



KARUNA PROJECT + WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY PRESENT: PERU ADVENTURE TRAVEL

INTRO TO QUECHUA CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

June 14TH – 23TH, 2025 - 10D/9N

OVERVIEW

This multi-day itinerary offers an immersive experience into the heart of Inca civilization.

We will delve into the rich history and cultural significance of iconic Inca sites like Saqsayhuaman and the Salt Mines of Maras. A significant highlight of this educational tour is an arduous yet rewarding trek along the Inca Trail, culminating in a visit to the breathtaking Machu Picchu.

Experience the majesty of Machu Picchu at sunrise, gaining unique perspectives on this architectural marvel. Our carefully selected campsites provide unparalleled opportunities to connect with the natural world, far from the distractions of modern life. Our expert guides will share fascinating insights into Inca history, culture, and the trail's ecological significance.

This educational trip is physically demanding and requires a good level of fitness. However, the rewards are immense. Immerse yourself in the footsteps of ancient civilizations and gain firsthand knowledge of the Inca people's ingenuity and reverence for the natural world.

This journey is perfect for students seeking a hands-on learning experience that combines history, anthropology, and adventure.

Day 1. Arrival to Cusco – Orientation meeting followed by dinner.
Day 2. City tour – We will explore Saqsayhuaman and the Qorikancha
Day 3. Salt mines tour of Maras: Architectural tour of Moray
Day 4, 5, 6, 7 Trek on the famous Inca Trail
Day 8. Machu Picchu tour and free afternoon
Day 9. Visit the village of Willoq – Cultural Immersion – Back to Cusco
Day 10. Departure from Cusco

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy the top Peruvian cuisine while touring Cusco city
- Leadership: Seth Quigg and Ricardo Vazquez-Perales from Western Colorado University. Amazing local guides, porters, support staff who have hiked the Inca trail more than 500 times and guided Machu Picchu more than 1000 times.
- Premier camping gear
- Savor the Peruvian cuisine brought by our chefs to the mountains

- Follow the original Inca trail and explore all the Incan sites along your journey
- Enter the most sacred city of the Inca Machu Picchu through the Sun Gate
- 3 Star Hotels – Tierra Viva
- Vistadome train ride back to Cusco

DETAILS

Duration: 10 days / 9 nights

Accommodation: This trip includes 3 nights in tents and 6 nights at a hotel in double occupancy. If you are a solo traveler let us know so we can accommodate someone else or we will just bring a private tent only for you at your request.

Location: This trip starts in Cusco. You will need to fly to Lima which is the capital of Peru, then to Velasco Astete of Cusco Airport which is a small domestic airport where we will be waiting for you at the airport.

Arrival and Departure Requirements: Please arrive before 3pm on June 14th. Our trip ends on June 23th. If you plan to leave Peru, please depart anytime on June 23th. We will drop you off at the airport in Cusco. If you plan to stay in Cusco, please let us know.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVAL

Seth and/or Ricardo will be waiting for you outside of the Airport when you arrive in Cusco. We will have a Karuna Project and/or Western Colorado University flag. We will transport you to our hotel in Cusco so you can relax and get sorted before our Orientation meeting at 5pm. After our Orientation meeting, we will go to our first group dinner. After dinner we will provide the plan for the next day. Includes: Pick up from airport, hotel, dinner.

DAY 2: CITY TOUR IN CUSCO

Begin your day with a delicious breakfast, followed by an exploration of Cusco's rich history and culture. Our first stop is the Colonial Cathedral, renowned for its exquisite colonial paintings, including a unique depiction of the Last Supper featuring the local delicacy, *cuy* (guinea pig). These artworks offer a fascinating glimpse into the region's heritage.

Next, we'll visit Qoricancha, or the Temple of the Sun. Marvel at the stunning architecture that has withstood centuries of earthquakes, a testament to the Inca's engineering prowess. Our journey continues to Saqsayhuaman, an awe-inspiring site featuring massive stones perfectly fitted together without mortar. This architectural marvel is truly unparalleled. Finally, we'll explore Qenqo, believed to be the Temple of Mother Earth and possibly the tomb of the great Inca ruler, Pachacutec. **Includes:** Breakfast, Lunch, entrance tickets to attractions to be visited, tour guide and transport during the tour. Dinner is on your own tonight.

DAY 3: SACRED VALLEY + SALT MINES TOUR

The Sacred Valley of the Incas is a breathtaking region characterized by charming villages and remarkable archaeological sites nestled amidst expansive plains and rugged mountains northwest of Cusco. As the heartland of the Inca Empire, this fertile valley was renowned for its maize production and abundant natural resources.

After we have breakfast, our journey begins in Chinchero, a captivating site showcasing ancient Inca cemeteries, meticulously preserved terraces, and awe-inspiring vistas of the Sacred Valley. Continuing our exploration, we venture to the mesmerizing salt mines, where over 3,000 salt ponds are meticulously tended by locals using traditional methods passed down through generations.

Next, we delve into the enigmatic agricultural experimentation center of Moray, where archaeologists have uncovered evidence of coca and cotton cultivation, defying the challenges of the high altitude. Our final stop is the iconic Inca citadel of Ollantaytambo, where we will embark on a 1.5 hour guided tour to unravel the mysteries of this architectural marvel.

Today includes breakfast, round-trip transportation, lunch, entrance fees, a knowledgeable guide, and overnight accommodations in the heart of the Sacred Valley. Lunch and Dinner are on your own today.

DAY 4: INCA TRAIL – DAY 1

This morning after breakfast, we embark on an early morning departure from our hotel, traversing picturesque villages en route to the Classic Inca Trail's starting point at Pisqacucho, also known as Km. 82.

Here, we will be greeted by our team of porters, who will diligently carry our equipment and prepare our meals throughout the trek.

The Classic Inca Trail commences along a trail flanked by cacti and a dry forest, offering vistas of the majestic Waqayhuillca mountain, which towers at an impressive 5,800 meters (19,030 feet) as the highest peak in the Sacred Valley Mountain range.

After approximately two hours of hiking, a lunch stop is provided. As the trail progresses, the landscape transitions into a lush jungle environment, presenting an opportunity to spot the extraordinary Patagonia gigas hummingbird. NOTE: Peru is home to the largest hummingbird in the world. ☺ We anticipate arriving at our campsite by 4 PM.

Upon arrival, our porters will offer warm water for washing, followed by a delightful hot beverages, popcorn, cookies, and other treats. Dinner will be served promptly at 7 PM. Your instructors will debrief the day and provide the plan for the next morning.

Distance covered: 12km (7.4miles)

Hiking time: 6 to 7 hours

Lowest elevation: 2700m (8, 858 feet)

Highest elevation: 3000 (10,168feet)

Difficulty: Moderate

DAY 5: INCA TRAIL – Day 2

This morning, you will be woken by one of our porters, who will offer you a steaming cup of coffee and a bowl of warm water to freshen up.

After a hearty breakfast, we will embark on a challenging hike that will take us through high-altitude jungle and up to the summit of Dead Woman's Pass. The views from the top are truly breathtaking, and you will be rewarded with a sense of accomplishment upon reaching this milestone.

The hike to Dead Woman's Pass is not for the faint of heart. The altitude is high, and the terrain is challenging. However, the rewards are great, and you will be able to say that you have hiked to one of the most iconic passes in the Andes.

After reaching the pass, we will descend to the campground at Paqaymayo, where we will spend the night. Here, temperatures can drop to freezing, so be sure to pack accordingly. Your instructors will provide the plan for the next day.

Distance covered: 11km (7 miles)

Hiking time: 7 to 8 hours

Lowest elevation: 3000 (10,168feet)

Highest elevation: 4215m (13,776 feet)

Difficulty: Demanding

DAY 6: INCA TRAIL – DAY 3

This morning after breakfast, we embark on the longest stretch of the Inca Trail, rewarded with breathtaking vistas, numerous Inca ruins, and vibrant orchids.

The day begins with a one-and-a-half-hour ascent to the second pass, Runkuraqay, at 3,950 meters (12,959 feet). After a brief rest and photo opportunity, we will descend to explore the Inca ruins of Sapaqmarca before enjoying a well-deserved lunch. The afternoon features a challenging one-and-a-half-hour hike through varied terrain, leading to the most beautiful campsite along the Premium Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, Phuyapatamarca.

Distance covered: 10km (6.2 miles)

Hiking time: 7 to 8 hours

Lowest elevation: 3650 (11,975feet)

Highest elevation: 3950m (12,959 feet)

Difficulty: Moderate to demanding

DAY 7: INCA TRAIL - Day 4

Today we will embark on the final leg of our Inca Trail adventure with an early morning departure from camp. After a hearty breakfast, we will descend through lush cloud forests, passing by the captivating Wiñay Wayna ruins. Here, we will have the opportunity to explore this remarkable site with a guided tour by our expert, local guide.

Following our visit to Wiñay Wayna, we will continue our descent towards Intinkunaq, the Sun Gate, where we will be greeted by the awe-inspiring panoramic views of Machu Picchu. Capture this unforgettable moment with stunning photographs before entering the ancient citadel.

We will spend the remainder of the afternoon exploring the enigmatic ruins of Machu Picchu, immersing ourselves in the rich history and architectural marvels of this iconic site. As the day draws to a close, we will board a bus to Aguas Calientes, where we will spend the night in a comfortable hotel and enjoy a celebratory dinner. Your Instructors will provide the plan for the following day. This is the final day of our Inca Trail adventure, and it will be a day filled with unforgettable experiences and memories.

Distance covered: 12km (7.4 miles)

Hiking time: 7 to 8 hours

Lowest elevation: 2400 (7,874feet)

Highest elevation: 3700m (12,139 feet)

Difficulty: Moderate

DAY 8: MACHU PICCHU EXPLORATION

This morning, we will rise early to optimize our visit to Machu Picchu and witness the breathtaking sunrise. We will board an early bus to ascend to the iconic citadel, where we will embark on a two-and-a-half-hour guided tour. Immerse yourself in the rich history and architectural marvels of this UNESCO World Heritage site, exploring key areas such as the Main Viewpoint, the Main Temple, intricate terraces, granaries, and the ancient Stone Quarry. After the tour, we will get back on the bus and head back to Aguas Calientes for lunch before hopping on the train to Ollantaytambo. Upon arrival in Ollantaytambo, we will board our private transportation and drive to our amazing hotel in the Sacred Valley. We will have structured free time until dinner is served. Your instructors will provide the plan for the next day. Includes: Breakfast, Dinner, Machu Picchu entrance fee, All Transportation, Hotel for the night. Lunch is on your own.

DAY 9: WILLOQ VISIT – CULTURAL EXCHANGE

This morning we have our last breakfast in the Sacred Valley and depart the hotel at 8am, heading towards the Willoq community for a one-hour drive. Here we will meet Roberto, who lives in the small town with 20 other families, all owners of numerous alpacas. Their houses are spread throughout the entire mountain valley. We have two main activities planned for today, both involving the family and their alpacas. We will participate in the CHUYAY, a traditional activity that involves gathering and marking the alpacas, as well as offering gifts to the mountain gods and Mother Earth. We will also help the family prepare the celebrated Pachamanca, a traditional method of cooking food using hot stones. We will return to Cusco via mini-bus and should arrive at our hotel around 3pm. We will have our celebratory dinner to commemorate our amazing, educational adventure in Southern Peru. Includes: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. Private transport, Hotel in Cusco.

DAY 10. DEPARTURE FROM CUSCO

Today is your last breakfast in Cusco. If you have a flight departing Cusco today, your instructors will take you to the airport to ensure you are on your way back home. If you are staying in country, please let us know and note that all services will end after breakfast.

SERVICES EXCLUDED

- Sleeping bag (can be rented for US\$ 20). our sleeping bags are washed after each use

PACKING LIST

- **Passport** – Please remember to bring your original passport, which should be the current one; if you have acquired a new one after you made your booking, bring both (the one you used for booking your trip and the new one). The information you provided us in time of your booking have to match your tickets in the Classic Inca trail.
- **Sleeping bag** – Recommended at least 0°F
- **Good hiking shoes** – They should be broken already; if you have acquired new ones, make sure to break them down before you come. They should be comfortable for your feet and possibly have ankle support.
- **Camp shoes** – running shoe, sandal, flip flop, something to wear if your hiking shoes are wet.
- **Down warm fleece** – The jacket should be warm enough for the nights and a jacket that is wind windbreaker resistant.

- **3 t-shirts** – Made for hiking; as you will sweat a lot, you may consider bringing at least 3 or 4 of them, one for the hike, one for the night and one clean for Machu Picchu
- **Socks** – Bring at least 3 pairs
- **Sun hat** – As some days can be hot and sunny, we recommend you to bring a sun hat that can keep the sun off your face.
- **Light long pants** – Trekking pants are the best ones, especially those that you can zip off the legs, plus they dry fast.
- **Clothes for sleeping** – Warm long underwear; you can use your fleece to sleep in and you may consider bringing gloves, especially for the campsite
- **Headlamp** – All the camps are dark so you will need to bring your headlights for organizing your stuff in your tent or going to the bathroom at night
- **Sunscreen** – SPF 35+ recommended
- **Sunglasses**
- **Trekking poles** – They are very helpful, they can take 30% off your weight (if you don't have them, you can rent them from us for \$10 per pair for 4 days of hiking)
- **Camera** - With spare batteries or phones take great pictures nowadays (batteries run down faster at high altitudes)
- **Bug repellent** – There are mosquitos all year round so make sure you pack your bug repellent
- **Water bottle** - Machu Picchu national park does not allow to bring plastic bottles, please make sure you have a Nalgene bottle or camel bag, before we leave the hotel in Cusco make sure you have filled up your water bottle for the first day then you will be able to get more from us whenever you will need it.
- **Toiletries**
- **Prescription medicines**, please inform your trip leader of any medications you are taking
- **Food restrictions** - If you have any allergies or preferences, make sure you add in the booking form.
- **Book to read** – you will have some spare time at every camp to read your favorite book or those that are about Machu Picchu that may make your journey more interesting (the following books are recommended by us: ***Last Days of the Incas* by Kim MacQuarrie, *Turn Right at Machu Picchu: Rediscovering the Lost City One Step at a Time* by Mark Adams**)
- **Journal and 3 pens.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHERE DO I MEET THE TEAM?

Your Instructors will pick you up at the Airport in Cusco.

WHAT IS THE TERRAIN LIKE ON THE INCA TRAIL? HOW CHALLENGING IS IT?

The trek is rated as moderate to challenging and covers approximately 45 km / 28 miles on uneven, rocky terrain with steep uphill and downhill sections and lots and lots of steps. Day 2 is the most challenging for most people because of the uphill and elevation, you will walk 1.215 meters / 4,000 feet in a span of 7 km / 4,3 miles to reach a maximum altitude of 4215 meters / 13,828 feet. Prior hiking experience is recommended.

WHAT IS THE WEATHER LIKE ON THE INCA TRAIL DURING THE YEAR?

Weather in the region is extremely variable and you should pack for a variety of conditions. In addition, our trek passes through ten bio-zones ranging from high altitude alpine conditions to high jungle. During a sunny day, you can expect temperatures of about 18–25°C (65–77°F), however, on the second day the weather is very unpredictable and temperatures can drop to 6°C (42°F) during the day at the pass (but you won't spend a lot of time up there).

The Machu Picchu area has a humid climate and tends to be warmer since it is located at a lower altitude

and near the Amazon Jungle. The average temperatures at Machu Picchu are between 23°C to 25°C (73°F and 77°F), with the minimum temperature around 18°C (64°F). The Cusco area has only 2 well-defined seasons: the wet season and the dry season. The wet season starts in November and ends in March. During this period, it rains almost every day for three or four hours, but also there are several sunny days. The dry season begins around March and lasts until October. June and July are the coldest months. Paradoxically at noon, the temperatures can reach 23 °C (77°F), the annual highest temperature.

WHAT DOES MY PORTER CARRY FOR ME? IS HE WITH US AT ALL TIMES?

You only carry a day-pack with everything you may need for a day's hike (water bottle, rain gear, camera, snacks). Porters carrying your extra bag will not walk together with you. Your extra bag will meet you upon arrival at the next stop. You will be allowed to put up to 8 Kilos / 17 pounds may include a sleeping bag 1.5 Kilos / 3.3 pounds, sleeping pad kilo /2 pounds, extra clothes for the night such as long warm underwear, warm fleece, and others. If you don't have any extra bag where you put extra stuff for the porter we will provide you with a duffle bag and you can return it at the end of your trek in Cusco.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET INJURED OR GET SICK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TREK?

In cases of emergencies or medical problems, we follow a detailed medical protocol. Your instructors are WFRS and your local guides have a "wilderness first aid certification", and carry a full first aid kit, portable oxygen, and radios with them at all times. In case special medical attention is needed, the nearest medical centers, are at Ollantaytambo and Aguas Calientes town. In case you get sick, for example, if you get altitude sickness that cannot allow you to continue, you may need to return with one of our porters to the beginning of the trek and get the train to Machu Picchu where you can meet us for the tour.

WHAT IS THE ELECTRICAL SITUATION?

There is no electricity while you are on the trek – that is why we recommend you to bring extra batteries for your camera if you are considering taking lots of pictures or bring an extra portable recharger for using your phone a lot you. And all the camps are dark so you will need to bring your headlights for organizing your stuff in your tent or going to the bathroom at night.

WHAT I AM GOING TO EAT ON THE TREK?

Our meals are based on organic food, and we pack from the beginning fresh vegetables.

Your lunch would be based on a Quinoa, pasta, vegetables soup and the main course usually in a small version of buffet including rice, potatoes, white or red meat and, salad such as avocado.

Dinner is usually similar but comes with dessert.

Breakfast is based on eggs, omelets, pancakes, bread, cereals, oatmeal, and drinks. You will be very well fed and may just want to pack very little snacks with you because we will even give you snacks such as fruit and a cookie for the way.

Note: We have options for vegetarians or vegans too.

SHOULD I TIP THE PORTERS AND GUIDES? IF I DO, HOW MUCH I SHOULD I TIP?

Our porters and guides are paid fairly according to Peruvian labor laws – that is why we don't force our clients to tip the crew. However, most of our clients want to give them an appreciation for the work they do and the service they receive so if you feel like giving them an appreciation or tip them, feel free to do it at the end of their work. It should be whatever you are comfortable with. We advise you to give the tip to the Leadership team and they will ensure it gets distributed fairly.

HOW MANY DAYS SHOULD I STAY IN CUSCO BEFORE THE TREK TO ADJUST TO THE ALTITUDE?

The main cause of altitude sickness is going too high, too quickly. Given enough time, your body will adapt to the decrease in oxygen. This process is known as acclimatization and generally takes one to three days at any given altitude., Cusco is at an elevation of 3,400 meters / 11,154 feet, so spending at least 2 days before any trek will help you a lot. You may also consider taking altitude pills. We often recommend to our clients DIAMOX or Acetazolamide, which are used to prevent and reduce the symptoms of altitude sickness. This medication can decrease headaches, tiredness, nausea, dizziness, and shortness of breath that can occur when you climb quickly to high altitudes (generally above 10,000 feet/3,048 meters). It is particularly useful in situations when you cannot make a slow ascent. The best ways to prevent altitude sickness are climbing slowly, stopping for 24 hours during the climb to allow the body to adjust to the new height, and taking it easy the first 1 to 2 days. (Regarding any specific medications, Please, check about side effects, precautions, interactions, or overdose or ask for advice from your doctor). PLEASE CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN BEFORE THE TRIP.

DO I NEED TO EXCHANGE MONEY IN CUSCO?

Yes, you should consider bringing money, as you may want to buy sodas, souvenirs, etc. and need to pay for certain meals. The currency in Peru is called a Sol or more than one, Sole. We recommend two ways for obtaining Soles. 1. Go to the ATM in Cusco with your debit card and remove a certain amount of Soles. NOTE: Please let your bank know you will be traveling to Peru, so you can use your card. 2. You can exchange USD notes for Soles in Cusco also. We recommend exchanging between \$200-\$300 USD into Soles for meals, souvenirs, etc.

SHOULD WE TIP OUR CREW?

The tip fee is included in your tuition for this course. Your instructors have covered it to ensure everyone is tipped accordingly and fairly.

DO I NEED TO CARRY MY OWN MEDICINE OR FIRST AID?

Your Instructors will have a first aid kit all the time, which includes some pain killers, bandages, small bandages to prevent blisters, an oxygen tank, pills for the case of diarrheas, and similar. At any time of the trek please feel free to ask for anything you may need, however, if you need any special medication or you have a special medical condition, please, contact your doctor to get the best advice before the trek.

CAN I RENT A SLEEPING BAG FROM YOU? WHAT TYPE SHOULD I BRING?

We rent sleeping bags that are specially designed for cold temperatures in the treks and we offer sleeping bags for up to 5 °F = -15 C°, In time you are booking your trek with us, you should request the sleeping bag if you need it, as at the spot it won't be possible to rent it. If you have one, make sure they are down and for temperatures up to 5 °F = -15 C°, or, even better, made for colder temperatures than that –, you don't want to be cold.

HOW DO I GET WATER ON THE TREK?

On the Inca trail, you will be provided with boiled drinking water from day 2 to the end of your trek., However, make sure you will get enough water for the first day, (you can also purchase it on the way to the beginning of the trek). People usually drink about one and a half liters of water per day, some even more so, you need to bring water bottles for the first day to refill them. We recommend you to bring Nalgene water bottles or camel backs so that way we can make less garbage.

WHAT IS THE TOILET SITUATION ON THE INCA TRAIL LIKE? SHOULD I BRING MY TOILET PAPER?

We will provide you with a portable private toilet in every campsite that will be cleaned by our staff after being used. Also, each camp has public squatting toilets, (holes in the ground with flushing water) so, you can use any of them as well. In the case of the toilet paper, you will need to bring your own with you.

DO I NEED WALKING POLES?

Walking poles are recommended for everybody, they will help you a lot down and uphill, Our expert guides say that they can take up to 30% off the weight of your body and pair of them is recommended per person. If you don't have any but you want to have them on your treks, you can rent them from us as well – a pair costs \$15 USD for the four days.

HOW BIG MY DAY BACKPACK SHOULD BE?

Thirty-litre backpack will be big enough to carry your belongings such as water, rain gear, and extra clothes since we will provide you with a personal porter who will carry up to 13Lbs of other equipment. If you already have any backpacks between 20 and 40 liters, they will be good too.

HOW BIG ARE THE SLEEPING TENTS?

Our tents are for 4 seasons and each one is designed for 3 people, but we use it for 2 (2.30 cm length/ 0.90 inch), width 1.70cm/0.70 inch). 2 people will share a tent.

IS THERE ANY PLACE TO WASH ME? ARE THERE SHOWERS?

The Inca trail has cold-free showers in the second and third campsite so, if you don't caretake cold showers, you feel free to shower. Every day in the morning you will get a small bucket of warm water in your tent that you can use for washing hands, face, or whatever you need. We also recommend you bring baby wet wipes

that you can use for washing yourselves.

IS THERE A PHONE SIGNAL?

There is a signal on day one until noon and on day four from lunch

LANGUAGE

Spanish is the national language of Peru, also a 20% of Peruvians speak Quechua (Inca language)
Our guides are fluent in Spanish and English