

# Peru: The Andes & Sacred Valley

## Sample Itinerary

**A note:** All of our itineraries are flexible. Our philosophy at Crooked Trails is to let the country guide our experiences and not to live by a strict itinerary. If unexpected events arise, we may change plans to take advantage of the situation or deal with an issue. However, we will do all we can to offer you everything that is on the schedule. Please be flexible yourself and allow the program to unfold. Meals included in the program cost are listed as B (breakfast), L (lunch) and D (dinner) for each day.

**Day 1** Spend the day in flight to Lima. Upon your arrival, you will be welcomed by Crooked Trails facilitator and brought to your Lima guesthouse in the heart of La Marina near the Ocean. Enjoy an evening welcome drink and introduction to program.

**Day 2** After a traditional Peruvian breakfast prepared by our hosts at Mama Panchitas, we will take a short historical tour through the streets of Lima, visiting such sites as the catacombs of the famous San Francisco cathedral, watching the changing of the guard outside the presidential palace and riding through one of Lima's most interesting suburbs to arrive at the top of San Cristobal Hill for a view of the entire city. We will have lunch in the newly renovated ocean overlook in the modern district of Miraflores and a stroll through the artist's district of Barranco. In the late evening, we will board the traditional High Andes Mountain bus on an overnight trip to Huaraz in the Cordillera Blanca (White Mountains). **B**

**Day 3** Upon arrival to Huaraz, we will have a few hours to rest and then after breakfast we will talk about our work with native communities and new community based tourism projects in the area. In the afternoon, we will travel for one hour to the native village of Huaripampa to visit one of the projects. Huaripampa is a small village high in the Andes where women weavers are learning skills to make themselves self-sufficient and changing the tapestry of their family economics. The Huaripampa Weavers Guild intends to establish a textile museum in Huaraz where women can demonstrate their weaving techniques and sell their products to tourists. We will explore the concepts of how tourism can help sustain tradition. In the late afternoon we will return to Huaraz, have dinner and then share an evening together listening to traditional music at El Tambo. **B**

**Day 4 - 10** Breakfast and then bus to the village of Vicos near Huascarán National Park. Welcome from the village council and families. You will meet your host family and settle in to their homes while they prepare you a traditional Andean lunch. In the afternoon we will meet to discuss the projects we will be working on while

in the village. In the late afternoon there will be time for exploring the village and meeting other community members. Your evening includes time with your families and optional language lessons. Over the next 7 days you will be working on a service project to be arranged by the community. This could include anything from building schools, to mapping projects, to harvest or water treatment depending on the needs and the time of year. There will also be time for meeting with local musicians, beekeepers, farmers, artisans and making bread with host families. One afternoon we will have a lecture and walk with a local shaman to study the traditional medicine of the region. One of our days will be spent hiking to 15,800 feet to a hidden lagoon in Huascarán National Park. Evenings will be set aside for time with the families – everything from fireside chats and language lessons to singing and dancing together.

Our final day in the village we will join all the families for a traditional Pachamanca feast before returning to Huaraz. Dinner in town with The Mountain Institute. **B,L,D**

**Day 11** A day to relax, do your laundry, explore Huaraz or join a local rock climbing expert for an afternoon of climbing. Overnight bus to Lima.

**Day 12** Arriving early to Lima we will transfer to the airport for the flight to Cusco, the former capital of the Inca Empire. Our local guesthouse has exceptional views of Cusco. After settling in, and taking in views from our guesthouse, we will explore the imperial city of the Incas by visiting the ancient monuments of Qorikancha (Temple of the Sun), the fine Inca walls of the Calle Loreta, the Ajlla Wasi (House of the Virgins of the Sun) and the Plaza de Armas. Peru's sensory feast comes alive as we wander through the flowers, meat, fruit and shamans' markets. In the afternoon, you will have time to explore on your own, perhaps by walking the narrow streets and finding hidden gems in the small *tiendas* (stores) for purchasing. The *tiendas* are full of local handicrafts, musical instruments and fine jewelry. Then it's dinner at a favorite local eatery accompanied by the sounds of traditional folkloric music. **B**

**Day 13** After breakfast we will travel down the Sacred Valley to the village of Chinchero to visit with friends who have developed a weavers' center. We will spend the morning working with our friends Paulino and Vilma, weavers of some of the most beautiful Inca designs we have seen. We will spend the entire day learning about the co-ops projects and spend the night enjoying the company of our new friends. **B,L**.

**Day 14** We begin our cross-country biking tour in Chinchero, crossing the spectacular Andean landscape. We will bike the dirt and gravel roads to Lake Huaypo, Maras-Moray, Salt mines and

finally downhill biking to Urubamba in the Sacred Valley. Maras is an Inca settlement and the Salineras salt mines have been mined since before Inca times. In the late afternoon, we will travel to Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley just three hours down the Urubamba River. Ollantaytambo is an attractive little town that has been built on top of original Inca foundations and is the best surviving example of Inca town planning. The town is divided in *canchas* (blocks) that are almost entirely intact. The town is located at the foot of some spectacular Inca ruins that protected the strategic entrance to the lower Urubamba Valley. The temple area is at the top of steep terracing which helped to provide excellent defenses. Stone used for these buildings was brought from a quarry high up on the opposite side of the Urubamba River - an incredible feat involving the efforts of thousands of workers. The complex was still under construction at the time of the conquest and was never completed. **B,L**

**Day 15** Following the footsteps of the ancient Inca, we will hike the Royal Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. This route is believed to be the ceremonial path that the Inca ruling caste used for ritual purification before entering the sacred site of Machu Picchu. The trail is a magnificent hike from the Choquesuysuy ruins, through an amazing cloud forest to Quetzal Falls, to the watch tower of Winayhuayna ruins. In the afternoon we will climb to Intipunku (Gate of the Sun), the ancient entrance to the sanctuary and arrive in the late afternoon to see Machu Picchu for the first time. When all the crowds have cleared, we will descend to Aguas Calientes where we can enjoy an evening of soaking in the fabulous local hot springs. **B,L,D**

**Day 16** We will spend the entire day exploring the ruins of Machu Picchu hearing the stories of the meaning behind this Inca site from our local guide. In the afternoon you will have free time to explore the ruins on your own and to climb to the top of Wuyanu Picchu and the Temple of the Moon before returning to Aguas Calientes to take the train back to Cuzco. Evening free time in Cuzco. **B**

**Day 17** Free day in Cuzco to explore; optional activities can be arranged. **B**

**Day 18** Afternoon flight back to Lima. Final dinner celebration together before boarding your flight back home. **B**