

# Peru: The Amazon & The Inca

## Sample Itinerary

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**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: FLIGHT TO LIMA**

Upon your arrival, you will be welcomed by a driver and brought to your guesthouse in the heart of the San Miguel district, near the cliffs of the Pacific Ocean. Flights generally arrive late at night from the US so you will check into your rooms and rest.

### **DAY 2: CUSCO, THE CAPITOL OF THE INCA EMPIRE**

After a traditional Peruvian breakfast at our guesthouse, we will take an early morning flight to Cusco, the ancient capital of the Inca Empire. We'll transfer from the airport to our local guesthouse and settle in. Afternoon walking tour of the imperial city of the Incas to the ancient monuments of Qorikancha, the temple of the Sun; the fine Inca walls of Calle Loreto, once again bearing its original Quechua name of Inti Q'ijllo; the Ajlla Wasi, the House of the Virgins of the Sun; the Stone of Twelve Angles; and the Huacaypata (Leisure Square), more commonly referred to by its Spanish name of 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) 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. Evening dinner and time to explore Cuzco's famous nightlife and music scene. **B**

### **DAY 3: CUSCO AND THE SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS**

Today we will travel through the Sacred Valley of the Incas on horseback visiting some of the area's most impressive Inca ruins such as the Temple of the Moon and the Temple of the Sun, ending at the impressive Inca fortress of Sacsayhuman. Here we will explore this important archeological site before returning to Cusco for lunch. After lunch we will travel 30 minutes down the Sacred Valley of the Incas to the Quechua village of Chinchero where we will meet our Quechua hosts Vilma and Paulino. Vilma Llangunaco is an accomplished Incan weaver. She and her husband Paulino established the Minka' Chinchero Co-op, which teaches local children the ancient Incan tradition of weaving and creating natural dyes. The goal of the Co-op is not just to preserve and to study traditional textiles, but also is to assist families in creating a larger market for their textiles and a new economy for their communities. We will spend the evening with our Quechua hosts and experience traditional Andean food, campfire and stories. **B,D**

### **DAY4: CHINCHERO HOMESTAY**

Today we will spend the day with our Quechua host families learning more about their ancient traditions and sharing our lives with these amazing people. While in Chinchero, we will take a short walking tour of the old central church and visit the incredible Chinchero Inca archeological site. We will also visit the local artisans' market where we can try *chica* (fermented corn beer) and barter for goods. **B,L,D**

### **DAY 5: OLLANTAYTAMBO**

After breakfast and goodbyes to our families, 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. Return to our lodging for rest and an evening sauna. **B**

#### **DAY 6: TREKKING THE ROYAL INCA TRAIL TO MACU PICCHU**

Following the footsteps of the 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 relaxing and dinner. **B,L**

#### **DAY 7: THE ANCIENT CITADEL OF MACHU PICCHU**

We will spend the entire day exploring the ruins of Machu Picchu while hearing the stories of the meaning behind this 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 Wayanu Picchu and the Temple of the Moon before returning to Aguas Calientes to take the train back to Cusco. Then you will have a free evening in Cusco. **B**

#### **DAY 8: AMAZON RAINFOREST**

Early morning flight to Puerto Maldonado where we will be met by our guide from Rainforest Expeditions, a Peruvian-owned tour company who works with

the Ese' eja native community. Skirting Puerto Maldonado, we will drive 20 kilometers to the Tambopata River Port, entering the native community of Infierno, whose hub lies near to the port. For the next few days you will be living and learning from the Ese' eja tribal community of the Amazon. Your English-speaking guide from the community of Infierno on the Tambopata River will provide unsurpassable wildlife spotting skills and insight into daily life in the forest and traditional knowledge. Although homes are scattered over 10,000 hectares, the "hub" centralizes the shared infrastructure – school, store, medical post, and meeting room. On our initial site visit we will learn about Infierno's techniques to characterize agricultural systems, gender differentiation of roles, family health care and education, traditional values and ceremonies, government, and attitudes towards development and ecotourism.

In the afternoon, we will travel to a family's home where a group of community members have built a fish farm. They have invested in two ponds where they keep both Gamitana and Pacotana, two local species of fish. Around the ponds they have built facilities for soccer and volleyball, a small restaurant and restrooms with showers. Their property is located next to a small creek where swimming is allowed. It's an interesting example of entrepreneurship among community members and here you can all swim, swing on the tree swings into the water and take the small dugout canoes down the river.

In the later afternoon, we will go by motorized canoe to our overnight destination at the shaman's native garden center, Centro Nape. The Centro Ñape is a communal organization that produces medicines out of forest plants and administers them to patients who choose to come to their little clinic. They have produced a trail that explains the different medicinal (and other) uses of selected plants and we will spend time with the shaman learning about native plants. The lodging service includes a bed with a mattress and a mosquito netting installed under a palm thatch roof with no walls and food will be brought in from Posada Amazonas Lodge. **B, L, D**

## **DAY 9: AMAZON RAINFOREST**

Early morning, you may spend a few hours with the native shaman at the center learning about the medicinal uses of plants. Later we will take a canoe to the Posadas Amazonas lodge where you will be greeted by the manager and learn a little more about the joint venture tourism partnership shared by Rainforest Expeditions and the native community of Infierno. Here we will have breakfast in the lodge restaurant and check into our rooms where we will spend the next two nights. Before lunch, you can join your guide for a twenty minute walk from Posada Amazonas to the 30 meter scaffolding canopy tower. From atop you obtain spectacular views of the vast expanses of standing forest cut by the Tambopata River winding through the middle. Now and then toucans, parrots or macaws are seen flying against the horizon, or mixed-species canopy flocks land in the treetop next to you. After lunch, you will join a local community member into the rainforest to learn about Brazil nut collection. Brazil nuts are the rainforest's only non-extractive commodity. A local Brazil nut concession manager will lead us through a stand of trees, analyzing the concession system, the role of the concession in the family economy and the future of the industry. Anecdotes and first hand accounts will complete the picture of life as a *castañeros*. Return to lodge for rest and dinner. A nightly presentation on the Infierno ecotourism project is available every night from a staff member; please ask if you are interested. **B, L, D**

## **DAY 10: AMAZON RAINFOREST**

Off early to Tres Chimbadas Lake, a thirty minute boat ride followed by forty five minutes of hiking from Posada Amazonas Lodge. Once there you will paddle around the lake in a catamaran, searching for the resident family of nine giant river otters (seen by 60% of our lake visitors) and other lakeside wildlife such as caiman, hoatzin and horned screamers. Otters are most active from dawn to eight or nine in the morning. You can also fish for piranhas! Return to the lodge for breakfast. After breakfast you will go by motorized canoe to Chonta, about 40 minutes down the river, where replicating the daily work of the macaw

researchers, you will climb a 30 meter tree with a rope, harness and jumars. From this height you have a macaw's viewpoint. In the afternoon, a thirty minute boat drive downriver takes us to the most complete farm in the community of Infierno. The owner grows a diverse variety of popular and unknown Amazon crops. In his garden, just about every plant and tree serves a purpose. Here you can learn and try a variety of Amazonian fruits and vegetables before returning back to the lodge for rest and dinner. After dinner, if you want, you can take a night safari to see all the animals that come out at night. **B, L, D**

### **DAY 11: RETURN TO LIMA AND HOME**

On our final day we will return to Puerto Maldonado and then fly back to the capital of Lima, where we will take a short historical tour through the streets of Lima, visiting such sites as the catacombs of the famous San Francisco Cathedral, the Plaza de Armas, and the San Cristobal Hill for a view of the entire city. We will share a family-style lunch in the old part of the city to get our final rich taste of traditional Peruvian food. In the late afternoon, we will stroll through the bohemian district of Barranaco. Once Lima's beach resort area, this district is now the home of Peru's most prestigious artists and writers. Puente de los Suspiros (The Bridge of Sighs) is a romantic outlook over the ocean in the loveliest part of the quarter. We will take a short walking tour before dinner in Barranco where we can watch the surfers and paragliders at sunset along the beach while enjoying a traditional dish of *ceviche*. Overnight flight back to the States. **B**