



Jaguar - Peru

**Hike to Machu Picchu • Explore the Amazon jungle • Sea kayak on Lake Titicaca
Meet a local family on Amantani Island • Hike Sacsayhuamán Fortress • Hike and
cycle in the Sacred Valley of the Incas • Explore Cuzco • Cycle through Andean
villages • Cycle La Raya Pass • Hike Amantani and Taquile Islands**

14 days: Cuzco – Lima

Fare: US\$3399

Season: Year round

The Jaguar is our action-packed multi-activity trip in Peru. It captures everything this beautiful country has to offer, from the towering peaks of the Andes down to the steamy depths of the Amazon jungle. You'll have a blast in this land of geographical and cultural extremes! You'll start your trip in the heart of the Inca empire, where you'll explore fortresses and surrounding valleys, hike over stunning mountain passes to Machu Picchu, cycle into the Sacred Valley of the Incas, view Amazon wildlife up close and sea kayak across Lake Titicaca to stay with an indigenous family. The variety of activities and landscapes on this trip will give you a Peruvian adventure like no other – an experience you'll never forget!

If you're too busy to come along for the entire adventure, that's OK! We're very flexible - and we have lots of options for the time-stressed. Give us a call - you'll be surprised at how well we can work with your schedule, even if it doesn't appear obvious when you first read our itineraries!

Sunday

Arrive Cuzco, hike Sacsayhuamán Fortress

Our trip starts in Cuzco, the heart of the Inca empire. Your trip leader will greet you with a cup of hot coca tea – the local specialty to help you adjust to the altitude. After lunch, we'll set off for a walk around this amazing ancient city and up to Sacsayhuamán fortress overlooking the main Plaza and Cuzco Valley. The fortress is a magnificent archaeological site representing a set of jaguar's teeth with massive, perfectly fitted stones weighing up to 130 tonnes each and was the place where the Incas made their final stand against the Spanish conquistadores. No one really knows what the Incas used Sacsayhuamán for – some say it was a sanctuary and temple of the Sun, others say it was a granary, and yet another theory is that it was the place where the old Inca king would play football using the heads of his enemies! No matter who is right, you'll have a lot of fun hearing all the stories this amazing area inspires. Later, we'll take a walk through the colourful Cuzco street markets. If you prefer, you can take some time to soak in the vibrant atmosphere of Cuzco's lively town square and meet up again later for an evening meal.

ACCOMMODATION: Cuzco lodgings, Cuzco

(L,D)

Monday

Cycle Sacred Valley, visit Pisac market, hike Pisac ruins

We'll head into the fertile Sacred Valley of the Incas this morning, stopping just above Cuzco where we'll jump on our bikes and ride down through breathtaking scenery, dotted with local villages and surrounded by the massive green slopes of the Andes. We'll finish our ride in the small town of Pisac, where we'll have a chance to check out the colourful *mercado artesanal*. From here we'll begin a spectacular hike up to the Pisac ruins. These Inca terraces rise 2,000 feet up from the river below. It's a heart-pumping walk up through ancient agricultural terraces – you'll never forget the views of Pisac and the Urubamba valley! After exploring the ancient complex, we'll descend the original Inca stairways and head back down the valley. This is the largest existing fortress-city of the Incas, and it's the perfect warm-up for your Inca Trail trek tomorrow!

ACCOMMODATION: Cuzco lodgings, Cuzco

(B,L,D)

Tuesday

Start your Inca Trail options

It's an early start this morning as we start our trek to Machu Picchu! When you book, you can choose between two 4-day/3-night options – the Lares Inca Trail or the Classic Inca Trail. The next four days will take you on a journey through the Andean wilderness and give you an unbeatable insight into the indigenous cultures that have shaped the Peruvian highlands. If you're not keen to hike the Inca Trail, no worries – just let us know and we'll work out an alternative option!

CLASSIC INCA TRAIL OPTION

Tuesday (continued) **Hike through the Sacred Valley of the Incas**

We'll leave Cuzco and make our way through the Sacred Valley of the Incas to the small village of Ollantaytambo before starting our hike at Piscacucho, or Kilometre 82 as it is known by the locals. From here we'll spend the day hiking alongside the Rio Cusichaca, surrounded by massive Andean peaks, Inca ruins and semi-arid forest. We'll visit a couple of small villages along the way, then have lunch and rest awhile on the way to our first camp, Pisonay (altitude 9,500ft). When you arrive at camp, you'll be greeted with tea by our porters and find your tent already set up for you.

ACCOMMODATION: Luxury camping in the Peruvian Andes!

(B,L,D)

Wednesday **Hike Inca Trail to Pacaymayo**

Today is an unforgettable day. You'll be woken with a cup of coca tea brought to your tent door. After a hearty breakfast, we'll begin our hike on what will be our most challenging day. Today we climb 3,000 feet up to Warmiwañusqa, or 'Dead Woman's Pass' (altitude 13,800 feet). The trail winds its way up through a beautiful mountain pass with stunning panoramic views of the alpine wonderland. It's a challenging hike to the pass, but the 360° views make every step worthwhile. After celebrating our ascent, we'll walk down cobbled steps paved by the Incas over 500 years ago to Pacaymayo Valley, our camp for the evening. Again, we'll already have tents set up so all you need to do is relax and enjoy the evening.

ACCOMMODATION: Luxury camping

(B,L,D)

Thursday **Hike Inca Trail to Wiñay Wayna**

The scenery gets even better today! We'll explore several fascinating Inca fortresses as we descend, with the cloud forest becoming more and more lush as the air becomes warmer and denser. The ancient ruins and increasingly verdant surroundings lend an eerie mood to the day as we make our way down to our next camp – Wiñay Wayna. This is our final night on the trail, with breathtaking views and another hearty dinner!

ACCOMMODATION: Luxury camping

(B,L,D)

Friday **Hike to Machu Picchu**

After a very early breakfast, we hike about an hour in the dawn light to Inti Punku, the Sun Gate. We'll wait here for the cloud to lift and the sun to rise over the ancient city of Machu Picchu, then after capturing the moment with our cameras, we'll make our way down to explore the city.

- OR -

LARES INCA TRAIL OPTION

The Lares Trail is not one specific, signposted path. Rather it is an exploration of the wilderness, farmland, lakes and passes around the Lares Valley with experienced local guides. Weather, track conditions and time of year can affect our route, and the hike you do may vary slightly in order to maximise your enjoyment and safety.

Tuesday (continued) **Hike Lares Inca Trail to Cuncani**

From Cuzco we'll drive to the town of Calca for breakfast, then begin our hike at Quiswarani, walking for a couple of hours along raging Andean rivers and among towering snow-capped peaks with curious grazing llamas. After a lunch stop, we'll continue to Hualcayasa Pass and have a relaxed hike down the other side to our first camp in the tiny Andean community of Cuncani. This remote outpost is the first of many small communities we'll visit that are populated by direct descendants of the Incas. On this trek there's a genuine opportunity to experience the local customs and way of life of a unique culture that's barely changed for 500 years. When you arrive at camp, you'll be greeted with tea by your porters and find your tent already set up.

ACCOMMODATION: Luxury camping in the Peruvian Andes!

(B,L,D)

Wednesday Hike Lares Inca Trail to Ipsaycocha Lake

Today is an unforgettable day. You'll be woken with a cup of coca tea, brought to your tent door. After a hearty breakfast we'll begin our second day of hiking down into the Chancachaca Valley with incredible views of the Lares Valley and the old stone houses that are scattered along the valley floor. Then we'll continue on to the small village of Huacawasi for lunch, before following the trail as it winds its way up Ipsay Qasa Pass, giving us stunning panoramic views of the surrounding alpine terrain. At the top of the pass we'll get our first glimpse of Mount Mantamay standing at 5600 metres (18,400 feet). From here it's a short hike to Ipsaycocha Lake and our second campsite. If you catch a trout here, it's on the menu for dinner!

ACCOMMODATION: Luxury camping

(B,L,D)

Thursday Hike Lares Inca Trail to Ollantaytambo

Today we'll descend into a beautiful valley to Patacancha, where we'll see children dressed in their traditional red ponchos, white short pants and colourful hats herding llamas and alpacas. Then we'll carry on towards the village of Ollantaytambo, passing local farmers tending their famous terraced crops, perched on the steep mountain walls above us. We'll have lunch at Pallata or Ollantaytambo and have time to explore the ancient Inca town with its cobbled streets and thatched houses – you'll feel like you've gone back in time! Later we'll take an unforgettable afternoon train ride down to the sub-tropical village of Aguas Calientes, where we'll have a chance to explore this colourful little town or soak in a hot spring before dinner. The perfect way to relax after a full day's hiking!

ACCOMMODATION: Local hotel, Aguas Calientes

(B,L,D)

Friday Visit Machu Picchu

After a very early breakfast, we head up to enjoy the sunrise over the ancient city of Machu Picchu, where we'll rejoin the rest of our group and explore the ruins.

Friday (continued) Explore Machu Picchu, climb Huayna Picchu Mountain

Today you can walk for about two hours, or much longer if you like. We have all day to explore the many passageways and stone structures of this mysterious place. If you're keen and there's time, we'll climb Huayna Picchu, the mountain overlooking Machu Picchu, for spectacular views of the site and the valley below. It's a steep 90-minute climb, but the views are worth the effort. After plenty of time to explore Machu Picchu, we'll head down to Aguas Calientes for a soak in the hot springs before taking a scenic train ride back to Cuzco.

ACCOMMODATION: Cuzco lodgings, Cuzco

(B,L,D)

Phil says “Lots of people ask me which is the best trail to Machu Picchu – the Lares Inca Trail or the Classic Inca Trail. I've tried to decide which one is my favourite and I can't. You'll meet great people, see amazing scenery, hike hard, and learn about Peru and its people on both trails, making them equally memorable.”

Saturday Free day in Cuzco

Cuzco is the archaeological capital of the Americas and it's a fabulous place to spend a day exploring – it's no wonder it's the continent's oldest continuously inhabited city! Walk along Cuzco's central streets, lined with massive Inca-built

stone walls that form the foundation of the city and blend into the colonial and modern architecture that has been added over the years. You can take the day to explore Cuzco's most popular temples, museums, churches and fortresses. Alternatively, we'll help you arrange one of the many optional guided activities available including mountain biking, hiking, or horse riding. There's also no shortage of great food and entertainment in Cuzco, with restaurants to suit any taste, cafés for coffee in the Plaza de Armas and great bars with local music.

ACCOMMODATION: *Cuzco lodgings*

(B)

If you're short on time, it's possible to finish your *Jaguar* trip here and we'll fly you back to Lima this morning.

Sunday **Journey to Amazon rainforest, wildlife hike**

Today we'll take a short flight from Cuzco to Puerto Maldonado, a frontier town in the Amazon basin. We'll take dugout canoes and glide down the headwaters of the Amazon, deep into the jungle. Listen for howler monkeys in the tropical forest canopy above and spot macaws perched high on the riverbanks. This area is teeming with wildlife – we'll look for giant otters, capuchin monkeys, caiman and many other jungle animals on our boat trip to the lodge. After lunch we'll head out in search of the plethora of monkey species this area is famous for. Keep an eye out for the rainforest dwellers that come out in search of food in the late afternoon!

ACCOMMODATION: *Lodge in the Amazon jungle*

(B,L,D)

Monday **Wildlife hike, virgin jungle exploration**

This morning we'll explore some of the many miles of jungle trails that criss-cross the dense rainforest. We'll travel by dugout canoe and hike through virgin forest to experience the wealth of native flora and fauna under the Amazon rainforest canopy, and learn how the indigenous people thrive in this challenging environment. The Amazon is the most biodiverse place on Earth and you'll have the chance to find out more about the amazing flora and fauna here, as well as learning about the incredible medicinal plants that are found in this region. After lunch, you have the rest of the afternoon free to hang out at the lodge with a book or continue exploring the surrounding area on your own. If you'd prefer to hike a little more this afternoon, you can head out with our naturalist guide on little-known trails that pass by the homes of some of the rarest animals in the rainforest. This evening we'll brave the jungle again in search of the nocturnal South American crocodile – the caiman.

ACCOMMODATION: *Lodge in the Amazon jungle*

(B,L,D)

Tuesday **Cycle through Andean villages and farms**

This morning we leave the rainforest and take a boat back to Puerto Maldonado where we'll catch a short flight to Cuzco. After lunch, we'll be fitted with bikes and safety gear and head off for a spectacular ride through the green hills of the Cuzco valley. We'll spend the afternoon riding through Andean farms and villages, where we'll have the chance to meet the locals tending their crops and herds of llamas. The biking today is mostly gentle downhill riding through picturesque villages and valleys. If cycling is not your thing, you can skip it altogether and relax in Cuzco, or hike up to the many Inca fortresses overlooking the ancient city.

ACCOMMODATION: *Cuzco lodgings, Cuzco*

(B,L,D)

If you're short on time, it's possible to finish your *Jaguar* trip here and we'll fly you back to Lima this morning.

Wednesday **Cycle La Raya Pass**

Today we'll cycle down from the spectacular La Raya Pass towards Puno, the capital of the Altiplano area and the gateway to Lake Titicaca – one of the most amazing rides you're ever likely to do! This is one of Peru's great highland areas where herds of alpaca and llama graze and snow-capped mountains rise steeply from the valley. If you'd prefer not to cycle you can sit back and enjoy the ride on this incredible scenic journey to Puno, known as the folklore capital of Peru. Its narrow streets are filled with the sounds of the typical Andean music called *saylla*, the hustle and bustle of the

local market, and the bell-ring of the *tricyclos*, the local bicycle taxis!

ACCOMMODATION: *Puno hotel, Puno*

(B,L,D)

Thursday

Hike Taquile Island, stay with local Quechua people

At 13,500 feet, Lake Titicaca is the world's highest commercially navigable body of water. The Incas believed it was the cradle of civilisation – the place where all life began. It's a very special place dotted with islands that have unique living cultures and traditions, two of which we'll visit today. The first is Taquile Island, where we'll hike to the highest point of the island for breathtaking 360° views of Lake Titicaca, the Capachica Peninsula, Amantani Island and the Bolivian Andes. On the way we'll visit an isolated village and have the chance to meet the local people and learn about their famous textiles and culture. Then it's a short boat ride to Amantani Island, where we'll spend the night. Our hosts, members of the indigenous Quechua community, will meet us at the lake's edge and are always up for a game of high-altitude soccer, if you're keen! Aside from being a great workout it's good fun and a unique way to get to know your hosts. When the game is over, we'll hike to the Pachamama (Mother Earth) temple at the summit of Amantani Island for unforgettable views of the sun setting over Lake Titicaca. Later we'll return to the homes of our hosts for a home-cooked meal. The Quechua people have maintained their traditional way of life for centuries, weaving wool, keeping *cuy* (guinea pigs), and farming their smallholdings. After dinner, we head down to the community hall to learn a few traditional dances with the locals. It's very quiet here – no streetlights, no cars, no dogs even! – and we're sure you'll love the tranquillity.

ACCOMMODATION: *Family home, Amantani Island*

(B,L,D)

Friday

Sea kayak Lake Titicaca, Uros Reed Islands

Our hosts will wave us off from Amantani's port this morning as we leave under our own steam in sea kayaks! This is one of the most unforgettable activities of the whole trip. The lake is so big it feels like - and even smells like - the sea, and it has its own unique dark blue colour. We'll spend the morning making our way across it to Capachica Peninsula, then hugging its shores, grazed by sheep and shadowed by ancient remnant agricultural terraces. We'll get in our motorboat for the final section of the trip back to Puno, stopping along the way to visit the manmade Uros Reed Islands – you'll be amazed at the unique lifestyle of the people who make these islands their home. After lunch we'll return to Puno by boat for our final dinner together.

ACCOMMODATION: *Puno hotel, Puno*

(B,L,D)

Saturday

Return to Lima, depart for home

This the last day of your two-week trip in Peru. We have a short drive to the nearby town of Juliaca before jumping on a plane to Lima. If you have time to spare after the trip, we're happy to make suggestions on how to make the most of it. On the other hand, if you're on your way home today, we'll send you back refreshed and invigorated from the great food, exercise, rest and adventures you'll have had with us in Peru!

(B)

Important Information

ACCOMMODATION: The *Jaguar* is an active adventure-oriented trip around Peru. We've chosen the places where we stay for their location, cleanliness and charm – not the number of channels available on the television! Many of the places we stay are off-the-beaten-track and set in amazing locations. For example, on both Inca Trail treks we're under canvas, but it's pretty fancy camping. Our porters carry tents and supplies, cook meals, boil drinking water for us and take care of everything around camp. On the nights where we stay in towns such as Cuzco and Puno, we have chosen clean hotels, ideally situated close to the main attractions without being too central, in order to avoid the most touristy and noisy areas. It's worth keeping in mind that Peru is a noisy place – people here have a festive way of looking at life and often enjoy beeping their horns and playing loud music! We have chosen the quietest areas practical in order for people to get the best sleep possible (although after hiking the Inca Trail trek most people find they have no trouble sleeping!), but earplugs are recommended in this energetic and lively part of the world. In contrast, the jungle lodges in the Amazon and the local family homes on Amantani Island are very tranquil and quiet.

RECOMMENDED FLIGHTS: You need to arrive in Cuzco by 10.30am at the latest on the first day of the trip. If you have extra time, we recommend heading to Cuzco early for more time to acclimatise to the high altitude, and to spend as long as possible in this incredible town! Most international flights get to Lima in the evening, so you'll probably fly in to Lima at night and then on to Cuzco the following morning – let us know if you need a hand with extra hotel accommodation. On the last day of the trip, we recommend booking your flight to depart out of Lima any time after 3pm. If you are considering other flight times, let us know and we'll see what we can do to make your trip run smoothly.

TRIP START: If you arrive on the first day of your trip, an ACTIVE SOUTH AMERICA representative will meet you at the airport at 11am and take you to your accommodation. If you're already in Cuzco, you'll meet your trip leader and the rest of your group in the lobby of our preferred Cuzco hotel at noon.

TRIP END: On the last day of your trip we'll fly you to Lima airport.

FITNESS: You must have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself. You don't have to be young or extremely fit (although if you are, you won't be bored), but you should be in the habit of doing at least some regular exercise. Age and experience are not important. We would rather have an older person with a good attitude than a 22-year-old couch potato!

EXPERIENCE: You don't have to have any outdoor experience. We offer trips that enable you to make the most of South America's awesome outdoor environment, culture and history. Our trip leaders are highly trained and experienced outdoor leaders and they'll look after you! You don't have to carry an overnight pack on the multi-day trek (if you like you can hire a porter to carry your overnight gear for a small extra cost), have ever paddled a kayak before or be used to hiking at altitude. You don't need to be a serious cyclist to enjoy our rides either. You don't have to ride at all, if you'd rather hike, shop or laze around! All you need is to be energetic and in reasonable shape – and we guarantee you'll have a wonderful time. But if you like a challenge we will certainly give you one! For example, at Machu Picchu, if you're keen we'll climb up Huayna Picchu Mountain. We manage the level of commitment to suit your experience, and we have an impeccable safety record.

FLEXIBILITY: Peru is a developing nation and we won't tell you that everything in South America runs like clockwork. What we *can* tell you is that we are experienced adventure travel leaders, and we know how to keep things operating as smoothly as possible, even when conditions are challenging. That's why we're here! But you'll find your trip even more enjoyable if you remember to bring flexibility, an open mind and a sense of humour with you.

INCLUDED: The trip fare is US\$3399. The trip fare includes just about everything, specifically:

- All guiding services. We always have an experienced trip leader on every trip and will have a local guide on many excursions for extra local knowledge.
- All ground and air transportation including your final flight to Lima at the end of the trip. The only flight not included is the Lima-Cuzco flight before the beginning of your trip.
- Comfortable accommodation for your entire trip. We can also book pre- and post-trip accommodation for you if required.
- All your meals, except for lunch and dinner on your free day in Cuzco, where we've found most people like to check out the local restaurants on their own.
- All drinking water. Alcohol and other drinks are not included – although we've been known to spring for a few drinks here and there!
- All hiking, canoeing, kayaking, biking, and jungle activities as described in the itinerary, excluding optional activities as noted. None of the activities are compulsory, so if you prefer to sit some of them out and just have a 'down day' hanging out with a book and a hammock, then that's fine by us. This is your vacation after all!
- Group porters to carry shared equipment (not individual gear) on your Inca Trail including tents, cooking equipment and food.

- Tips for local activity guides and drivers, except for Inca Trail guides and porters, are taken care of by us.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Tips for your Inca Trail guides and porters.
- If you choose to, you can hire a personal porter to carry your overnight gear and personal gear (clothes, toiletries, sleeping mat and sleeping bag) on the Inca Trail.

This is your holiday, and we are serious about not nickel-and-diming you! You'll have to pay for the items mentioned here, extra activities if you choose them, and you'll probably feel like tipping your trip leader at the end of a fabulous time, but you won't be pulling out your wallet every few minutes on your ACTIVE SOUTH AMERICA trip!

We'll see you soon!

Itinerary valid through April 2010