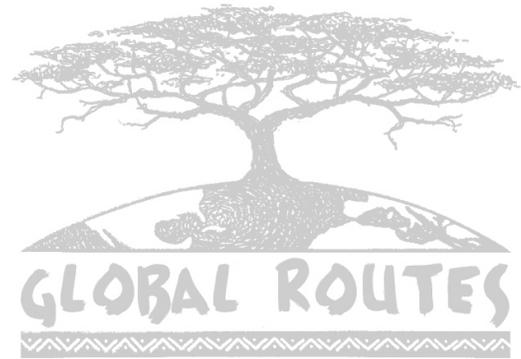


PERU

JOURNEY TO THE SACRED VALLEY



Centuries of culture are embedded in the valley at the base of Peru's high Andean peaks. The Incas were master masons and the terraces, aqueducts, and great cities of their immense creation mark the landscape, in particular the awe-inspiring Machu Picchu. Today, the indigenous Aymara and Quechua peoples still flourish. Their cultivation of the ancient quinoa grain and the brilliant geometric patterns on their hand-woven fabrics are living testimony to their cultural heritage. Settling into a rural indigenous community, where the towering mountains are revered as divine, you have the rare opportunity to live within and honor the traditions of the Valle Sagrado, the Sacred Valley.

"I grew in my confidence and ability to speak Spanish because I started off very hesitant/unclear in communicating but I learned a lot and was very comfortable communicating with my family and the community by the end."

-Jackson Smith, Peru 2011

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Cusco's vibrant streets as you search the local markets for a cozy alpaca scarf.
- Make adobe bricks of clay, and construct a health clinic to benefit your community.
- Learn Spanish and Quechua as you prepare meals with your host family.
- Trek along the spectacular mountain, lake and valley landscapes of the Sacred Valley and visit the royal site of Machu Picchu, the "Lost City of the Incas."
- Kayak on Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake.



PERU DETAILED ITINERARY

IN-COUNTRY ORIENTATION AND MACHU PICCHU TREK

Surrounded by the distant sounds of the Urubamba river and the green terraces of the Sacred Valley, you will be welcomed onto the organic farm of a kind local family. From here, you will spend your days exploring the ancient ruins of Ollantaytambo, hiking to an Incan military fortress, playing “duck duck goose” with local school children, and learning how to weave beautiful, intricate tapestries from traditional weavers. In the evenings, you will get to know your group and hosts better over laughter, stories, and steaming bowls of home-cooked quinoa soup.

Your group then embarks on a 4-day adventure trek in the stunning Sacred Valley. Here, experienced local guides lead you through traditional villages surrounded by grazing llamas, rugged mountains and pristine lakes. Ascending to over 13,000 feet you marvel at the dramatic views of snow capped Andean peaks and enjoy relaxing soaks in thermal hot springs. Your trek culminates with the breathtaking ruins of Machu Picchu. This famed ancient city, perched atop a steep hillside that drops to the Urubamba River below, is considered one of the world’s great wonders.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

For a few days you enjoy the pleasure of rural living in a community in the Sacred Valley. Here, help construct a health clinic or salón comunal (community center) using traditional adobe techniques. Meanwhile, become immersed in rich cultural traditions, as ancient and inspiring as the country’s famous ruins. Share quiet evenings with your group in your host community. Forge playful connections with the youngsters in the community, speaking both Spanish and Quechua. Help members of the community harvest potatoes and raise guinea pigs. A quiet afternoon might offer the rare sight of an Andean condor soaring across the skies.

TRAVEL ADVENTURES

After a parting ceremony in your host community, journey to the 3000-year old city of Cusco, which sits at a dramatic altitude of 10,500 feet. Massive rock walls and cobblestone streets create the picturesque setting of this small city, once the capital of the Inca Empire. Allow the distinctive folk songs of the churango (small guitar) or the zampona (Andean flute) to serenade you through colorful Cusqueño markets and the ancient fortress of Sacsayhuaman. Continue your travels south, and ride through high Andean grasslands to arrive upon the shores of mystical Lake Titicaca, sitting at 12,400 feet above sea level. This deep blue oasis, known as the birthplace of Incan civilization, holds great spiritual significance for Quechua and Aymara peoples. Your days bring kayak adventures along the coastline of the secluded Capachica peninsula and boating excursions to Isla Taquile and the floating Uros islands built of totora reeds.

THE BASICS

Dates: TBD.

Starting/Ending Point: Cusco/Juliaca, Peru

Program Fee: TBD, depending on group size.