



Adventure tours that delve deeper

The Peru food tour

TRIP LENGTH: 14 days
STARTS AND ENDS: Lima
ENDS: Puno

Our Peru food tour includes all the highlights - Lima, Machu Picchu, Cusco, the Sacred Valley, and Lake Titicaca – plus the world's most diverse produce markets, a full-immersion local cooking lesson in Cusco, a gourmet farm to table experience, local microbreweries and distilleries, and unforgettable meals in roadside stalls, world-famous gourmet restaurants, and local homes.

One trip date each year coincides with Mistura – Lima's huge, fabulous annual food fair.

Day 1 Lima - gastronomic capital of the Americas!

No food tour of Peru could start anywhere else – Lima is one of the most passionately 'foodie' cities on the planet. We'll get straight into it today with a lunch that showcases *ceviche*, Peru's world-famous national dish, followed by a wander through seaside suburbs where pre-Inca history lies in wait around every corner.

Later we'll head to the indescribable *Circuito Mágico de Agua* (magical water circuit - Lima's quirkiest attraction), before dinner at a *peña*, where we'll start to get a taste of a folk-dance culture that's just as rich and diverse as Peru's gastronomic tradition!

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Lima

Meals: Lunch and dinner included

Day 2 Option A: Lima – que rico!

One of the reasons Peru's food is so glorious is the diversity of its produce. Ingredients from the ocean, mountains and jungle all come together, in almost overwhelming abundance, at the typical urban produce market we'll visit this morning.

Later we'll head to Lima's historic centre to explore beautiful colonial buildings, stately plazas and creepy catacombs. This afternoon we'll wander the quaint byways of Barranco, where we'll sample Peru's answer to the doughnut – sweet potato dough-based picarones.

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Lima

Meals: All meals included

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Day 2 Option B: Mistura!

Mistura is the annual event in Latin American food. We'll check out mind-bogglingly huge displays of pisco, chocolate, coffee, wines, and exotic Amazonian fruits. Flamboyant cooking demonstrations and hotly contested competitions will compete for our attention. We'll taste food prepared by country grandmothers and internationally-renowned chefs like Gastón Acurio, Javier Wong, Mitsuharu Tsumura and Rafael Osterling. Come hungry!

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Lima

Meals: All meals included

Day 3 Delicious Cusco

A short flight this morning brings us to Cusco (3,300m/10,000ft), the capital of the Inca empire and one of the most beautiful cities on Earth. This afternoon your guide will show you around the winding cobbled streets and historic buildings of central Cusco, and in the evening we'll head for Magisterio, Cusco's cosmopolitan residential area. Here we'll dine where the well-heeled local gourmets go, then drop in for a craft beer at Zenith – our pick of the crop of microbreweries that have sprung up in Cusco in recent years.

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Cusco

Meals: All meals included

Day 4 Pisac

This morning we'll drive the short distance to Pisac, home to the largest handicraft market in the region and a huge Inca fortress. We'll explore both, fuelled by local favourite street snacks like choclo con queso (corn and cheese) and wood-fired empanadas, before heading to Urubamba, where we'll stop at Katy's favourite gourmet novo-Andino restaurant for lunch.

This afternoon we'll catch the train to Aguas Calientes, the rainforest-gorge town that's our jumping-off point for Machu Picchu tomorrow.

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Aguas Calientes

Meals: All meals included

Day 5 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.

We'll be up at sunrise so 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 crowds arrive. There's plenty more time for your own exploration of the massive, still-mysterious site.

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Aguas Calientes

Meals: All meals included

Day 6 Ruins, weavers, and a salt factory

This morning we'll travel to Chinchero, where we'll visit outdoor weaving studios and an Inca ruin with incredible views. Next, we'll explore Moray – a mysterious complex of massive amphitheatres of astounding engineering precision and stern, magnificent beauty.

After a gourmet picnic lunch, an easy stroll (or ride in the vehicle 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: Charming accommodation at Ollantaytambo's best hotel

Meals: All meals included

Day 7 Ollantaytambo

This morning we'll explore gorgeous Ollantaytambo, a perfectly preserved, incredibly charming Inca town with atmospheric cobbled alleyways, sun-drenched plazas, and working Inca waterways.

Lunch is an organic, gourmet, farm-to-table experience to remember, and this afternoon we can either work it off by hiking around the town's spectacular Inca fortress, tour a local distillery, or relax with a local libation in the riverside beer garden at the Sacred Valley Cerveceria.

Accommodation: Charming accommodation at Ollantaytambo's best hotel

Meals: All meals included

Day 8 The Sacred Valley

This morning we'll drive the length of the eternally spring-like, stunningly scenic Sacred Valley. We'll need frequent photo stops as we pass still-working Inca terracing, fertile floodplain orchards and farmland, and awesome mountain vistas.

We're on our way to a very special lunch. No food tour of Peru would be complete without pachamanca (literally "earth oven" in the Inca language, Quechua) – the celebratory feast of the Incas which has made a big comeback in recent years and is now touted by fancy restaurants both in Peru and outside it.

Our friends, mountain farmers Mamerto and Dominga, prepare the most delicious version we've tried, and today they're making it for you! Chicken, lamb, banana, yuca, corn, soft cheese, and – of course! – various different potatoes, are lovingly coated with secret condiments then buried, cooked, and served with uchucuta – a creamy, slightly spicy, incredibly delicious and moreish sauce that's indigenous to this area.

After lunch, we'll head back to Cusco where there's a time this afternoon for more exploration with your guide – or to take a nap and sleep off lunch!

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Cusco

Meals: All meals included

Day 9 Full immersion Peruvian cooking day

Today we'll spend the day with a local friend who's an expert cook of regional dishes. We'll start at the Vinocanchón wholesale producer's market in Cusco's outskirts, where we'll select our ingredients. Then we'll head to the kitchen, roll up our sleeves, and get down to the business of the day: preparing a three course, gourmet Peruvian feast, with a jug of pisco sour to wash it down!

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Cusco

Meals: All meals included

Day 10 The South Valley

The Valle Sur, little visited by foreign tourists, is a favourite local food destination. Each town has one specialty: chuta bread in Oropesa, guinea pig in Tipón, fried cheese in Checacupe, and Steve's favourite chicharrónes in Saylla.

It's also home to the church of Andahuaylillas, which is so ornate it's known as the Sistine Chapel of the Americas, and a couple of charming, scenic pre-Inca ruins.

We'll spend the night at a historic hacienda. Established as a convent in the 18th century, it's now home to a dairy farm where we'll have the opportunity to sample delicious high-altitude cheese and yoghurt.

Accommodation: Historic hacienda near Ayaviri

Meals: All meals included

Day 11 Forgotten riches in Lampa

Today we'll explore the surreal canyons of Tinajani, and taste Ayaviri's locally-revered kankacho (lamb and potatoes, but not the version you grew up with!), on our way to one of our favourite places in Peru – Lampa. Once one of the richest towns in Peru, it's now all but a ghost town, making the grandeur and scale of its cathedral all the more striking. Impressive from the outside, inside the cathedral is simply incredible. Among many other marvels, it houses a catacomb, a mind-boggling collection of skulls and skeletons, and a full-scale reproduction of Michelangelo's Pietá.

We'll arrive to the shores of Lake Titicaca in time for a memorable dinner at one of Puno's excellent fusion restaurants.

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Puno

Meals: All meals included

Day 12 Lake Titicaca tour begins

This morning we take to the waters of Lake Titicaca. Our first, brief stop is the very interesting but extremely touristic Uros – the famous floating reed islands of Lake Titicaca. Next is Amantani Island, where we'll head home with our homestay hosts for a lunch of sopa de quinoa (quinoa and vegetable soup – so tasty it seems to be more than the sum of its parts). In the afternoon we'll explore the rustic byways of the pedestrian-only island, and later, take in what may be the most beautiful sunset you'll ever see.

Accommodation: Homestay on Amantani Island

Meals: All meals included

Day 13 Textiles and trout on Taquile Island, Lake Titicaca

After breakfast, a short cruise across Lake Titicaca brings us to scenic Taquile Island. Here we'll explore winding island paths across rolling green hills and through idyllic villages and enjoy stunning views across the lake to the snow-capped peaks of Bolivia to the east. Taquile is the most famous textile centre in the Andes and we'll learn about colourful, storytelling weavings, before enjoying a lunch of fresh-caught trout in the island's co-operative restaurant. In the afternoon we return to Puno for a memorable dinner to mark our last night together.

Accommodation: 4-star hotel in Puno

Meals: All meals included

Day 14 Departure day

You can book your flight (out of Juliaca, the nearest airport to Puno) for any time today. If you're staying on in Peru, we'd be delighted to help out with suggestions and assistance for the rest of your time here.

Meals: Breakfast included

What's included:

- All accommodation (*based on twin-share. Single Supplement available for US\$800*)
- All ground transport (*private vehicle and train*)
- Flight from Lima to Cusco on Day 3
- All activities and attractions specified in itinerary
- Extra permit to climb Huayna Picchu at Machu Picchu (*if available at time of booking*)
- Dedicated Aspiring Adventures guide
- All meals as specified (*13 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 13 dinners*)
- Drinking water with meals

What's not included:

- Tip for your guide and driver
Flights to start (Lima) and from end (Puno/Juliaca) of the trip

Accommodations:

Accommodations on our Peru food tour are our favourites in each place. In Lima, Cusco, Aguas Calientes and Puno, we stay in four-star hotels. Between Cusco and Puno, we stay in a family *hacienda* where one bathroom is shared between two very comfortable bedrooms (four people maximum share a bathroom). In Ollantaytambo we stay in the best hotel in town – it's three-star rated, but more than makes up in charm and character for anything it may lack in luxury.

On Amantani Island we stay in humble family homes. Your room will be clean, and your bed will be warm, but overall conditions are basic, and hygiene may not be what you are used to at home. Any slight discomfort you experience will be well compensated by the insight into a very different way of life.