



Adventure tours that delve deeper

Hiking Paradise Peru

TRIP LENGTH: 11 days
STARTS AND ENDS: Cusco

This sample itinerary gives an idea of how we would structure a longform Peru walking trip: starting with day walks that increase in length and altitude as we acclimatize; and moving from hotel stays, through homestay, and eventually to full camping on the iconic Salkantay trek to Machu Picchu.

This is just a small sample of the amazing hiking within easy reach of Cusco. Talk to us about the many other fantastic options at our fingertips!

Day 1 Hikes on Cusco's doorstep!

Great bushwalking begins less than half an hour's drive from Cusco's historic center, with many options on the hills above town, all tending downhill and spilling us out into quaint, historical neighborhoods San Cristobal and San Blas, and eventually the Plaza de Armas itself.

The most popular day walk out of Cusco takes us through the series of four ceremonial sites that visitors to the royal, holy city of Cusco had to pass through: Tambo Machay, Qenqo, Puca Pucara and Sacsayhuaman.

If we feel like getting off the beaten path and into the bush, there are plenty of options: Inca Jail, the Monkey Cave, mystical Moon Temple, intriguing Devil's Throat, and the little-known, family-friendly Chakana, to name just a few! You might even want to spend more than one day exploring this area... the hills are alive with lovely walks and surprising sights!

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Cusco
Meals: Lunch included

Day 2 Chinchero and Pisac

Today includes two famous Inca ruins, with a gentle, 2-3 hour acclimatization hike in between. One hour's drive from Cusco brings us to Chinchero, known for its charming church and Inca terracing perched on a hillside. From here we'll hike a track that descends gently and consistently down to the gorgeous little village of Urquillos and out into the Sacred Valley.

From here we'll drive (45 minutes) to Pisac, and explore this charming little town's cobbled streets, carved stone buildings, and hidden courtyards, not to mention its famous craft market - the largest in the region and a perfect opportunity for souvenir shopping! Then your guide will show you around the massive and intricate series of bristling fortifications and protective terracing that loom over the town. From here it's a 45 minute drive back to Cusco.

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Cusco
Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

Day 3 Rainbow Mountain

Today we'll hike the one and only, instagram sensation that is Rainbow Mountain! Known locally as Vinicunca, this mountain offers a challenging day hike to view an amazing mountainside where a combination of sedimentary layers and erosion has created a colorful spectacle.

It's a long drive from Cusco, and a challenging 15km hike, to a seriously high altitude of 5,200m (17,060ft), over a rough trail... but if we get clear weather, the incredible views make it all worthwhile!

Accommodation: Cusco

Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

Day 4 Tambo Machay to Patabamba

We'll begin our first multiday hike a short 20 minute drive from Cusco. A morning's walk through high grasslands brings us up over Sicllaccasa Pass, where we'll have views of farmland on one side, Cusco on the other, and the snow-capped peaks of the high Andes in the background!

We'll have lunch by serene Coricocha Lake, where we can spot Andean geese, lapwings, and partridges. Then we'll continue down the valley, partly on Inca roads, through the rapidly changing ecological layers that characterize the Andean sierra, to the community of Patabamba where we'll receive a warm welcome from Mamerto and his family.

Accommodation: Homestay with Mamerto and Dominga, Patabamba

Meals: All meals included

Walking time: 7-8 hours approx

Walking distance: 14km (8.7 miles)

Min. Altitude: 3,765 meters (12,350 feet)

Max. Altitude: 4,100 meters (13,200 feet)

Day 5 Patabamba to Huchuy Qosqo

The first section of today's hike contours around the top of the ridge above the Sacred Valley, affording unique views down into the Sacred Valley and straight across to one of the highest and most spectacular ridges of the Andes.

Our path takes us through farmland and a village, up through a pass, and over into a complex of hills and valleys that were once heavily-travelled Inca pathways. A beautiful gorge section brings us to the ruin of Huchuy Qosqo, from where a last short climb brings us to Irene's place, a memorable homestay.

Accommodation: Irene's place, Huchuy Qosqo

Meals: All meals included

Walking time: 7-9 hours

Walking distance: 19km (12 miles)

Min. Altitude: 3,300m (10,000ft)

Max. Altitude: 4,250m (13,940ft)

Altitude of accommodation: 3,460m (11,350ft)

Day 6 Huchuy Qosqo to Sacred Valley

This morning we'll explore Huchuy Qosqo. Thought to have been one of the palaces of the eighth Inca, Viracocha, it's an impressive, well-preserved site with a variety of architecture featuring both stone and mud-brick buildings. There are few visitors here so we'll most likely have the site to ourselves.

After this it's a steep descent to the road and the farming village of Lamay, where we'll have lunch. From here we'll drive one hour to our accommodation in the eternally-sunny countryside near Urubamba.

Accommodation: 4-star accommodation in the Sacred Valley

Meals: All meals included

Day 7 Start the Salkantay trek!

We'll head out early this morning, stopping along the way for a hearty local breakfast. At the trailhead we'll load up our packhorses then start hiking the fabled Salkantay trail! Two hours in, our first major stop is the incredibly scenic Laguna Humantay – an incredible glacial blue lake set between spectacular mountains – this is one of the most photogenic places in Peru!

From here it's a 4.5 to six hour hike up to Soyrococha, where we spend the night in the shadow of the impressive Salkantay Glacier.

Accommodation: Camping on the Salkantay Trek

Meals: All meals included

Walking: 7.5 miles (12km)

Min. Altitude: 12,760 feet (3,890m)

Max. Altitude: 14,700 feet (4,480m)

Altitude of camp: 14,700 feet (4,480m)

Day 8 Over the high pass!

After breakfast we begin our steep ascent to Abra Huayracmachay (15,100 feet), the highest point in the hike where we'll enjoy magnificent views of the high glacier of Salkantay. From here it's a long, easy descent to our second campsite. Total trekking time today is about eight hours.

Accommodation: Camping on the Salkantay Trek

Meals: All meals included

Walking: 10 miles (18km)

Min. Altitude: 9,480 feet (2,890m)

Max. Altitude: 15,100 feet (4,600m)

Altitude of camp: 9,480 feet (2,890m)

Day 9 Hike along the riverside into high jungle

Today's first section is a lovely descent alongside the Salkantay River. You'll notice the changing environment as we move down from arid highlands into a tropical ecosystem, with waterfalls, lush vegetation, and eventually coffee, avocado and banana plantations. In the afternoon we'll likely be accompanied by flocks of colourful parrots, and if we're lucky we'll see the bespectacled bears that were the inspiration for Paddington Bear! From the end of the trail our vehicle will take us to the beautiful Cocalmayo hot springs where we'll camp the night – what better place to soak away the tiredness and bask in our achievements on the Salkantay trail?

Accommodation:	Camping at Cocalmayo hot springs
Meals:	All meals included
Walking:	9 miles (15km)
Min. Altitude:	7,070 feet (2,150m)
Max. Altitude:	9,480 feet (2,890m)
Altitude of camp:	7,070 feet (2,150m)

Day 10 Rainforest stroll to Machu Picchu Pueblo

After another soak in the springs in the morning, we'll pack up, wave goodbye to our cooks, and drive to the beginning of our very pleasant 10km stroll to Aguas Calientes, through a winding rainforest gorge around the base of Huayna Picchu. Here we'll enjoy a well-deserved hot shower and gourmet dinner before a night in a comfortable bed!

Accommodation:	4-star hotel, Aguas Calientes
Meals:	All meals included
Walking:	9 miles (15km)
Min. Altitude:	6,400 feet (2,000m)
Max. Altitude:	8,860 feet (2,700m)

Day 11 Explore Machu Picchu

A spectacular stone city surrounded by incredibly steep, incredibly green mountains, Machu Picchu needs no introduction and is deservedly one of the new Seven Wonders of the World.

There's time for your guide to show you around Machu Picchu's main citadel, as well as our favourite hidden nooks and crannies, before the day's crowds arrive from Cusco. Then there's time for your own exploration of the massive, still-mysterious site, before we catch the train back to Cusco, where we'll drop you off at your accommodation around 6pm.

Meals:	Breakfast and lunch included
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What's included:

- All accommodation (*two people per room or tent. Single supplement: add US\$450pp*)
- All ground transportation
- All attractions and activities specified in itinerary
- Dedicated Aspiring Adventures hiking guide to look after you throughout the trip
- Meals as specified in the itinerary
- Clean, safe drinking water

What's not included

- Tips for your guide, cooks, horsemen and driver
- Alcoholic beverages
- Laundry and room service
- Airport transfers