



tour dossier for:

Highlights Of The Incas 1

11 nights / 12 days • Peru, Bolivia



Adventure Tours
Varied local transport • Pleasant hotels

The Facts

Dossier Last Updated: 30-03-2008

Tour Code: PIP

Duration 11 nights / 12 days

Joining City: Lima

Departure City: La Paz

Nearest International Airport (joining / departing):

This dossier is designed for this particular tour and should be read in conjunction with the country dossier(s), regional pre-departure booklet and optional excursions guides relevant to your itinerary. You will also receive a joining letter in advance of your journey with further information, while last minute updates may be posted in the Latest News section of our website. Please see tucantravel.com for details.



What's Included

Accommodation: 8 nights in hotels, 2 nights in jungle lodge, 1 night with local Indians (very basic)

Meals: Meals in Amazon Jungle & on Amantani Island

Excursions: Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley tour, most site entrance fees in the Cuzco area and Sacred Valley, Amazon Jungle, Uros/Amantani/Taquile Islands

What's Excluded

Local Payment

International flights and departure tax

Domestic flight taxes approx US\$6 each

Tips on included excursions, visas, travel insurance, personal items, other tips, sleeping bag.

Pre and post tour accommodation

Airport transfers

Spending money allow US\$25-30 per day to cover meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras

Brief Overview

Immerse yourself in the many facets of Peruvian culture and enjoy bustling colourful markets, astonishing wildlife, ancient Inca ruins and friendly locals. Explore the desert city of Lima, spot incredible wildlife in the Amazon Jungle, discover the mysteries hidden throughout legendary Inca ruins and stay overnight with friendly local folk on Lake Titicaca.

Itinerary

Day 1 to 4

Lima - Puerto Maldonado - Amazon Jungle (or free time) - Cuzco

The tour begins in Lima, Peru's capital. Lima was founded by the Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535 after he eradicated the Incas and made the city his capital. Lima has many fine colonial buildings and some of the best museums in South America including the Gold Museum, Museum of the Inquisition and the Catacombs below the San Francisco Church. Peru's capital has a great deal to offer and many of the sights, including the city's two main squares the Plaza de Armas and Plaza San Martin, are within easy walking distance. The Plaza de Armas houses the Cathedral, Municipal Palace and Presidential Palace where the changing of the guard can be seen every day at 12 noon. If you want more time to explore properly Lima you may wish to allow a few extra days at the beginning of your trip. On Day 2 we fly to the jungle community of Puerto Maldonado, our starting point to visit the Amazon rainforest. If you choose not to visit the Amazon Jungle you will have free time in Cuzco and a portion of your tour cost will be deducted (see brochure for prices). This bustling town has many thousands of motorcycles, busy markets and shops. Upon arrival we have a short tour of the town's medicinal markets. Our journey to the jungle lodge begins here, firstly by bus and then motorised canoe, a 30km journey along the river (approx 2 hours total, bus and canoe). The large canoes are very safe and lifejackets are supplied. Arriving at the inviting lodge at the river's edge you will be allocated a bungalow, all of which are built from rustic and typical materials from the area. Each room is sealed by meshed netting to stop mosquitoes and other insects from entering your room. All rooms have private en suite bathroom. Other facilities in this complex include a welcoming reception area with friendly staff (as well as some semi-wild animals, mostly parrots) dining room, bar facilities, a library and living room where you can relax. All excursions are led by local guides who specialise in biology and ecology, and all our jungle guides are English speaking. After a delicious lunch on the first day and settling into the lodge our jungle program begins, with an introductory walk in the jungle. You will have plenty of time to enjoy marvellous jungle landscapes and rich diversity of flora and fauna. It is possible to see a great variety of monkeys such as the 'maquisapa', the black and the white 'Martins', 'Leoncito de la Selva' (Little lions), 'Frailes' (Friars), 'Achuñis', 'Ronsocos' etc, as well as an array of birdlife. In the evenings it is often possible to enjoy the wonderful sunset, one of the most impressive sights of the forest (weather permitting). Tonight we will travel by canoe to spot caiman and other nocturnal wildlife along the rivers edge. The next day we will awake to the sounds of the jungle. After a typical jungle breakfast we will set off early to walk through the rainforest along specially adapted pathways with bridges to cross the marshes. Our guide will explain the medicinal plants and delicate ecological systems of the Amazon Jungle before arriving at a hidden oxbow lake. The lake has transparent waters surrounded by wide marshes and giant trees. We take a short canoe ride observing caiman, abundant bird life and the possibility to catch a glimpse of the rare giant otter. Afterwards we will enjoy the view of the lake and observe the parrots, guacamayos, toucans, camungos, shanshos, herons, turtles and caiman (alligators) from our viewing point. Then we will return to the lodge for a well deserved lunch. A short siesta to pass the heat of the day and then it's time to visit a farming family close by the lodge, to observe the local way of life of the Amazon people. This evening our guide will take us on a short night walk to listen to the sounds and sights of the jungle. On the final day in the jungle we return upriver to Puerto Maldonado for our flight back to Cuzco where you have the rest of the day free to further explore this fascinating ancient capital. You can take an orientation walking tour of this enchanting city, which has an indigenous population of around 300,000. Cuzco's centre is the Plaza de Armas, dominated by the opulent Cathedral and La Compañía de Jesus Church. Its cloistered arcades house many fine restaurants, bars and shops. Make the most of your free time to explore Cuzco's amazing churches, colonial buildings and picturesque streets, many of which have Inca walls, arches and doorways. On a hill overlooking the city stands the ceremonial fortress of Sacsayhuaman, where some of the most spectacular Inca walls can be found, one of the stones is a massive 130 tons. This is also the location of the famous annual Inti Raymi Festival, which takes place on the 24th June. In close proximity are some other fine examples of the Inca ingenuity: Kenko, Tambo Machay and Puka Pukara.

Day 5 to 5

Cuzco - Sacred Valley

A full day is spent visiting the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Firstly we visit the Pisac ruins, perched on a hilltop with incredible views of the snow-capped mountains, and then we go down to the famous traditional Indian market of the same name, which is full of colour and atmosphere. A great place for souvenirs! After lunch, we continue along the valley to the temple-fortress of Ollantaytambo with its

enormous Inca terracing constructed on the side of a steep mountain.

Day 6 to 7

Machu Picchu - Aguas Calientes - Cuzco

You will have an early morning departure for the train that takes you to Aguas Calientes and Machu Picchu. The Lost City of Machu Picchu was originally completely self-contained, surrounded by agricultural terraces sufficient to feed the population, and watered by natural springs. Located high above the fast flowing Urubamba River, the cloud shrouded ruins have palaces, baths, temples, storage rooms and some 150 houses, all in a remarkable state of preservation that will simply take your breath away. The ruins were only discovered by the outside world in 1911, when American explorer Hiram Bingham found them while looking for another lost city called Vilcabamba. Due to their isolation many of the buildings are still quite intact and you can't help but admire Huayna Picchu (Young Mountain), which towers above the ruins. It is a hard climb to the top of the mountain (it takes about 50 minutes) but you are rewarded with spectacular views over the whole site. You then have a free day to enjoy Cuzco.

Day 8 to 10

Puno - Lake Titicaca - Uros, Amantani & Taquile Islands - Puno

Leaving Cuzco, we'll drive along roads abundant with herds of llamas, alpacas and vicuñas before reaching the Altiplano (high plain) where our journey takes us past hot mineral pools, snow capped mountains and through villages where the Indians sell food, fur hats and alpaca sweaters. At the highest point, the La Raya pass at 4,321 metres, you can see the research station for high altitude animals. The beautiful scenery is continual all the way to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca, which at 3,855 metres above sea level, is the highest navigable lake in the world. We'll arrive in time so you can visit the colourful market or you can visit the unique burial towers at Sillustani (optional). The next morning departing Puno for our overnight excursion we visit the floating reed islands in the Bay of Puno to see the Uros Indian's way of life and ride in a traditional reed boat before continuing our boat journey to the island of Amantani. Here we enjoy the hospitality of the native Aymara/Quechua Indian families to sleep in their homes, we usually purchase gifts for the families at the port of Puno. The next morning we visit Taquile Island, where the men stand around knitting distinctive woollen hats while the women work the fields. You can buy some of these unique handicrafts in the local co-operative shops. After lunch we board our boat for the return journey to Puno.

Day 11 to 12

Puno - La Paz

Built on a series of hills and considered one of the world's most beautiful cities, La Paz is built in the basin of a canyon with the snow-capped Mount Illimani in the background. Our hotel is very centrally located and is just around the corner from the city's colourful Indian street markets including the fascinating and suitably called "witches market" where bowler-hatted women in their flared skirts sell such items as dead cats and llamas fetuses said to ward off evil spirits. The main square, Plaza Murillo, is also within walking distance. The square still retains its colonial buildings including the Presidential Palace. La Paz is possibly the best place to experience a traditional peña show of Andean music and dance where local bands play time-honoured instruments such as zampoñas (pipes) and charangos (ukulele). There are also many optional excursions available. Check out the Moon Valley with its strange rock formations shaped by the weather or take in the incredible views from Mount Chacaltaya and the world's highest ski resort at 5,221 metres. Another fantastic excursion is to Coroico, the gateway to the Bolivian jungle region and a great place to see sub-tropical vegetation and plants. En-route you will cross a 5,000 metre high pass before descending to 1,300 metres on narrow mountain roads bordered by sheer drops. The excursion to Coroico can also be done by mountain bike, as it is downhill nearly all the way and very exhilarating, but not for the fainthearted! Our Tour concludes on Day 12 in La Paz.

Amazon Jungle (or free time)

This tour gives you the option to take a two-night excursion into the Amazon Jungle. If you choose not to visit the Amazon a discount will be taken from your tour price and you will have free time in Cuzco. See brochure and tucantravel.com for prices.

Important note: The itinerary listed above is to be used as a guide only. Occasionally we may need to update this document and it may be different to the information printed in our current brochure. Tour leaders may need to make adjustments due to unforeseen circumstances during the tour. It is very important that you visit our website and review a copy of this dossier as close as possible to your departure date in case of changes that may affect your plans. Any last minute changes may also be posted in the Latest News section of our website.

Pre and Post Tour Accommodation

Very little time is spent in the starting and finishing cities and you will need to allow a few days at the beginning or end of your tour if you want to explore them further. For details of pre and post tour accommodation bookings (which should be made at the time of your tour booking) please refer to our current brochure or contact our reservations team.

About Adventure Tours

Adventure Tours travel by public transport wherever possible and so have a high degree of interaction with the local people. This hands-on style means that you will need to travel light (see below for details). Tucan Travel Adventure Tours will bring you into contact with cultures and experiences that contrast dramatically with those at home and therefore a sense of humour and patience is essential!

Don't forget that Tucan Travel also offers four other tour styles: Discovery Tours (Central and South America) where we travel by private and comfortable, custom-built vehicle staying in hotels; Overland Expeditions (in South America only), which usually have a high percentage of camping, travel by overland truck and suit travellers who love the great outdoors; Budget Expeditions (great value tours for 18 to 35s in South America) are flexible tours offering travellers optimum control over their budgets, travelling in our custom-built expedition vehicles, plus coaches and local transport, staying in pleasant hotels, hostels and campsites; Independent Travel offers personalised itineraries, stopovers and language schools with your choice of accommodation and flexible travel days.

Local Payment

The cost of all Tucan Travel tours includes a compulsory Local Payment which is in addition to the Tour Price paid to your booking agent. The Local Payment MUST be paid to your Tour Leader in full \$USD cash at the pre-departure meeting on the first day of your tour. The Local Payment is administered by Tour Leaders and no refunds can be made for any unused services or if you decide to leave the tour early.

Pre Departure Meeting

The address of your joining hotel can be found on your joining letter and tour voucher. On arrival you should look for a Tucan Travel information sheet on the hotel notice board where you will find details of the pre-departure meeting. The tour leader will normally hold the pre-departure meeting on the afternoon of Day 1 (assuming that all clients have arrived by then). Your tour leader will give a briefing about the tour, outline the plan for the next few days, answer any questions and collect your Local Payment in full in US\$ cash. Then there may be an option for everyone to go out for dinner and drinks to start to get to know one another. Please note that you will need to bring the following important items to the pre departure meeting:

1. Passport (including any necessary visas) original document and a photocopy.
2. Vaccination certificates (e.g. Yellow Fever, if required)
3. Travel voucher
4. Travel insurance policy
5. Local Payment

Tour Personnel

Adventure Tours use a variety of different styles of leadership in order to maximize your enjoyment and experiences. On this tour you will have a combination of Tucan Travel tour leader, Tucan Travel guides, local guides and local reps. The Tucan Travel Tour leader accompanies your tour and Tucan Travel guides will escort you at times when your tour leader may not be available. Local guides will lead your included and optional excursions, and local reps are local businesspeople also responsible for occasional meet and greet and transfers.

Degree of Difficulty / Fitness

Adventure Tours suit people who are fit and active. Although no experience is required there are many walks between bus/train terminals and hotels and travellers must be able to carry their own luggage over various terrains as well as lift up luggage onto the tops of buses!

There is fairly easy walking through the rainforest on the jungle excursion and moderately demanding uphill walking on Taquile and Amantaní islands (due to the altitude).

There is no hard walking involved in the Sacred Valley. Most people will suffer from some degree of altitude sickness at some point during the tour. We suggest that heavy smokers either cut down or stop completely for their time at altitude. The local coca tea is usually very helpful in combating altitude sickness, however if you are worried you should consult your doctor and possibly obtain some altitude sickness tablets prior to leaving home.

Pre-Departure Information

Once you have booked the tour (paid your deposit), your booking agent will provide you with a detailed pre-departure booklet with in-depth information to help you prepare. If you do not receive your pre-departure information shortly after booking your tour please consult your travel agent. After you have paid for your tour in full you will also receive from your travel agent: a local map and joining letter for your arrival city, your tour voucher and transfer voucher (if applicable).

Country Dossiers

This Tour Dossier is designed to be read in conjunction with our Country Dossiers which you can download from our website or obtain from your booking agent. The Country Dossiers contain essential information about visas, arrival transfers, spending money and costs, taxes and tips, climate, local food etc.

What you need to bring

A full list of suggested equipment can be found in the pre-departure booklet.

Thick blankets are supplied when on Amantaní Island (Lake Titicaca) but they have a tendency to be dusty, so you may also need a sleeping bag or sheet (they cannot be hired here). You should consider bringing a towel although a sarong may be a useful alternative and it is a good idea to bring a torch.

On Amantaní Island it is customary to buy a kilo of sugar or rice or some eggs to present to your host family. This should cost no more than US\$2-3 per person.

On Adventure Tours it is very important that you do not bring too much luggage as you will find it extremely difficult to get on/off buses and trains etc and there is a fair amount of walking to/from hotels. You are also likely to encounter many cobbled streets and dirt roads so luggage on wheels is totally unsuitable. Travellers who visit the jungle, Lake Titicaca and Colca Canyon will require a daypack as you will spend a night away from your main luggage, and only need to take very minimal belongings on these trips.

You must be prepared to carry your own bags at all times. We therefore strongly urge you to limit your luggage to a maximum of 10-14 kgs. Please see the relevant Country Dossier and Pre Departure Information booklet for further information about luggage requirements and what to pack.

Transfers

In Lima we offer an arrival and departure transfer service, either or both of which can be booked for an additional charge (see our current brochure for prices). Both these services should be arranged when making your tour booking. Due to the late arrival and departure times of many flights in and out of Lima, we recommend that passengers travelling through Lima book an airport transfer through Tucan Travel, especially if travelling alone. Please refer to your tour Joining Letter for detailed guidelines.

Accommodation

All hotels are chosen for their central locality, security, friendliness, cleanliness and ambiance. Although sometimes simple, you will find clean comfortable rooms with en-suite facilities (occasionally bathrooms may be shared but this is rare), and often a bar and restaurant are attached or close by. All rooms will be allocated on a share basis, usually in twins or triples (depending on the male/female ratios).

The jungle lodge

Each room has comfortable beds (multi-share triple rooms) with all bedding and towels, mosquito nets, candles or oil lamps, as well as a well equipped bathroom with cold (or tepid) running water, toilet and shower. There is no electricity at the lodge so please remember to charge your video and camera batteries in advance! All meals are prepared by a professional cook with fresh ingredients (fruit, vegetables, fish etc.). The bar also sells cold beers, mineral water and soft drinks.

Transport

On Adventure Tours our goal is to offer you as much variety as possible while meeting the local people. On this trip we will be using local public buses, mini buses, taxis, trains, various boats, motorised and dug-out canoes. There will also be some walking with your luggage between bus terminals and hotels. The tour also includes domestic flights and optional excursions may use other forms of transport, for example boats, horses and mountain bikes.

Meals

Meals are included on the jungle excursion, Amantaní Island. At the jungle lodge you will experience delicious dishes typical of the region, such as the "juanitos" a dish served with rice, chicken and vegetables cooked in a banana leaf and a great variety of fish from the area, like the golden "dorado", maiden "doncella" and jumping "saltón" fish.

All other meals, extra snacks and drinks on the tour are at your own expense Please see the relevant Country Dossier for more information about the local food.

Tour Highlights

- City of La Paz highest capital city in the world
- Andean Music local bands playing pan-flutes, zampoñas and charangos will be in abundance throughout the tour.
- Full day tour of the Sacred Valley of the Incas including the colourful Pisac market
- City of Cuzco Explore the former Inca capital with a combined entrance ticket giving access to the main monuments, museums and archaeological sites.
- Orientation walking tours in each main city and town.
- Machu Picchu train to the Lost City of the Incas
- Jungle excursion - visit to the Amazon Basin staying overnight in a jungle lodge
- Lake Titicaca homestay on the island of Amantani followed by a stopover at Taquile Island and the floating reed islands of the Uros Indians.

Day to Day Itinerary & Meals

Day 1 Arrive Lima
Day 2 Fly to Puerto Maldonado in the jungle, LD
(or free time in Cuzco see brochure or website for details)
Day 3 Jungle excursions, BLD
Day 4 Fly back to Cuzco, free time B
Day 5 Full day excursion to Sacred Valley of the Incas
Day 6 Machu Picchu & return train to Cuzco
Day 7 Cuzco free day
Day 8 Bus to Puno
Day 9 Boat via Uros Islands to Amantani (overnight), LD
Day 10 Boat via Taquile back to Puno, B
Day 11 Bus to La Paz (Bolivia)
Day 12 - Depart La Paz

(B Breakfast, L Lunch, D - Dinner included)

Please note the day to day itinerary above is given as a GUIDELINE ONLY.

Responsible Travel Tips

At Tucan Travel we are serious about our responsibility to care for the environment and people that we visit. Here are a few tips to help you to enjoy your tour while minimising your impact and enhancing your travelling experience. Learn more about our responsible travel policy at www.tucantravel.com.

1. Carbon offset your Tucan Travel tour and flights. Check out our website for details about how you can go about this www.tucantravel.com.
2. Bring your own metal water bottle. Fill up at restaurants or treat your own water on tour instead of buying lots of plastic bottles. Bear in mind that there may not be recycling facilities available at some destinations.
3. Cut out plastic remove and recycle the packaging of new travel gear before you pack, and bring a light cotton or string bag for your shopping, so you can politely refuse plastic bags at shops and markets.
4. Bring a stack of pens and pencils and hand these out to children rather than offering sweets. Your alternative gifts will still be popular and the parents will thank you for saving their children's teeth access to dental services may not be readily available there.
5. Learn a bit of the local language before you travel. Being able to say even a few words like hello, please and thank you will help you to connect with people in a positive way and really enhance your personal experience. Bring a phrase book on tour and keep practising to improve your confidence. You will also find some good language tips in the country dossier(s).

Feedback

At the end of your tour we would greatly appreciate it if you could take the time to complete a questionnaire about your experiences. The tour leader will give you a paper copy and an electronic version can be found on our website. We take feedback very seriously as it allows us to maintain and improve the very high standards we expect from our road crew, local operators, hoteliers, transportation and office staff, among others. We also use this information to improve our itineraries and optional excursions on offer. Thank you in advance for your help with this.

Subscribe to our e-newsletter

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Join our online communities

Make friends with fellow passengers in the Tucan Travel forums, and ask questions about any tour you like we've got the answers! See Share your tour photos and videos on Youtube and Flickr, and keep in touch with group members on Facebook, Bebo and Myspace. There are many Tucan Travel communities out there waiting to welcome you, just a few clicks away.

Write a travel diary and get published on our website!

Share your experiences of life on tour and you may be rewarded! Get in touch with us for details through www.tucantravel.com.

We want your photos!

We've taken you to some of the most amazing places on earth why not share that with the world? Send us high resolution colour photos of your adventures, and you could be published on our website or our brochure. Contact us through www.tucantravel.com.

