



ADVENTURE TOURS THAT DELVE DEEPER

THE QUYLLUR RIT'I TRIP

TRIP LENGTH: 12 Days

STARTS AND ENDS: Cusco

Quyllum Rit'i (pronounced KO-yor RI-ti) is the most 'out there' experience we offer (or even know of!) in Peru, a very 'out there' country. If you think you've seen and done it all, Quyllum Rit'i is for you. You'll spend two days in another world – a 24-hour-a-day world of music, dance, costumes, symbolism, pilgrimage and fireworks. The trip also includes scenery and history in Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu, and outdoor adventure on the Standard or Jungle Inca Trail. There is no better way an adventurous person could use 12 days in Peru!

This trip takes place only once per year, and the dates vary according to the lunar cycle.

DAY 1: BEAUTIFUL, HISTORIC CUSCO

Welcome to Cusco! We'll meet you at 1pm for a traditional Peruvian meal at a local favorite restaurant. In the afternoon your guide will lead a relaxed walking tour around Cusco's stunning historic center – it's important to take it easy if you've arrived from sea level today, as you need to acclimatize to Cusco's 3,000m (10,000ft) altitude.

Accommodation: Comfortable hotel in Cusco

Meals: Lunch and dinner included

DAY 2: STUNNING SCENERY IN THE SACRED VALLEY

The sunny, incredibly scenic floodplain between Pisac and Ollantaytambo in the valley of the Urubamba River is known as the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Pisac is a tiny, cobbled Inca village which is home to the largest handicraft market in the region and a huge Inca fortress. We'll explore both, then set off into the Sacred Valley. We'll need frequent photo stops as we pass still-working Inca terracing, irrigation canals, and awesome mountain vistas. Our destination is Ollantaytambo, perhaps the most perfectly preserved of all Inca towns, a maze of cobbled alleyways and sun-drenched plazas presided over by a spectacular, llama-shaped ruin.

Accommodation: Cosy, family-run hotel in Ollantaytambo

Meals: All meals included

OPTION A: JUNGLE TRAIL TO MACHU PICCHU

DAY 3: RUINS, WEAVERS, AND A FUNCTIONING INCA FACTORY

Today starts with Chinchero, best known for its outdoor weaving studios and extensive Inca terracing with incredible views. Next we'll explore Moray – a mysterious complex of massive amphitheaters of incredible engineering precision and stern, magnificent beauty.

Then an easy stroll (or ride in the bus if you prefer), through rolling farmland and views of the high Andes, brings us to Salineras – a surreal and beautiful patchwork of pools and paths that still produces salt using Inca technology and is our favourite site in the Cusco region.

Accommodation: Cosy, family-run hotel in Ollantaytambo

Meals: All meals included

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DAY 4: ADVENTURES IN THE AMAZON BASIN

Today we cross one of the world's more drastic topographical divides: from the arid, Pacific side of the Andes to its lush western slope and the uppermost reaches of the Amazon Basin. The differences become more and more obvious as we descend from the icy high pass of Abra Malaga (4,350 meters/14,000 feet), all the way down to the steamy heat of the *ceja de selva* ("eyebrow of the jungle").

Our destination, sleepy Santa Teresa (1,550 meters/5,085 feet), is home to one of our favorite places in Peru, the *Baños Termales de Cocalmayo*, natural mountain hot springs beside a raging river. It's the perfect place to soak away the road dust of today's journey from one side of the Andes to the other.

If you're into biking, you might want to ride some or all of the day's long descent to the high jungle – it's an incredibly fun, freewheeling, downhill and is suitable for anyone who can ride a bike. We provide bikes so you can ride as much or as little as you like.

Accommodation: Rustic eco-lodge near Santa Teresa

Meals: All meals included

DAY 5: MEET COFFEE GROWERS AND SAMPLE THEIR WARES

Coffee, grown at cottage-industry level and exported to the world through growers' co-operatives, is the backbone of this area's economy. This morning a local coffee producer will show us around their plantation, and the operation where they harvest and mill coffee.

In the afternoon we'll take a short (seven kilometer/five mile) train ride to Aguas Calientes. There's time this afternoon to explore the market and admire the scenery all around and above us – the isolated little town has one of the most beautiful settings you'll see in Peru, in a jungle gorge by a rushing river.

Accommodation: Comfortable hotel in Aguas Calientes

Meals: All meals included

OPTION B: INCA TRAIL HIKE TO MACHU PICCHU

DAY 3: START HIKING THE INCA TRAIL TO MACHU PICCHU!

We'll get up very early this morning to take the bus to Kilometer 82, the start of the Inca Trail. The hike begins in the Sacred Valley as we follow the Urubamba River, climbing ever higher and eventually heading off up the Cusicacha Valley, through semi-arid forest and farming villages, to Wayllabamba, where we'll camp for the night.

Accommodation: Luxury camping on the Inca Trail

Meals: All meals included

Walking: 12 kilometers (7.5 miles)

Min. Altitude: 2700 meters (8860 feet)

Max. Altitude: 3100 meters (10,170 feet)

Altitude of camp: 3,100 meters (10,170 feet)

DAY 4: HIKE OVER WARMIWAYÑUSCA PASS

Most of our walking time today is taken up by a stiff 1,200 meter (3,940 feet) hike up to Warmiwayñusca (Dead Woman's Pass), the highest point of the Inca Trail. From here if it's clear we'll enjoy incredible views back the way we came, and onwards towards the distant, snowcapped Vilcabamba Range. Then we descend steeply into Pacaymayo, our campsite for the night with one of the best views in the Andes.

Accommodation:	Luxury camping on the Inca Trail
Meals:	All meals included
Walking:	11 kilometers (6.8 miles)
Min. Altitude:	3100 meters (10,170 feet)
Max. Altitude:	4200 meters (13,780 feet)
Altitude of camp:	3600 meters (11,810 feet)

DAY 5: RUNKURAKAY, SAYACMARCA AND WIÑAYWAYNA

Today's hike takes us through some of the most stunning scenery in Peru, with cloud forest, orchids, hummingbirds and mountains on all sides, and to three gorgeous little ruins – Runkurakay, Sayacmarca, and Wiñaywayna, next to the evening's campsite. Along the way we cross the watershed of the Andes – this is one of the best days trekking in the world.

Accommodation:	Luxury camping on the Inca Trail
Meals:	All meals included
Walking:	12 kilometers (7.5 miles)
Min. Altitude:	2670 meters (8760 feet)
Max. Altitude:	3900 meters (12,800 feet)
Altitude of camp:	2670 meters (8760 feet)

DAY 6: EXPLORE MACHU PICCHU

An early start rewards us with sunrise at Machu Picchu – a peak moment for anyone. 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. Your trip leader will take you on a guided tour – a necessary start to orient you in this massive site – then you'll have plenty of time to explore the site and some of the surrounding peaks on your own before we catch the train back to Cusco for the night.

Accommodation:	Back at our home-base Cusco hotel
Meals:	All meals included

DAY 7: FREE DAY IN CUSCO

There are things to do in Cusco to suit every mood and personality: churches, museums, and art galleries; adventure activities like rafting and horse riding, and organized tours. This is also the perfect day to just wander around and enjoy the spectacular mountain views, traditionally dressed locals, excellent cafes and charming architecture that characterize the historic centre of Cusco.

Accommodation:	Cusco hotel
Meals:	Breakfast included

DAY 8: LOCAL LIFESTYLE AND FABULOUS FOOD

The *Valle Sur* just outside Cusco is one of our favourite places to share with our guests, because it offers a one-day snapshot of the incredible variety of this whole region. We'll meet *brujos* (witches) who can read your future in coca leaves, and see how bakers create the area's famous *chuta* bread. We'll explore two charming, little-visited ruins: the Inca agricultural laboratory Tipón, with its still-working terraces and panoramic views, and Pikillacta, 'the flea village', which was home to 10,000 members of a pre-Inca tribe known for abundant procreation!

We'll check out the church of Andahuaylillas, so elaborate it's known as the Sistine Chapel of the Americas, and the deliberately-deformed skulls of departed Inca nobles displayed in the museum next door. On the way home there's time to sample local specialty foods like *toqto* (pigskin) and *cuy* (guinea pig), or for the less adventurous palate, the best cakes and ice-creams in the region!

Accommodation: Cusco hotel

Meals: All meals included

DAY 9: PILGRIMAGE HIKE TO QUYLLUR RIT'I

A 2.5 hour drive brings us to Mawayani, (3,900m, 12,800ft), where our pilgrimage begins. From here it's a walk of approximately eight kilometres (five miles) up to the Sanctuary, 4800 metres (15,750ft) above sea level. Here the ceremonies – in honour of, in no particular order, Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, Taytacha (Father Earth) and the Apu Ausangate (a powerful mountain god) – take place. Along the way are crosses marking places for rest, prayer, and exchanging religious icons, all accompanied by the hypnotic, pentatonic-scale music that will follow us throughout our time here.

Late in the afternoon we'll arrive to our comfortable campsite, among tens of thousands of other pilgrims and within sight of the Sinakara Glacier. If you have any energy left, you will find plenty to look at wandering around the site, or you might want to just relax with a cup of coca tea in our cosy dining tent.

Accommodation: Luxury camping at Quyllur Rit'i

Meals: All meals included

DAY 10: CENTRAL DAY OF QUYLLUR RIT'I FESTIVAL

Quyllur Rit'i, the largest indigenous festival in the Americas, centres around the Sanctuary of the Lord of Quyllur Rit'i and the nearby pre-Inca holy rock which has had a chapel to the Virgin Mary planted on top of it. A procession of singing and dancing devotees continues day and night between these two points, with a stop in between to make reverence to the mountain. Fireworks go off all night, and the music never stops.

Different *comparsas* – groups of dancers – drawn overwhelmingly from rural, Quechua-speaking communities are the players. Each *comparsa* has its own music, dance, and unbelievably elaborate costume. Perhaps the most important personages are the *ukukus*: the guardian spirits of the festival, and, drawn from all the communities, the unifying link between all the groups here. They are heavily disguised in shaggy bear costumes and masks, always carry a whistle and a llama-hide whip, and speak in falsetto voices to hide their identities.

Accommodation: Luxury camping at Quyllur Rit'i

Meals: All meals included

DAY 11: BACK TO THE REAL WORLD

This morning a solemn Mass brings the Quyllur Rit'i festival to a close. Late this morning we'll join the trail of pilgrims winding their way back down the valley and out to the road. Here we'll meet our vehicle for the trip back to Cusco, where a hot shower, a gourmet dinner and a comfortable bed await us.

Accommodation: Back at our home-base hotel in Cusco

Meals: All meals included

DAY 12: DEPARTURE DAY

You can book your flight out of Cusco for any time today. If you're staying on in Peru, we're delighted to help out with suggestions for the rest of your time here.

Meals: Breakfast included

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- All accommodation, including tent (based on twin share. Single Supplement available for US\$350)
- All ground transport (private vehicle and train)
- All activities specified in itinerary
- Dedicated Aspiring Adventures guide
- All meals except lunch and dinner on free day
- Drinking water with meals
- Entrance to all attractions specified in itinerary
- Extra permit to climb Huayna Picchu at Machu Picchu if available at time of booking (with Option A)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED:

- Drinks apart from water with included meals
- Tips for your guide(s), driver and cooks and horsemen on Quyllur Rit'i hike
- Tips for your porters and cooks on the Inca Trail hike (Option B only)
- Extra cost for Option B, Inca Trail hike (add US\$250)
- Sleeping bag and sleeping mat for camping (bring your own, or hire from us – US\$40 per item)
- Optional: mule to carry your gear on the Quyllur Rit'i pilgrimage (add US\$40)

CONDITIONS AT QUYLLUR RIT'I:

This trip is suitable for adventurous people who are prepared to rough it. At times Quyllur Rit'i will be cold, confronting and tiring. You will be camping in an isolated mountain valley with no infrastructure. Food choice is limited and suitable for those who consider themselves adventurous eaters. Vegetarians should bring extra snacks. We provide hot food and drinks throughout the event, in our base camp. Bottled water and other drinks are readily available to buy.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Accommodations on our Peru trips are our favourites in each place. In Cusco we stay in a clean, comfortable three-star level hotel. In Santa Teresa we stay in an eco-lodge perched like a treehouse in the bush. In Ollantaytambo and Aguas Calientes, we stay in quiet, quirky, family-run hotels. At Quyllur Rit'i and on the Inca Trail we camp in tents.