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JOURNEYS

**YOUR GUIDE TO
MACHU PICCHU**
& The Sacred Valley



Machu Picchu evokes images of trekking through impenetrable jungle in search of an ancient city shrouded in mountain-top mist. Thankfully, in reality, The Lost City has already of course been found, and is meticulously manicured by the local Incan people and their llamas!

Location

Overlooking the Urubamba River, Machu Picchu is nestled within the peaks of the Andes 2,430 metres above sea level. Archaeologists believe the site was once used as a sacred sanctuary and royal estate for the leaders of the Incan empire. During the Spanish conquest in the 16th century, some 100 years after its construction, the Incas abandoned the citadel and the knowledge and location of this grand city faded from memory.

This architectural treasure had been hidden for more than four centuries before its “rediscovery” on 24th July, 1911 by Hiram Bingham.



When to visit

Machu Picchu is open year-round, but the best time to visit is generally from late-April to mid-June or from September through to October. July and August tend to be the busiest months with plenty of sunshine and dry weather, while the rainy season runs from November through to early April. In February, the wettest month of the year, the Inca Trail closes for its annual month-long maintenance.

Altitude

The Sacred Valley has a much lower altitude than Cuzco, which sits at just over 3,300 metres above sea level. Travellers concerned about altitude sickness in Cuzco, should begin their journey in the Sacred Valley, then visit Machu Picchu before returning to Cuzco.



A wonderful place to explore Peru's Andean Highlands, an area which is rich in history and culture, being the heartland of the Inca Empire when it was at its peak.

The Classic Inca Trail

This well-known route runs from the Urubamba Valley up to the ruins of the citadel. The trail is famous for its access to Machu Picchu through the citadel's Sun Gate where trekkers catch their first breath-taking glimpse of the ruins from the best panoramic viewing spot on the mountain. Permits are required for treks and often sell out well in advance – early booking is essential.

The Lares Trek

A great option for those looking to mix local experiences with comfortable lodge-based accommodation which serves as a base for stunning day hikes in surrounding areas. Explore the Sacred Valley and see traditional weavers attired in colourful dress, roving herds of alpacas and llamas, and a panorama of waterfalls, snowy peaks, and glacial lakes.

The Salkantay Trek

A more physically challenging trek reaching higher altitudes, highlights include the exquisite beauty of the Salkantay Peak and Humantay Glacier Lake. Throughout the trek, you will enjoy the comfort of mountain lodges.

Cuzco & The Sacred Valley

You can easily spend three days wandering Cuzco's cobbled streets, admiring ancient Incan walls, Spanish cathedrals and chaotically colourful markets. Pisac's bustling markets are not to be missed, while the large stone terraces and ruins at Ollantaytambo will complete your Inca history wish-list. Maras is a must see, with an amazing collection of over 3,000 salt extraction ponds dating back over 2,000 years. Moray has impressive circular terracing that was in Inca times an agricultural experiment.





EXPLORING MACHU PICCHU

The best way to travel to Machu Picchu is to take a road transfer from Cuzco to the train station at Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley, from where you board your choice of train for a 90 minute scenic journey to Aguas Caliente, just below Machu Picchu.

THE VISTADOME TRAIN

Enjoy large panoramic windows beside and above the seat, offering unparalleled photo opportunities and superb views of the passing scenery. As you make your way from Machu Picchu, you'll be treated to traditional music, delicious cuisine, and dances inspired by the ancient culture of the Andes.



HUAYNA PICCHU

This is the large mountain you often see in the photos, that sits directly behind Machu Picchu. The name translates into Young Peak and for many trekkers, climbing Huayna Picchu is one of the highlights of a visit to Machu Picchu. While the climb is steep, the views of the citadel and surrounding landscape are incredible from the top so it's well worth the effort. A separate ticket to visit Huayna Picchu must be purchased in advance, and for safety the number of trekkers permitted to climb is restricted to 400 per day.

THE HIRAM HIRAM TRAIN

This is an enchanting luxury train with 1920s-style carriages allowing guests to be whisked into the glamour of a bygone era with gleaming woods, fine fabrics and antique fittings. Experience the magic of the mountains while sampling culinary delights paired with fine wines.

THE LLAMAS OF MACHU PICCHU

Machu Picchu isn't just famous for its ancient ruins - it is also well-known for its llamas! Along with alpacas, these creatures are the only inhabitants of the citadel. Llamas held a special place in ancient Incan society, providing wool, food and a way of transporting goods.

Entrance tickets

To access Machu Picchu, you will need to purchase an entrance ticket before your visit. There are four types of tickets, all of which include access to the Inca site, with some also offering visits to museums and nearby mountains.

The Peruvian government has implemented restrictions on the number of people who can visit the Machu Picchu ruins each day. All entrance tickets are now issued with a set time, allowing a maximum of 4 hours at the site for each ticket issued. Your first visit to the ruins must be with a guide where you will follow a set route.

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