages.**
DAY 7	**Learn about Huacahuasi community. Hiking and biking in the Sacred Valley.**
DAY 8	**Visit the ruins at Ollantaytambo with optional hike.**
DAY 9	**Guided tour of Machu Picchu. Return to Cusco.**
DAY 10	**At leisure in Cusco; optional excursions.**
DAY 11	**Fly to Lima and onward destination.**

ITINERARY

On this holiday you can get under the skin of Peruvian culture and set foot on wild landscapes little trodden by visitors. You won't miss out on the highlights: you visit imperial Cusco, Machu Picchu and the temple fortresses of Pisac and Ollantaytambo. But between visits to these stars of Inca heritage you'll be walking along silent, sun-blistered upland trails, usually within sight of snow-dazzled Andean peaks, discovering buzzing village markets and the rustic settlements of weavers and livestock herders, meeting giggling bands of children making their daily rural trek to school, all under the scrutiny of grazing llamas. You don't have to go far: new community roads are opening up previously little-visited regions not far from the Sacred Valley of the Incas.

You don't have to rough it either: sleep in cosy purpose-built lodges, nourished with hot meals. You're accompanied by guides who will lay out a menu of options for you: drives, strolls or more serious hikes; visits to co-operatives, hamlets or archaeological sites: it's up to you. The idea is that you enjoy an off-road adventure exerting as much physical effort as you feel comfortable with. Travel between the lodges by road if you wish. Or choose the toughest hikes and be rewarded with sight of truly wilderness landscapes.

In addition, a lot has been going on in Peru. Boutique hotels, fusion cuisine and chic shopping opportunities are springing up in all the tourist hotspots.

DAY 1

Arrive Lima, walk to airport hotel.

Arrive in Lima, the capital of Peru, in the early evening. You'll be met and escorted to to the Wyndham hotel at the airport. You have an early flight the next morning.



DAY 2

Fly to Cusco, Inca capital, high in the Andes.

It's a short walk back to the airport for your 1hr flight down to Cusco, set in a mountain bowl in the Andes. You have the rest of the day to relax and acclimatise to the altitude of over 3,000m.

The name Cusco derives from the Quechua word for navel, indicating its location at the centre of the Inca Empire. Today its many impressive original Inca walls display extraordinary craftsmanship, while the busy squares are dotted with ornate baroque colonial churches.

It's a vivacious city, where shoeshine boys and postcard sellers jostle for your attention in cobbled streets lined with handicraft shops. In the evening, the town centre fills with people flocking to the many restaurants, bars and cafés.



DAY 3

Guided walking tour of Sacsayhuaman and the historic centre of Cusco.



Take a short drive from Cusco to the Inca site Tambomachay, featuring aqueducts and ritual bathing facilities, where you will begin your gentle hike along original Inca pathways. The walk passes several other impressive ruins, each with a story to tell about Inca culture and lifestyle. These include the fortress at Puka Pukara, the Temple of the Moon, and Qenqo with its sacrificial stone. You'll reach the vast Sacsayhuaman archaeological park, which overlooks Cusco from the brow of the highland basin, and take a guided tour of the grand plaza and its adjacent extensive terrace walls, constructed from massive stones.

Walk down to the centre of Cusco for lunch followed by a stroll through the narrow streets of the arty quarter San Blas, well known for its ateliers and handicraft shops. Here you will visit the church of San Blas and a family-run workshop. Continue towards the main Plaza de Armas and visit the cathedral, followed by the Koricancha temple.

DAY 4

Chocolate, coffee and pisco tasting tour.



Following a morning at leisure, the afternoon's guided excursion takes you to an artisan chocolate factory, a coffee museum and an establishment dedicated to pisco, the grape brandy spirit beloved by Peruvians.

You will learn about the production process and, in the chocolate and coffee establishments, participate in an interactive workshop where you are taught to make your own confectionary and coffee blend. At the bar Republica del Pisco, close to the main square, you have the opportunity to sample each of four varieties of pisco, washing down a plateful of gourmet tapas. If you are enjoying yourself you can stay on in the bar afterwards; they sometimes have live music in the evening.

DAY 5

By road to the Sacred Valley, visit Pisac and isolated Viacha community.



Depart Cusco early by road into the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Your first stop is at Pisac, a compact colonial town set in the shadow of magnificent Inca ruins, famous for its artisan market. A perusal of the richly woven textiles, bags and traditional clothing gives you a taste of the cultural delights yet to come. There's a hiking option in the exquisite countryside of this fertile river valley, hemmed in by rugged, icy peaks.

Peru is the home of the potato and this region is famous for its many varieties. Enjoy exclusive access to the isolated community of Viacha. You can drive or hike for three hours over a mountain pass at 4,328m to get there. Learn about its age-old potato cultivation techniques and be treated to an Inca 'pachamanca' meal, a medley of meats cooked under hot stones. Afterwards you will visit the Pisac archaeological complex, with the sun setting behind the peaks.

Spend the night at Lamay Lodge, 2,958m, in the rustic adobe village of the same name, sitting at the foot of rugged cliffs, too steep to bear vegetation. Like the other lodges operated by Peruvian firm Mountain Lodges of Peru, in conjunction with local communities, the cosy lodge is exclusive to you and any other guests on your current adventure. There are currently only 8 rooms – all on the ground floor – accepting visitors at the moment; each has its own terrace overlooking a flowery garden. Your bed is comfy and warm, and the shower hot and powerful: just what you need after a day spent outdoors. The Peruvian-style meals served here as at the other accommodation are nutritious and well presented. Lunches on hikes too are more than just a sandwich: fresh, hot meals are served in little camps set up in scenic locations.

DAY 6

Explore the Lares valley; hikes and weaving villages.



Today you will venture deeper into the heart of the Lares Valley. A scenic drive into the mountains along the celebrated 'Inca Weaver's Trail' allows you to discover the rarely visited archaeological site of Ancasmarca and the market town of Lares.

After lunch, you can visit the traditional Choquecancha, a modest weavers' village of squat stone and adobe dwellings, typical of the region, where the vivid colours of the intricate textiles, woven by women who themselves wear traditional dress, contrast with the earthy shades of the settlement. Meet the ladies and watch them at work; visit the old colonial church and Inca ruins nearby. Alternatively, you can opt between two hikes of 2-4 hours respectively, over rocky, treeless moorland, a wilderness terrain characterised by a real bleak beauty. There are sweeping views looking down on turquoise-hued lakes glowered over by lofty peaks before you reach Huacahuasi village, where you will spend the night.

This thatched lodge, built of wood and stone into a mountain cliff with large picture windows, is a relatively grand affair, with spacious, bright guest rooms and even floor heating. It is staffed year-round by local people who enjoy interacting with guests. The venture provides an interesting insight into the evolving role of the indigenous Andean people in both the culture and commerce of the modern-day region around Cusco.

If you'd like to stay longer in the region and learn more about the people living here we can arrange a longer Lares Adventure which includes an night in Lamay Lodge and an extra night in Huacahuasi. Highly recommended.

DAY 7

Learn about Huacahuasi community. Hiking and biking in the Sacred Valley.



In the morning, learn more about the day-to-day activities of the Huacahuasi community. Then, you may choose to embark on a spectacular hike through varied highland terrain and over a pass leading to the adjacent valley and the little town of Ollantaytambo, a grid of small dwellings with Inca foundations and Spanish colonial dwellings. Above it soar the ruins of the Inca temple fortress which stood at the gateway to the Amazon basin.

If you prefer to see more of the Sacred Valley, you can travel by road to an ethnographic museum featuring the history of Peru's civilisations, or hop on a mountain bike to explore at a leisurely pace the landscapes scored with fields of cereals and vegetables and studded with tiny adobe hamlets. After, enjoy lunch in a restaurant in the pretty countryside fringing the Urubamba River on your way to Ollantaytambo. For the dedicated trekker, there's a challenging full-day hiking option crossing a high-altitude pass down to Ollanta. Walk in a landscape dotted with alpacas with breathtaking views of snowy peaks, stopping along the way to interact with children in traditional dress on their way to school or shepherds moving their hardy herds through the rugged landscapes.

DAY 8

Visit the ruins at Ollantaytambo with optional hike.



Following a night spent in a hotel close to Ollanta, you can opt to hike up to some Inca granaries perched on a near-vertical cliff opposite the main stepped structure of the vast temple. You get a very different view of this monumental structure than the rest of the visitors at ground level…

Head back down to the ruins for a guided tour along with those who chose not to climb. In the afternoon, you will pick up the train to Machu Picchu, 1.5 hours further down the valley as the river cascades towards the Amazon.

The River Urubamba enters its narrow gorge between thickly-forested granite hills, there is room only for a single track, which hugs the right bank and passes through hamlets that are no more than a collection of shacks beside the railway.

Close to the foot of the mountain on a saddle of which the citadel was built is the modern-day village of Machu Picchu (formerly Aguas Calientes), dedicated to serving the many visitors with artisan markets, bars and restaurants. It's bursting with pizzerias and happy hours, but your hotel has a lovely peaceful riverside location, set in its own orchid-filled gardens.

DAY 9

Guided tour of Machu Picchu. Return to Cusco.



The majestic ruined city, reclaimed from tropical cloud forest, is reached by a sinuous road, or on foot up a near-vertical rocky path. The American explorer Hiram Bingham discovered it in 1911, by which time it was completely buried beneath jungle vegetation. It is perhaps the ruins' location, on a ridge spur amid forested peaks and above a roaring river canyon, that most ignites the imagination.

You will have a guided tour of the ruins and there's time later to take one of the many trails within the site itself, such as the hike to the vertiginous Inca Bridge, carved into a cliff edge; or wander amongst the stone buildings and llama-dotted grassy ledges, soaking up the atmosphere. For those with a good head for heights, there's the option of climbing the sheer Inca staircase of Huayna Picchu, a steep and vertically quite challenging hike that affords views encompassing Machu Picchu and the surrounding mountain ranges.

Return by train to Ollantaytambo and drive back to Cusco.

DAY 10

At leisure in Cusco; optional excursions.



Cusco is a compact city, easy to explore on foot independently. You are at leisure to discover the many markets, baroque churches and museums which you haven't already seen, and just to wander the attractive narrow streets.

There are optional excursions in the surrounding region, including a trip to Maras and Moray, about an hour's drive from Cusco. Moray is a system of ancient agricultural irrigation paths which now form circular depressions in the earth, with wonderful views into the Sacred Valley and in the shadow of the snowy peak of Mount Veronica. From here it is a short walk to the salt pans at Maras, circular pans of glistening white carved into the mountainside. Feeling you'd like to be active? White-water rafting, cycling and horse riding are on offer.

DAY 11

Fly to Lima and onward destination.

Transfer to the airport and fly back to Lima to connect with your international flight home, or take one of many suggested holiday extensions.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Walking tour of the city of Cusco and nearby ruins
- Chocolate, coffee and pisco tasting in Cusco
- Guided walks and culture-focussed activities in the Lares valley
- Guided visit to Pisaq market and ruins
- Guided visit to Ollantaytambo village and Inca fortress
- Guided tour of Machu Picchu

ESSENTIALS

One internal flight (approx 1hr); various scenic road journeys (time varies according to your choice); 2 rail journeys (1.5hrs each).

On this tour we use a variety of accommodation. The mountain properties are built sensitive to the environment and blend harmoniously with the landscape in which they are sited. This sympathy to the cultural and traditional style, and the convenience of the locations, is what governs our choice rather than consistency of standard. The hotel in Cusco is a comfortable, good standard property, well located for exploration, those in the Lares Valley are small, purpose built, community run lodges with heating, plenty of hot water and home-cooked cuisine; exclusive to guests on the Lares trail circuit so you will all know each other by the time you stay there. The hotel at Machu Picchu is a well-established property featuring cottages with open fires in riverside gardens.

Breakfast daily; lunch days 3,9; full board days 5-8.

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return.

You will have the same well informed bi-(or tri-)lingual guide guide on the Lares trail (days 5-9), so you will be able to get to know him/her and he/she will be able to advise you on your choice of walks and other activities, including fitness issues and and their compatibility with your interests.

11 days, 10 nights: Lima 1; Cusco 3; Lamay village 1; Huacahuasi village 1, Ollantaytambo 1; Machu Picchu 1; Cusco 2.

The unit of currency in Peru is the sol.

HOW TO TAKE IT

Cash machines are available in all major cities and towns, and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds.

We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency.Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

DAILY SPEND

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US$45 per day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants and you will pay considerably more.

TIPPING

Tips are welcomed and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income. Your guide in the Sacred Valley region days 5-9 will be with you for five days, we recommend a tip of $10 per day per person.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Tipping guidelines can be found in our Briefing Dossier.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential.

Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

AIRPORT TAXES

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax and taxes on internal flights are usually included in the ticket.

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This is rated an active holiday, as there are walks and hiking options of different lengths and required effort most days. However, it is suitable for all able-bodied, reasonably fit visitors, including families, as there is plenty of choice of activity.

Your guide in the Sacred Valley will be able to recommend the best option for you for the day according to your level of fitness. The daily options vary from a challenging walk to a drive to an Inca ruin or local community, which means the holiday is appropriate for couples, groups of friends, or families with differing abilities or interests. During the period in the Sacred Valley of the Incas (days 5-9) your luggage is transported by road to that night's lodge, meaning you only have to carry your day-pack on the daily activities and hikes.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

The rainy season in the Andes runs between November and March when there are showers most afternoons. The dry season is in June, July and August when the sun is strong during the day, but at night the temperature drops dramatically (from freezing point to 10°C). May, September and October are less predictable, with both rainy and sunny spells. The a ctual temperature varies with altitude. Out of the sun, it is always chilly above 3,500m, but when the sun shines the temperature rises significantly.

Your stays in the Sacred Valley (2800m to well over 4000m, depending on any hikes you undertake) and Cusco (3400m), are at high altitude. Machu Picchu is lower, as it sits on a mountain saddle where the Andes lose height down to the Amazon basin.Your three days of gentle activity in Cusco at the beginning of the holiday give your body time to acclimatise to the altitude before you undertake any serious walking.

Most people are only mildly affected by altitude and if you drink plenty of water and don't exert yourself or drink alcohol for the first couple of days, you'll probably be fine. Symptoms vary: most common are mild headaches, slight nausea and breathlessness. If you don't recover in a day or two speak to our representatives; in very rare instances it is necessary to descend to lower altitudes.

For day-to-day wear you should go prepared to encounter all seasons. Both warm clothing and a sun hat are essential at altitude; a light fleece jacket and a waterproof/breathable outer shell makes a good combination. Trousers, skirt or shorts made from light, quick-drying synthetic materials work well. If you plan to eat in smart restaurants, although clothing is not formal (no need for jacket and tie), something quite smart would be appropriate.

Strong, comfortable footwear or walking boots is essential and you should bring insect repellant (mostly for Machu Picchu), sun block and sun glasses. If you pan to do some of the longer hikes, walking poles can be a welcome asset. Owing to luggage restrictions on the train to Machu Picchu, the bulk of your luggage will be transported to your hotel in Cusco or to your onward road transport from Ollantaytambo. You can take up to 10kgs per person on the train and an overnight holdall is recommended.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts. Good equipment is very important and hard to come by in South America.

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following: typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. You should consult your GP for specific requirements.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

With shared excursions, this trip is suitable for single travellers.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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