

Amazon to Andes

Peru – Bolivia –Argentina-Brazil

Giving you the 'very best' of South America



Our favourite places ... Fully guided

- Magical Machu Picchu
- Optional Inca Trail
- Remote Amazon Jungle
- Cusco – Navel of the Universe
- Colourful bustling La Paz
- Scenic Island of the Sun Lake Titicaca
- Curious Reed islands of Lake Titicaca
- Stunning Rio de Janeiro
- Spectacular Iguacu Falls
- Delicious juicy steaks in Argentina



Check out these Inclusions:

ALL airfares Lima-Buenos Aires
 ALL transfers airport stations etc
 ALL transport buses,boats,trains, etc
 ALL accommodation budget twin share
 ALL breakfasts as per itinerary
 ALL sightseeing as per itinerary
 ALL entrance fees as per itinerary
 ALL food, accom etc Jungle Expedition
 Services of professional Tour Manager
 Services of English speaking local guides

Departs:
2May,13Jun,8Aug,5Sep2025
27 Days Fully Guided
from NZ\$13395 from Lima to Buenos Aires
Independent departures any Fri \$13995

Latin Link Adventure
The South American Specialists
 1 Highfield Ridge Wanaka 9305 Tel: 03 4435036
 Email: info@latinlink.co.nz Toll Free:0800 528 465
www.latinlink.co.nz
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Information Sheet – Amazon to Andes

Fully Guided – 27 days from Lima to Buenos Aires

A real kaleidoscope of the Andes - Peru – Bolivia – Brazil-Argentina

Begin this amazing adventure by heading direct to Lima. Here you will spend two nights to recover from the jetlag and time to explore this capital of Peru – known as City of Kings. From here, it's into the Amazon Jungle for an encounter you won't forget. Fly to remote Puerto Maldonado on the Rio Madre de Dios- a tributary of the Amazon - still unspoiled, where animal and bird spotting is among the best in South America.

Next we find ourselves with so much to see and do as you explore Cusco the Inca temples and quaint cobble-stone villages where life goes on as it did so many years ago. Arrive into beautiful red-tiled Cusco, fabled Navel of the Universe, to explore the Inca Empire – still alive today – and prepare to hike the legendary Inca Trail to the 'lost city of the incas' Machu Picchu. For those not wishing to take up the challenge of the Inca Trail we have an exciting alternative programme – see shaded days of the detailed itinerary.

Across the altiplano to Puno, on the shores of tranquil Lake Titicaca, where you can experience life on the floating reed islands while visiting the Uros Indians. Stop overnight in sleepy Copacabana on the lake where you will visit the scenic and tranquil Island of the Sun – legendary birthplace of the sun as it rose out of the lake.

We then take a picture postcard route to La Paz situated at 3900 metres above sea level and where ancient cultures meet the new millennium. This bustling city is unique, with bowler-hatted ladies selling their fruit and veges on the pavement outside towering skyscrapers.

From **La Paz** fly to stunning and vibrant Rio de Janeiro. See the spectacular views from Sugar Loaf Mountain and Christ the Redeemer statue, plus there is time to watch people on the famous Copacabana and Ipanema beaches. Then to the Iguacu Falls. 275 cascades fall in a wild array of spray over a winding 3km cliff face into the gorge 60metres below -. An impressive sight!

Finish up in stylish **Buenos Aires** where you can enjoy a tango show and an enormous juicy steak.

There are no unpleasant surprises once you are in South America, you know before you leave exactly what this trip will cost and it is a bonus not having to dip into your money belt all the time to pay for 'EXTRAS' like some companies do. We pride ourselves on being totally upfront before you leave. Compare our inclusions for yourself – detailed on our Trip Dossier.

We want your adventure to be as hassle-free as possible – so you can expect the following whilst planning to explore the "Amazon to Andes"

Costs: 2024 group Departures: 3May, 9Aug, 6Sep NZ\$13395 14Jun NZ\$13695 Single supplement \$1795

NB. June departure includes the amazing Inti Raymi Festival in Cusco

Independent Departures: Fridays weekly NZ\$13695, Single supplement \$1895

4 Day Inca Trail Option: additional NZ\$750, **1 Day Inca Trail Option:** additional NZ\$195

Bolivia Salt Flats Option : additional NZ\$1195 per person

NB These costs based on you flying internationally to/from South America with LATAM Airlines. Should you travel on another airline a surcharge of NZ\$350 applies

Early Booking Discount: reserve your place on the tour by 30 Sep 2023 and receive a early booking discount of \$200.

Galapagos Islands Pre Extension :

Depart to Quito on Thurs , 1 week earlier for 3 nights in Quito, Otavalo Tour, 7 night Galapagos Islands Cruise
Additional Cost: NZ\$7580(win/double share , includes additional airfares) *Itineraries for Galapagos Extension available on request*

Cost Includes:

ALL flights within South America
ALL transport (boats, buses, taxis, trains etc)
ALL entrance fees as per itinerary
ALL national park entrance fees
ALL sightseeing as per itinerary
Services of experienced local guides Inca Trail
Services of porters to carry gear on Inca Trail
Services of experienced Tour Leader

5 dinners, 5 lunches
ALL accommodation with breakfasts
ALL camping fees, tents, sleeping mats on the trek
ALL food during Inca Trail
ALL transfers as per itinerary
Dinner & Tango show in Buenos Aires
NB: 4.5kg limit on all treks - rest of gear to be left at hotel
Services of English speaking local guides

Does not include:

Tips allow USD250 per person
Insurance - Laundry - Personal Spending - Medical Expenses

Tour Leaders:

Our experienced bi –lingual Tour Leaders travel with the group departures (subject to a minimum of 6 people travelling)

Accommodation:

We use comfortable 3 star hotels throughout . All rooms have your own private bathroom . Hotels are chosen for their location and service and most would have free WIFI

Personal Spending :

We suggest allow for US\$35-45 per day to cover incidentals, laundry, meals not included . **Group Size :** groups are limited to a maximum of 15 people

Day	Date	Program	Overnight
Day 1	Fri	<p><u>Lima</u> Arrive Lima On arrival you will be met and transferred to our hotel . Accommodation: Hotel Antigua Miraflores www.antiguamiraflores.com</p>	Lima
2	Sat	<p><u>Lima</u> Lima, city of Kings and capital of Peru. This was the principal city of Spanish South America from its founding in 1535 until the independence of the South American republics in early 19th century. It never rains in Lima, except for 2 months of the year when the skies are blue, in January and February. You have the morning to explore Lima. A city tour of the Greater Colonial Lima this morning allows you to appreciate the wonderful colonial buildings in downtown Lima such as the Santo Domingo Convent and the Casa Aliaga, one of South America's oldest Spanish homes. Drive by the elegant tree-lined avenues of San Isidro and Miraflores. Afternoon at leisure or we suggest a visit to the Gold Museum or Larco Museum</p>	Lima (B)
3	Sun	<p><u>Lima</u> Choice of half day tours included Either Local Markets + Food History Tour you will can visit some of our authentic local markets in Lima city. At the same time, you will get immersed in the Peruvian culture trying local fruits, tapas, drinks, juices and the best of all interact with local people OR Nature Trek Tour Located only minutes outside of Lima's bustling city, lies a hidden natural paradise. Come, escape the city and discover the wide variety of plants and animals in these natural wetlands! During your tour, we will visit many lakes and learn about a variety of native and migratory bird species who have made this natural reserve their home!</p>	Lima (B)

4	Mon	<p><u>Lima – Puerto Maldonado- Tambopata</u></p> <p>Transfer to the airport for the short flight to Puerto Maldonado</p> <p>Join a 1-hour bus and a 2.5 boat journey to the lodge. Your first taste of the Amazon culinary will be in the river while you leave the city to enjoy the amazing jungle landscapes.</p> <p>As we cross the confluence with the Malinowski River, we will leave the final traces of human habitation behind. Within the 700,000 hectares uninhabited nucleus of the reserve, sightings of capybara, caiman, geese, macaws and other large species will become more frequent.</p> <p>Tambopata Research Center awaits – a spacious boutique eco-lodge, with bar, a massage center, and buffet service in the heart of National Reserve of Tambopata, being the only lodge inside the reserve surrounded by dozens of macaw nests belonging to the Macaw Project.</p> <p>Your stay includes three meals daily, teas, coffee, guided excursions and activities, refreshments upon arriving, and transfers to and from the airport. We assign guides on private small groups of 6:1</p> <p>There is a choice of excursions each day and the following is a guideline</p> <p>This afternoon join the Overlook A 3 to 5km hike will lead us to overlooks commanding magnificent views of the Tambopata winding its way into the lowlands. The forest on this trail, regenerating on the old bamboo forest, is good for Howler Monkey and Dusky Titi Monkey.</p> <p>You will have the option of hiking out at night when most of the mammals are active but difficult to see. Easier to find are frogs with shapes and sounds as bizarre as their natural histories.</p>	Amazon Jungle (B,L,D)
5	Tues	<p><u>Tambopata Research Centre</u></p> <p>Join a party of colors and sounds</p> <p>On most clear mornings of the year, dozens of large macaws and hundreds of parrots congregate on this large river bank in a raucous and colorful spectacle that inspired a National Geographic cover story. Discretely located fifty meters from the cliff, we will observe Green-winged, Scarlet, and Blue-and-gold Macaws and several species of smaller parrots descend to ingest clay. Outings are at dawn when the lick is most active.</p> <p>This five-km trail covers the prototypical rain forest with immense trees crisscrossed by creeks and ponds. Amongst the figs, ceibas, and shihuahuacos we will go for a monkey search Squirrel, Brown Capuchin, and Spider Monkeys as well as peccaries. TRC is located within this habitat.</p> <p>Ten minutes upriver from the lodge explore the island where is a tiny pond with a platform in the middle. It is a great place to spot waterfowl such as Muscovy duck, sunbittern and hoatzin along with the woodpeckers, oropendolas, flycatchers, and parakeets that call this pond their home.</p> <p>After dinner scientists will provide a night lecture, an in-depth look at the biology of macaws, their feeding habits, the theories for clay lick use, their breeding and feeding ecology, population fluctuations and the threats to their conservation.</p>	Amazon Jungle (B,L,D)

6	Wed	<p><u>Tambopata Research Centre</u></p> <p>On most clear mornings of the year dozens of large macaws and hundreds of parrots congregate on this large river bank in a raucous and colorful spectacle which inspired a National Geographic cover story. Discretely located fifty meters from the cliff, we will observe Green-winged, Scarlet and Blue-and-gold Macaws and several species of smaller parrots descend to ingest clay. Outings are at dawn when the lick is most active. They arrive in search of minerals and salts and the digestive properties of the clay particles themselves. On average several hundred Macaws and smaller parrots visit the clay-lick daily, including Scarlet, Blue and Yellow, Red and Green, Chestnut-fronted and Blue-headed parrots, among others. This clay-lick is considered one of the largest in the world. Following a late morning hike in the trail system in search of some of the nine species of monkeys present in the area, including Spider monkeys, Squirrel monkeys and Dusky titi monkeys as well as the elusive large mammals like Tapir, White-lipped peccaries and Jaguar. After lunch visit the Pond Platform-10 minutes upriver from the lodge is a tiny pond with a platform in the middle. It is a great place to spot waterfowl such as Muscovy duck, sunbittern and hoatzin along with the woodpeckers, oropendolas, flycatchers and parakeets that call this pond their home. After dinner you will have the option of hiking out at night, when most of the mammals are active but rarely seen. Much easier to find are frogs with shapes and sounds as bizarre as their natural histories</p>	Amazon (B,L,D)
7	Thurs	<p><u>Tambopata Research Centre</u></p> <p>Another outing at dawn when the macaw lick is most active.</p> <p>After breakfast hike the Terra Firme Trail</p> <p>An entirely different habitat characterized by smaller, thinner trees atop hills and slopes is covered by this five kilometer trail. Saddleback tamarins are frequently found here. As we walk near the limits of the swamp we will also keep our eyes open for rare tapir tracks.</p> <p>After lunch enjoy a hike on the Palm Swamp Trail</p> <p>Growing on the remains of an oxbow lake and providing both arboreal as well as terrestrial mammals with fruits throughout the year, the aguaje palms are one of the most important food sources in the rainforest. Demand for these fruits and great conditions for planting rice, makes the palm swamp also one of the most threatened habitats.</p>	Amazon (B,L,D)
8	Fri	<p><u>Puerto Maldonado – Cusco</u></p> <p>An early start today, transfer to the airport for a short flight to Cusco.</p> <p>Accommodation: Hotel Royal Inka 1 www.hotelroyalinka.com</p> <p><i>A lovely historic hotel in the heart of Cusco</i></p> <p>Rest of day free to relax and adjust to the altitude</p>	Cusco (B)
9	Sat	<p><u>Cusco</u></p> <p>Cusco, heart of the Inca Empire, known by the local Quechua Indians as 'Navel of the Universe'.</p> <p>Cusco is an amazing experience. Lying in an exceptionally beautiful countryside 3300 metres above sea level, here you will encounter a fine blend of Spanish and Inca cultures, colourful Quechua Indian markets, Inca temples and massive stone walls which form the foundations of Colonial Cusco, originally part of the impressive monument of Sacsayhuaman, situated above the town.</p> <p>This morning enjoy a comprehensive walking tour of this delightful city, including the Cathedral, Plaza de Armas, Temple of the Sun. Visit Sacsayhuaman -this magnificent Inca fortress, which overlooks the city of Cusco. Sacsayhuaman can be variously translated as 'speckled falcon' or 'speckled head'. The last interpretation refers to the belief that the city of Cusco was set out in the form of a puma whose head was the hill of Sacsayhuaman. The origins are uncertain but the fortress is generally attributed to the period of Inca Pachacuti, the man who essentially founded</p>	Cusco (B)

10	Sun	<p><u>Cusco – Sacred Valley</u> Drive through stunning scenery to Chinchero, the most colourful and authentic market in Peru. Continue on to Maras Salt Pans. Another fabulous walk today. Discover these amazing salt pans still mined as they were hundreds of years ago, Also visit Moray –these unusual Inca ruins consist of several enormous terraced circular depressions, the largest of which is about 30m. deep. Continue through the Sacred Valley to our hotel an old monastery (completely restored of course!). Accommodation : Hotel Recoleta Monasterio www.hotelessanagustin.com.pe/hotel_recoleta.htm</p> <p><i>NB June departure itinerary will have a slight change of order to attend the Inti Raymi Festival on 24 June</i></p>	Sacred Valley (B)
11	Mon	<p><u>Sacred Valley Trekkers in group depart for Inca Trail Day 1</u> Continue into the beautiful Sacred valley of the Incas. Next is Pisaq where you will enjoy a panoramic walk along the original Inca pathways and terracing to the ancient town below. Visit the markets then continue through this lush valley where the towering fortress of Ollantaytambo dominates the surrounding area. Accommodation : Hotel Recoleta Monasterio</p>	Sacred Valley of the Incas (B)
12	Tues	<p><u>Train to Aguas Calientes or Day 2 - Inca Trail</u> After breakfast you have an early morning transfer to Ollantaytambo to catch the train to Aguas Calientes, a small railroad town with tons of character – enjoy a soak in the hot pools under the Andean sky or explore the town Accommodation: Santuario Hotel www.santuariohotel.com <i>the 1 Day Inca Trail Option is also available today</i></p>	Aguas Calientes(B)
13	Wed	<p><u>Bus to Machu Picchu- Cuzco or Day 3 – Inca Trail</u> It's an early start today. This is the best time to enjoy the peace and tranquillity not to mention the magic of Machu Picchu is before the trainload's of visitors arrive. Machu Picchu, known also as 'Lost City of the Incas'. It is undoubtedly the best known and most spectacular archaeological site on the continent and is considered a must for all visitors to Peru. You will travel by bus up the zig-zag, the Hiram Bingham highway, to the ruins where your first views will take your breath away. Enjoy a fully guided tour of the ruins, some time to explore on your own, before returning down the mountainside. Time for a snack and then board the train to Ollantaytambo and transfer to our hotel in Cusco. Accommodation: Hotel Royal Inka 1</p>	Cusco(B)
14	Thurs	<p><u>Cusco or Day 4 Inca Trail</u> Free day to explore this delightful city – everyone's favourite. The day is yours to enjoy, all the convents, churches, museums, alpaca and jewellery bargains.</p>	Cusco (B)

15	Fri	<p><u>Cusco - Puno</u></p> <p>Bus ride to Puno through the dramatic landscapes of the highland plateau, with occasional views of tiny Andean villages and herds of llamas and vicunas. We will stop at Andahuaylillas, where there is a beautiful baroque church built at the beginning of the XVIIth century. It is very well known thanks to its beautiful mural paintings. We will make a second stop at Raqchi, where there is an Inca temple built to worship Wiracocha, one of the most important Inca gods. Finally, we will stop at the archaeological museum of Pukara (200BC-AD300) then we will lunch at a restaurant en route.</p> <p>Arrive in Puno late afternoon.</p> <p>Accommodation: Qelqatani Hotel www.qelqatani.com</p>	Puno (B,L)
16	Sat	<p><u>Uros Islands -Copacabana</u></p> <p>What an experience! By boat visit the curious floating reed islands and the Uros Indians who live there. Everything is made of these reeds, houses, schools, boats, churches etc. Once you reach the reed islands, you can experience gliding across Lake Titicaca in an authentic reed boat - you can't beat it! Return to Puno.</p> <p>This afternoon continue through lovely scenery, which follows this mighty lake to the Bolivian border.</p> <p>After border formalities continue to the sleepy town of Copacabana.</p> <p>Accommodation: Hotel Rosario del Lago www.hotelrosario.com/lago</p>	Puno Lake Titicaca (B,L)
17	Sun	<p><u>Copacabana – La Paz</u></p> <p>Morning at leisure to explore around Copacabana . The opportunity for an optional boat trip out on the lake to tranquil Isla del Sol (Island of the Sun) where legend has it that the first Inca King rose out of the lake.</p> <p>On this legendary island, visit the Pilkokaina Inca Palace and enjoy a short walk to the Gardens, Sacred Stairs and Fountain of the Inca. As we ascend to Yumani village, we have a magnificent view of the lake set to the backdrop of Mount Illampu. Depart Copacabana and continue through even more stunning scenery, with snow-capped peaks and the blue lake, to La Paz, capital of Bolivia and highest capital in the world.</p> <p>Known as City of Contrasts, here ancient traditions meet the new millennium of chaotic traffic and towering buildings.</p> <p>Accommodation: Hotel Rosario www.hotelrosario.com/la-paz</p>	La Paz (B)
18	Mon	<p><u>City tour and shopping</u></p> <p>A morning tour takes you down to where the air is thicker and the elite live. Visit the witches markets, Calle Jaen with its museums, San Francisco Church, Plaza Murillo, National Congress, Cathedral, Presidential Palace, continuing to the very unusual eroded formations of the Moon Valley.</p> <p>The afternoon is free to enjoy the uniqueness of this colourful bustling city and shop for bargains and gifts.</p>	La Paz (B)

19	Tues	<p><u>Explore La Paz</u> Optional tour to Tiwanaku (Pre-Columbian) ruins outside the city or a Mountain Bike down the world's most spectacular road or spend the day with a little more shopping and people watching. A great city to do that!</p> <p>OPTIONAL TOUR To BOLIVIA SALT FLATS (B,L) Transfer to the airport early this morning for a flight to Uyuni On arrival commence a full day tour of the Salt Flat of Uyuni. Visit the train cemetery and then continue towards the great Salt Flat of Uyuni, visiting on the way the Colchani village, where you will enter into a domestic salt processing plant. Journey across the salt flats, visiting an area called "Los Ojos de Agua" (Eyes of Water) where you will see the manual extraction of salt by local communitarian industries. Continue the trip along the Salt Flats towards the Incahuasi Island, better known as "Isla Pescado" (Fish Island) where you will find enormous Cactus and hike around the interesting geology of the area. Lunch will be served on the shores of the Island. Return to Colchani and overnight out the unique Hotel - made entirely out of salt Accommodation: Luna Salada Hotel www.lunasalahotel.com.bo</p> <p>Wed Day 19 UYUNI- SANTA CRUZ -RIO de JANEIRO (B) After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight to Santa Cruz and connect with rest of group for flight to Rio. Additional cost : NZ\$1095 per person, single supplement NZ\$150 (Based on a minimum of 2 people travelling)</p>	La Paz (B)
20	Wed	<p><u>La Paz –Rio de Janeiro</u> An early start as we say 'adios' to the Andes and transfer to the airport for our flight to Sao Paulo with a connection to Rio. Transfer to your hotel in Copacabana Accommodation: Hotel Martinique www.windsorhoteis.com.br/martinique</p> <p><i>Located 1 block back from Copacabana beach</i></p>	Rio (B)
21	Thurs	<p><u>Rio de Janeiro</u> This morning travel to the Cosme Velho Train Cog Station at the bottom of the Corcovado Mountain, you will stop by Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas. Once at the mountain, you will take the ride up to the top, through the dense Tijuca rain forest to the 38m tall Christ the Redeemer Statue. From the top, you will enjoy the spectacular views of Rio and the surrounding countryside. This afternoon starts with a panoramic tour of downtown Rio where you'll pass by the infamous Sambadrome, the exhibition area for the renowned Samba schools in Rio. A brief stop is made at the Metropolitan Cathedral, made famous for its unusual pyramid shape. Admire its beauty and rareness from both the outside and the inside! Your panoramic city tour continues with a visit to the traditional Cinelandia Square where you'll tour the various historic buildings such as the Municipal Theatre, the National Library and the National Museum of Fine Arts. Head towards the Urca neighborhood, where one of Rio's most iconic symbols is located, Sugar Loaf Mountain. Travelling up Sugar Loaf mountain in a cable car, you will make a brief stop at a vantage point approximately 700 feet (215 meters) above sea level. Capture unparalleled panoramic views of the city, Guanabara Bay, the Rio-Niteroi Bridge and Corcovado Mountain. You'll then ascend to the peak of Sugar Loaf for breathtaking views of Copacabana Beach, the Santa Cruz Fortress and the beaches of Niteroi.</p>	Rio (B)

22	Fri	<u>Rio de Janeiro</u> Day at leisure , perhaps explore the quaint district of Santa Teresa or enjoy a day at the beach .	Rio (B)
23	Sat	<u>Rio –Iguacu</u> Transfer to the airport for our morning flight to Iguacu . On arrival commence a tour to the Brazilian side of the falls followed by a visit to the Bird Park , an opportunity to enter the huge 8-meter high forest aviaries to study and photograph birds in their natural habitat without the restrictions of netting and cages. There are over 160 species, both indigenous and from other continents. Then transfer to your hotel Accommodation :Bourbon Business Hotel	Iguacu (B)
24	Sun	<u>Iguacu Falls - Buenos Aires</u> Travel to the Argentine side of the falls, these falls defy description! Enjoy the majesty of the world's most spectacular waterfalls. Set in pristine rainforest with countless birds and butterflies, situated on the borders of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil, they plunge in a series of gigantic waterfalls over 3kms long and more than 80 metres high. The thunderous roar of crashing water and the multicoloured mist is natural beauty at its best. It is undoubtedly one of the world's most impressive sights. Later see the mighty Devils Throat Cataract. We then transfer to the airport for your flight to Buenos Aires. On arrival you will be transferred to your hotel Accommodation: Intersur Recoleta Hotel http://intersurrecoleta.com.ar	Buenos Aires (B)
25	Mon	<u>Buenos Aires</u> This morning our tour will allow us to discover the city of Buenos Aires. We will visit its Civic Centre, the impressive National Congress and May Square (Plaza de Mayo) surrounded by Government House (Casa Rosada), the Metropolitan Cathedral and City Hall from colonial days (Cabildo). We will visit the Colon Theatre (Teatro Colón), one of the world's best known opera houses and the cultural pride of the "Porteños" (Buenos Aires natives). Next, we will tour the traditional barrio of San Telmo where the magical atmosphere of the district will take you back in time. We will then stop at La Boca, home of the first Italian immigrants and you will observe its picturesque and colourful architecture. We will then continue to the residential neighborhood of Palermo and many parks. Finally, we will go to Recoleta, the city's most exclusive district, with its famous cemetery where Evita Peron is buried, elegant boutiques, gourmet restaurants and side walk cafés under ficus trees (gomereros).	Buenos Aires (B)
26	Tues	<u>Buenos Aires</u> There is still time to explore the city further or perhaps enjoy an optional trip across to Colonia in Uruguay. district. Tonight get into the Argentine mood with a juicy steak and Tango show	Buenos Aires (B,D)
27	Wed	<u>Buenos Aires</u> You will be transferred to the airport	(B)

Inca Trail Description & Distances

Please note you will be given a duffel bag in Cusco to pack the items you need on the trail. Your main baggage will be stored for you while you are on the Trail. Sleeping bag, sleeping mat & sheet included

Day 1 (12km): You will be picked up from your hotel in Urubamba for the short trip to Km 82 where you will begin the trail.

Cross the Vilcanota River and follow the trail to the right as it climbs steeply up from the river. After passing through a small village, the ruins of the Inca hillfort of Huillca Raccay come into view high above the mouth of the river Cusichaca ('happy bridge'). It is a simple descent down to the Cusichaca river.

For a further 4.5-hour, 08- to 10-kilometre-walk the path follows the left bank of the river up to the village of Wayllabamba (3,000m). The name in Quechua means 'grassy plain'. You will spend the first night here – depending on everyone's fitness.

Day 2 (11km): Rising early (around 6am), today begins with a gradual climbing up from Wayllabamba for about 3 hours through steepening woods and increasingly spectacular terrain brings you to the treeline and a meadow known as Llulluchapampa (3,680m). It is another 1½ hours climb to the first and highest pass of the trail (Abra de Huarmihuañusca or 'Dead Woman's Pass') at 4,200m. During this part of the trail hikers are exposed to the Andean elements: first scorching sun and then, closer to the pass, freezing winds. Once at the top hikers can celebrate having completed the most difficult section of the trail.

The descent from the pass is steep although not difficult, following the trail on the left side of the valley to the valley floor and to the 2nd night's campsite at Pacaymayo (3,600m). There are toilet facilities here.

Day 3 (16km): From Pacaymayo it takes about an hour to climb up to the ruins of Runkuracay. These small circular ruins occupy a commanding position overlooking the Pacaymayo valley below. Another 45 minute hike will bring you to the top of the second pass: Abra de Runkuracay (4,000m). At last you'll feel that you are walking along the trail of the Incas with paving, for the most part, being original. The descent down the steps from the pass is steep so take care. This section of the trail, up till the 3rd pass, is particularly beautiful as the path crosses high stone embankments and skirts deep precipices. After about 1 hour from the 2nd pass you'll arrive at Sayacmarca by way of a superbly designed stone staircase. The name Sayacmarca means 'Inaccessible Town' and describes the position of the ruins perfectly, protected on three sides by sheer cliffs. No one knows the exact purpose of these ruins.

You have to backtrack a little to rejoin the trail as it passes Conchamarca, a small Inca dwelling situated in the shadows of Sayacmarca, which was probably a *tambo* for weary travellers on their way to Machu Picchu.

From then on the path descends into magnificent cloudforest full of orchids, hanging mosses, tree ferns and flowers, passing through an impressive Inca tunnel, carved into the rock, on the way.

The trail then climbs up to the 3rd pass (3,700m). The view from the pass offers excellent views of several snow-capped peaks including Salkantay (6,271m) and Veronica (5,750m). A few minutes after the pass is Phuyupatamarca (3,580 metres), the most impressive Inca ruin so far. The name means 'Town in the Clouds'. Access to the ruins is down a steep flight of stairs passing six 'Inca Baths' probably used for the ritual worship of water.

Leaving the site via an impressive Inca staircase leading from the west side of the ruins (the far end from the baths) you descend a thousand or so steps. Be careful with your knees which will feel the strain by the end of the day. After about an hour of walking through cloud forest you may just be able to see the archaeological site of Wiñay Wayna (2,650 metres),

The campsite at Winay Wayna is a welcome sight and your efforts can be rewarded with a deserved cold beer, as well as hot showers (\$1.5) and toilets. Trekkers on the Classic 4-day trek will camp here.

A short trail leaves from the southern end of the ruins of Wiñay Wayna. The name in Quechua means 'forever young' and is named after a variety of pink orchid which grows here. The ruins comprise magnificent agricultural terraces set in an impressive location. There are also many buildings of good quality stonework and a sequence of 10 baths, suggesting that the site was probably a religious centre associated with the worship of water. Ritual cleansing may have taken place here for pilgrims on the final leg of the trail to Machu Picchu.

Day 4 (6km): On the last morning we rise before dawn (4am) to begin the final section of the trail, after a light breakfast you will say goodbye to our porters as they pack up the camping equipment and head back to Cusco. Most people attempt to wake up early so that they can leave Wiñay Wayna to get to Machu Picchu before sunrise. The sky starts getting light by 6am and the first rays of the sun reach Machu Picchu at about 7am. The trail contours a mountainside and drops into cloudforest before coming to an almost vertical flight of 50 steps leading up

**Suddenly the whole of Machu Picchu is spread out before you in all its glory -
a fantastic sight for all – pure magic.**

Around 7am, our guide will take you on a full guided tour. You will then have plenty of free time to explore this mystical Inca city, later in the afternoon descend by bus down to Aguas Calientes, you may decide to have lunch in one of the many restaurants (not included) then catch the train to Poroy and transfer by bus to our hotel in Cusco to rejoin the group

Day 12 Inca Trail Option (L)

For those wanting to experience the Inca Trail take the train to KM104 where you disembark to begin the full day hike to Machu Picchu. The one-day hike from Chachabamba to Machu Picchu is an excellent alternative to the full Inca Trail trek. Enjoy a beautiful day of moderate hiking en route to Machu Picchu. On the 9.6km hike from the trailhead at the Vilcanota River footbridge, ascend a total of 800m. Just prior to reaching Winya Wayna ruins you will reach a spectacular waterfall in a delightful cloud forest glade which offers the possibility of a refreshing shower on a hot day. This merges with the regular Inca Trail at Winya Wayna ruins. From Winya Wayna, most hikers take 1.5 hours for the mainly level walk along the spectacular Inca Trail to the final overlook at Inti Punku, the Gate of the Sun (2,700 m). With typical stops for lunch (included) and photography, overall walking time is 6-7 hours. After arrival at Machu Picchu descend by bus to Agua Calientes to join the group