



# THE ULTIMATE TRAVEL GUIDE TO MACHU PICCHU



Free step-by-step guide to planning and organising your Machu Picchu adventure!



Best of Peru Travel is an online travel guide for independent travellers who are looking for the best Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley in Peru have to offer. Want to know where to get the best Pisco sour in Cusco, the best lunch in Lima or which is the best hotel in Machu Picchu? Look no further... **Visit us here!**

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Editor's note: Prices are in Peruvian Soles (S/) unless otherwise stated in US\$. All prices are guide prices only and are based on an exchange rate of 3.42 Peruvian Soles (PEN) to the US Dollar at the time of publication.

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# MACHU PICCHU INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION TO MACHU PICCHU



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The iconic Machu Picchu perched on a mountain ridge above the Urubamba Valley near **Cusco** in Peru, is the most famous and well preserved Incan site of the Andean region and is one of the main reasons that over one million travellers visit Peru every year.

Machu Picchu was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 and has become so popular that the Peruvian government has had to limit visitors to 2,500 per day in order to help preserve this ancient wonder.



## MACHU PICCHU FACTS

- Machu Picchu is located at an altitude of 2,430m (7,972 ft). You actually go down in elevation to Machu Picchu from the city of Cusco which is located at 3,400 m (11,200 ft).
- Machu Picchu is located at the edge of the rainforest and has a sub-tropical climate with temperatures ranging from an average of 8°C (28.4°F) to 26°C (78.8°F).
- The town closest to Machu Picchu is known as Aguas Calientes but the official name is 'Machu Picchu Pueblo'.
- Machu Picchu Pueblo is a completely pedestrian town apart from the buses that bring travellers up to the Machu Picchu ruins.



## WHERE IS MACHU PICCHU LOCATED?

Machu Picchu is located in the Urubamba Valley of the Cusco province in Peru in South America.



# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



At Best of Peru Travel, we love helping people create their dream trips to Peru and **Machu Picchu**, one of the most stunning wonders of the world! This guide is designed to help you plan your own trip step by step.

We want you to be able to create your own adventure and see the best this region has to offer at a leisurely, stress-free pace that will allow you to delve in and experience the local culture and natural beauty.

This guide will cover the main sights you probably want to see in Machu Picchu, some off the beaten track experiences, suggestions for our favourite hotels and restaurants and lots of practical information about how to buy your Machu Picchu tickets and how to actually get there!

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to plan your own trip to Machu Picchu so we have organized the trip plans into three sections:

**Section 1:** The basic things you need to do to organise any trip to Machu Picchu – tickets, transport etc.

**Section 2:** Suggested one day, two day and three day itineraries for your trip

**Section 3:** Other travel information including **hotels, restaurants, things to see and do** and travel tips.

Along the way we have also included a few extras such as advice on **when to visit**, how to **beat altitude sickness**, and **what to pack**, as well as a few maps to help you get oriented.



## GENERAL INFO

- Peruvian currency: Nuevo Soles (S/.)  
US\$1 = approx. S/.3.42.
- Time zone: Eastern Standard.
- Electricity: 220 voltage.
- Language: Spanish
- Capital city: Lima



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Section 1

# MACHU PICCHU TRAVEL BASICS



There are three important steps to planning your own Machu Picchu trip regardless of whether you plan to visit in one day or over several days.



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## STEP 1: BOOK YOUR MACHU PICCHU TICKETS

One of the most important things on your list when planning a trip is buying your Machu Picchu entrance tickets into the **Machu Picchu Archaeological Site**. Only 2500 people a day are allowed entry into this World Heritage Site and tickets sell out fast particularly during high season from June to August.

As soon as you know the date you want to visit Machu Picchu **BOOK YOUR TICKETS** to avoid disappointment.





There are three options for booking your Machu Picchu tickets:

## 1. BOOK YOUR TICKETS ONLINE.

Visit the official ticket site [here](#) to buy Machu Picchu tickets. Be warned that the site is not always working and that it can sometimes be difficult or impossible to actually purchase your Machu Picchu ticket online. We've found the following tips help when buying your ticket online:

- Use the Spanish version of the website. The English site isn't fully translated and often isn't working properly. ([Click here to see our step by step video](#) on how to use the official Machu Picchu ticket website in Spanish.)
- The site only accepts Visa credit cards that are 'Verified by Visa'. No other credit card will work even though the site says other cards are accepted.
- Tickets are not e-mailed to you so make sure you are connected to a printer when you buy your tickets so you can print out your tickets on the spot.

## 2. BOOK YOUR TICKETS WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN CUSCO.

Go to the 'Direccion Regional de Cultura' office with your passport at Calle Garcilaso, Museo Casa Garcilaso in Cusco.

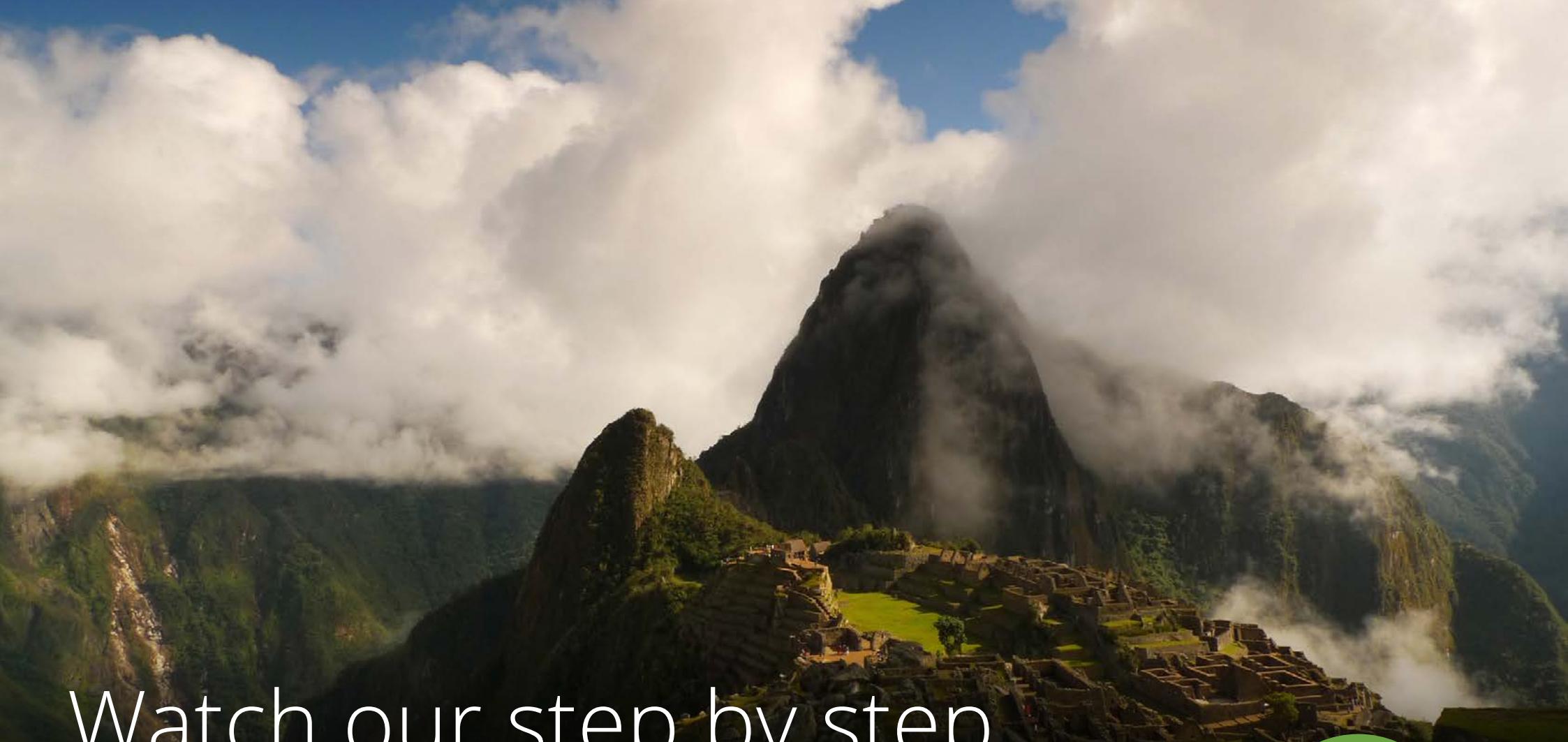
### Opening hours:

Monday – Saturday 07.15 – 18.30.  
Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays.

This option is a little riskier particularly in high season when tickets can sell out In advance.

## 3. BOOK YOUR TICKET WITH A TOUR OPERATOR AS PART OF A TOUR PACKAGE.

See a list of official tour operators [here](#).



Watch our step by step  
video guide to buying your  
Machu Picchu tickets online





## OPTION 1: MACHU PICCHU CITADEL ONLY.

This ticket provides you access into the main section of the Machu Picchu ruins only.

- Visitors: S/.128 (Approx. \$US38).
- Peruvian and Andean Community Residents: S/.64 (Approx. \$US19)

## OPTION 2: MACHU PICCHU CITADEL AND HUAYNA PICCHU MOUNTAIN.

Huayna Picchu is the steep mountain on the north side of Machu Picchu and is a popular hike for travellers visiting Machu Picchu. This ticket option books out fast as only 400 people are allowed to climb the Huayna Picchu Mountain each day. We recommend you book Huayna Picchu tickets at least 6 weeks in advance.

You can choose to start the climb between 7-8 am or 10-11 am. This is quite a strenuous and steep climb so we recommend you are in decent physical shape and not afraid of heights. Views are spectacular. The short hike takes approximately two hours in total.

If you are feeling adventurous you can do the longer hike around the back of Huayna Picchu and also visit the Temple of the Moon. Allow 3.5 to 4 hours for the full Huayna Picchu and Temple of the Moon hike.

- Visitors: S/.152 (Approx. \$US45)
- Peruvian and Andean Community Residents: S/.90 (Approx. \$US27)

## OPTION 3: MACHU PICCHU CITADEL AND MACHU PICCHU MOUNTAIN.

Machu Picchu Mountain is the mountain at the southern end of Machu Picchu and is an alternative hike to Huayna Picchu with stunning views of the citadel. Access is between 7am – 8am or 9am – 10am every day. This steep climb is definitely recommended only for those in good physical shape and takes approximately 4 hours in total depending on your level of fitness.

- Visitors: S/.142 (Approx. \$US42)
- Peruvian and Andean Community Residents: S/.80 (Approx. \$US24)

# MACHU PICCHU TICKET OPTIONS


Machu Picchu Citadel only
<b>Visitors</b>
<b>S/ 128</b> APPROX. US\$ 38
<b>Peruvian and Andean Community Residents</b>
<b>S/ 64</b> APPROX. US\$ 19


Machu Picchu Citadel and Huayna Picchu
<b>Visitors</b>
<b>S/ 152</b> APPROX. US\$ 45
<b>Peruvian and Andean Community Residents</b>
<b>S/ 90</b> APPROX. US\$ 27


Machu Picchu Citadel and Mountain
<b>Visitors</b>
<b>S/ 142</b> APPROX. US\$ 42
<b>Peruvian and Andean Community Residents</b>
<b>S/ 80</b> APPROX. US\$ 24

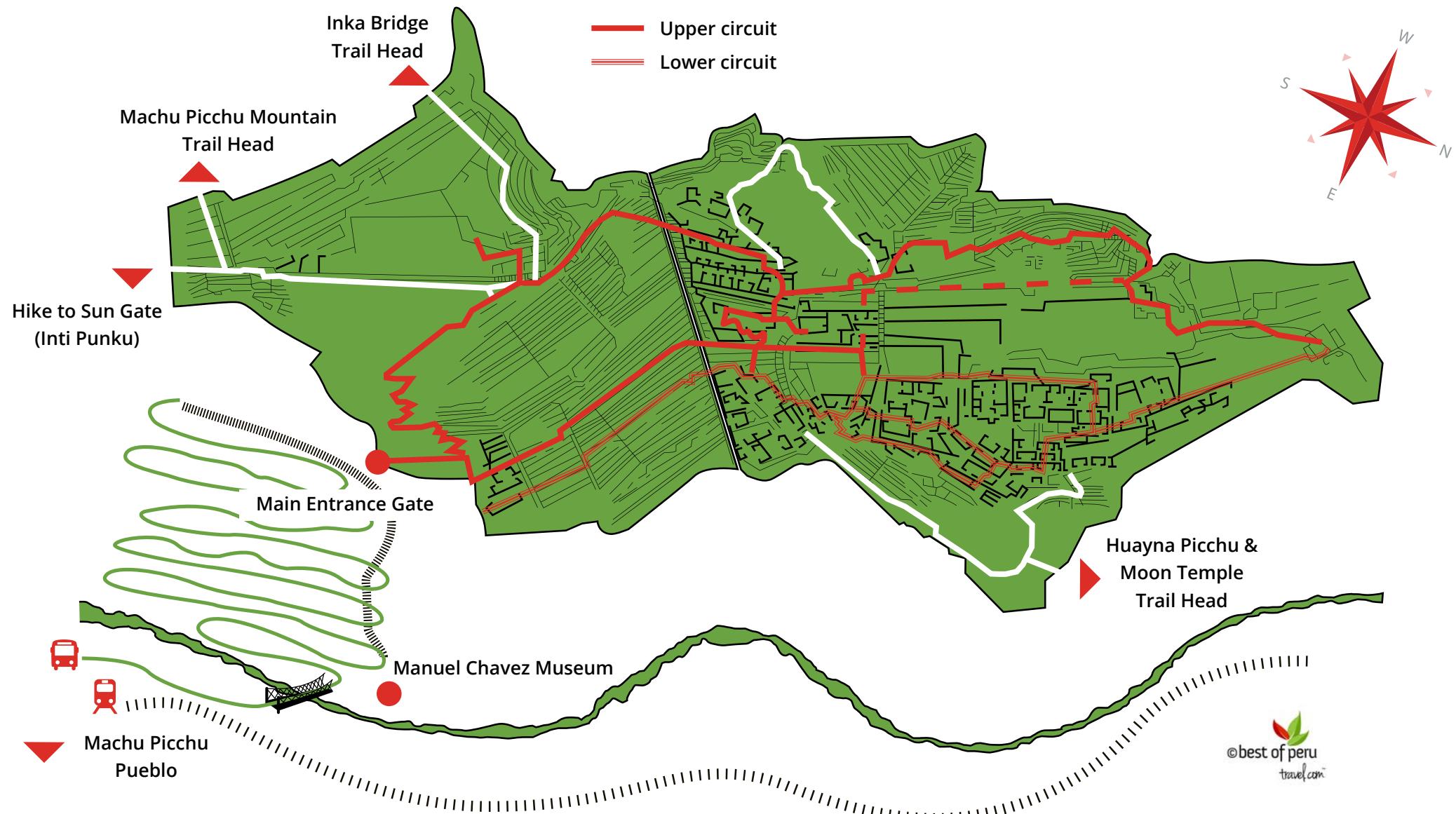


Note: Children under 8 are free. Children under 18 pay student rate and must show a valid ISIC card when booking tickets.



# MACHU PICCHU CITADEL MAP

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# GETTING TO MACHU PICCHU / AGUAS CALIENTES



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## STEP 2: GETTING TO MACHU PICCHU / AGUAS CALIENTES

There are various steps involved in getting to Machu Picchu.

### 1: TRAVEL TO CUSCO.

The first step to get to Machu Picchu is to book a flight to the city of Cusco in Peru which is the closest city and airport to Machu Picchu. Click here for information on how to get to [Cusco](#).

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A scenic view of the ancient Incan city of Machu Picchu, built into the side of a mountain. A green rectangular overlay is positioned in the upper right corner. Inside the overlay, the text "Need some extra help planning your Peru vacation?" is written in a white, cursive font. At the bottom of the overlay, there is a red button with the text "Click here to see how we can help you NOW!" in white. In the bottom left corner of the image, there is a black square containing the "best of peru travel" logo, which features a stylized green leaf icon above the text "best of peru" and "travel".

### 2: TRAVEL FROM CUSCO TO THE TOWN OF MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO.

(Also known as Aguas Calientes, but we will call it by its official name 'Machu Picchu Pueblo' in this guide.)

You have the following 3 options to get from Cusco to Machu Picchu Pueblo:



#### OPTION 1: TAKE THE TRAIN

This is the most popular option. From Cusco, most travellers make their way to the town of [Ollantaytambo](#) by taxi or bus and then on to Machu Picchu Pueblo by train. (See [here](#) for details of how to get from Cusco to Ollantaytambo)

There is also a direct train from Cusco – Machu Picchu Pueblo that takes 3.5 hours and leaves from Poroy station. During the [rainy season](#) (Oct – Mar) the trains from Cusco are often stopped due to flooding. During this period we highly recommend you travel to Ollantaytambo by bus or taxi and then take the train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes.



## TRAIN COMPANIES

- There are numerous train departures every day by the two train companies that operate this route [Peru Rail](#) and [Inca Rail](#).
- Be warned that the train trip to Machu Picchu is known as the most expensive train journey in the world with a return cost of between US\$120 (if you book well in advance) and up to US\$800 if you opt for the luxury [Hiram Bingham](#) train service on what is a 43km journey from Ollantaytambo to Machu Picchu pueblo.
- Book your train tickets well in advance particularly in [high season](#) as it gets very busy.



### PERU RAIL



#### EXPEDITION TRAIN

This train was also previously known as the backpacker train and is the budget option from Peru Rail. A great option for those looking for a comfortable, budget-friendly train. Prices from US\$55 one way.

#### VISTADOME TRAIN

This is the mid-end option from Peru Rail. Trains are modern and new with large windows which make for 90% panoramic views. A light meal is served on board and there is a fashion show and music on return journey from Machu Picchu which is something you will either love or hate! Prices from US\$70 one way.

#### HIRAM BINGHAM TRAIN

The luxury train option from Belmond with two dining cars and an observatory bar car in the style of trains from the 20's. Enjoy stunning scenery, a gourmet meal and live music on board. Prices from US\$400 one way.



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## INCA RAIL

Inca Rail only operates on the train route from Ollantaytambo to Machu Picchu Pueblo.



### MACHU PICCHU TRAIN

This is Inca Rail's budget option. Prices from US\$55 one way.

### INCA TRAIN

This is the mid-range option from Inca Rail and they offer an executive service and a first class service. Prices from US\$75 one way

### INCA PRINCESS TRAIN

This is a private luxury service train to Machu Picchu that is available for private hire. Price available on request.



## TRAIN TRAVEL INFO

- Arrive at the train station 30 minutes before the departure of your train.
- You are only allowed to bring one 8kg bag on Inca Rail and 5kg with Peru Rail. Left luggage storage is available for Peru Rail passengers only at the Peru Rail ticket office just before the entrance to the Ollantaytambo train station and in the Machu Picchu Pueblo station.
- Train journey time from Cusco – Machu Picchu Pueblo: Approximately 3.5 hours
- Train journey time from Ollantaytambo – Machu Picchu Pueblo: Approximately 90 minutes.
- Route type: This is a railway train route only with great views of the Andes Mountains and the Vilcanota River.





## OPTION 2: HIKE THE INCA TRAIL

Thousands of people every year opt to hike the Inca Trail which is typically a four day guided hike that begins at the km 82 marker (82 kilometres along the train tracks between Cusco and Machu Picchu).

You will arrive at Machu Picchu on the fourth day of the hike through the Sun Gate right up at the citadel. There is no direct access from here to the ruins however and you will have to return to the main entrance on foot to gain entry into the Machu Picchu citadel.

Only 500 people are permitted to hike the Inca Trail each day (200 tourists and 300 porters, cooks and guides), so you must book your visit well in advance (we recommend six months in advance to avoid disappointment!) with an authorized tour operator. [Click here](#) for a list of tour operators authorized by the Peruvian Ministry of Tourism.

### Note:

The Inca Trail closes during the month of February every year for maintenance.

**Journey time:** The classic Inca Trail hike takes 4 days but there are also alternatives available including a 2 day trek from km 104 and the seven day Salkantay trek that joins the Classic Inca Trail route on the fourth day.

**Distance of Classic Inca Trail:** Approximately 43km

**Route type:** This is an unpaved pedestrian mountain trail that runs through the Andes Mountains.



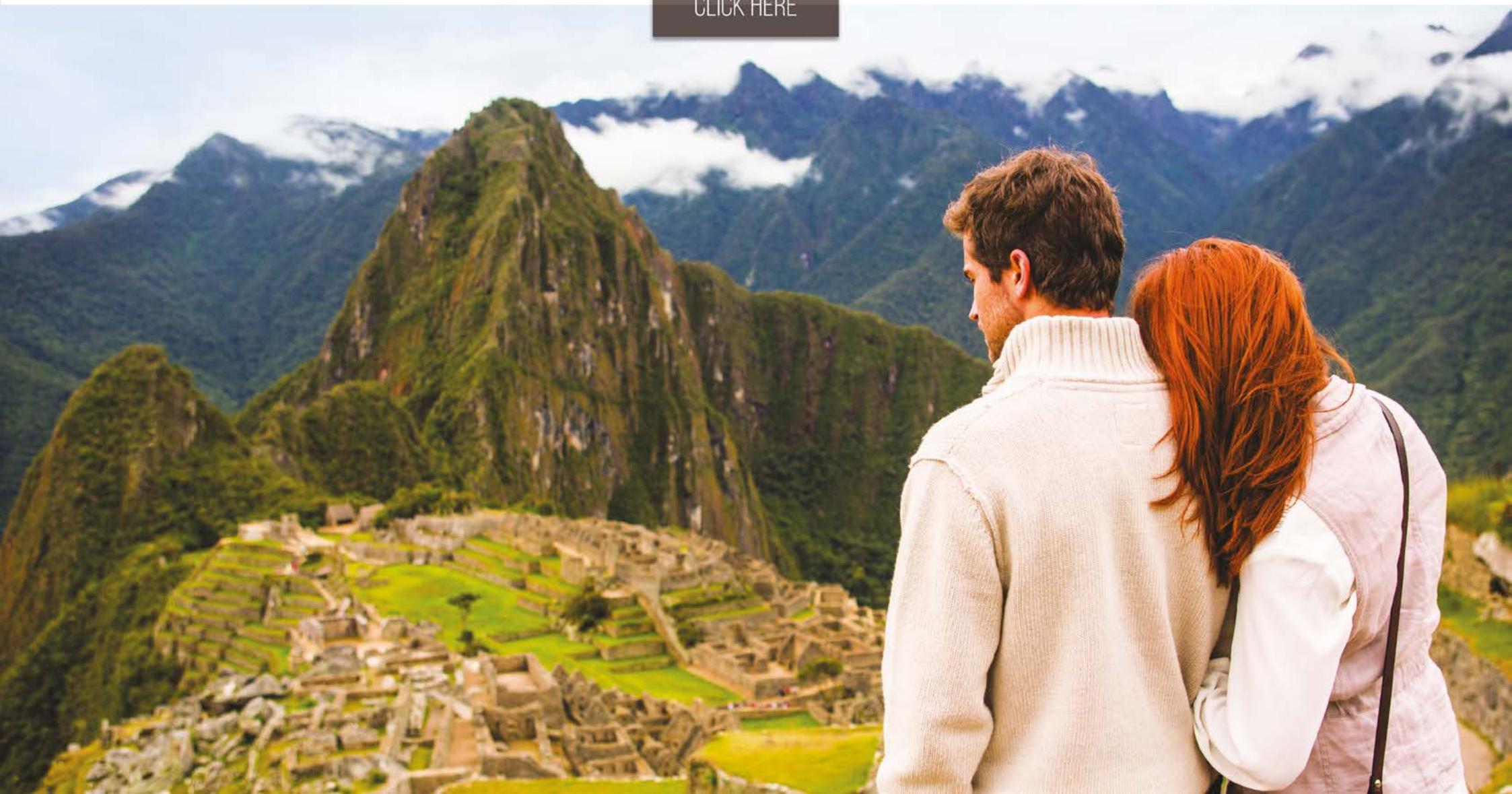
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## OPTION 3: ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO MACHU PICCHU VIA SANTA TERESA

This is an alternative route popular with backpackers who have more time and are on a budget. This is definitely a longer, more complicated route to Machu Picchu.

**Journey time:** Approximately 4 hours from Ollantaytambo and 6 hours from Cusco – Santa Maria - Santa Teresa.

**Road type:** The road to Santa Maria is a winding, narrow road with steep precipices on one side almost the whole way. The road is paved except in small sections until Santa Maria so is reasonably comfortable but the deep precipices do make for a heart-stopping journey.

The road from Santa Maria on to Santa Teresa is unpaved and mostly single lane. Try to avoid this route at night and in the rainy season (Dec – March), as landslides are common. This is definitely a longer, more complicated route to Machu Picchu and we don't recommend it particularly in the rainy season.

### CHOICE 1:

Hire a taxi to take you from Cusco directly to Santa Teresa. Approximately 4 hours from Ollantaytambo (S/.350 Approx. US\$103) and 6 hours from Cusco. Cost S/.450 Approx. US\$.132). Once you arrive in Santa Teresa take the train to Aguas Calientes or walk along the train tracks (Approx. a 2.5 hour hike/12km).

### CHOICE 2:

Take the bus from Cusco (Santiago bus terminal) to the jungle town of Santa Maria. (Approx. 5 hours and 15 soles (Approx. US\$4.50.) Then take a colectivo (shared mini-van) (6 soles approx. US\$1.75) or shared taxi (10 soles approx. US\$3) on to the town of Santa Teresa which takes approximately 1.5 – 2 hours depending on the state of the road. Once you arrive in Santa Teresa take the train to Aguas Calientes or walk along the train tracks (Approx. 2.5 hours/12km)

### Notes:

- Make sure you have a good driver. There are over 100 sharp bends on this road so trust us when we say that having a good driver will make the journey much more pleasant! The numerous roadside crosses say it all about this section of the road...
- Views are spectacular along this route.

## STEP 3: GETTING FROM THE TOWN OF MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO TO THE CITADEL.

There are two options for getting from the town of Machu Picchu Pueblo to the Machu Picchu citadel itself.



### OPTION 1: BY BUS

**Journey time:** 25 minutes.

**Route type:** This is a narrow unpaved road with a series of switchbacks that brings you up to the entrance of the ruins.

Once you arrive in Machu Picchu Pueblo, walk out of the train station and straight through the market stalls until you reach a foot bridge. Cross this foot bridge and you will see below the ticket office where you can buy bus tickets to Machu Picchu on the Avenida Hermanos Ayar. Buses depart a little further down the road on the right hand side. You can't miss the bus departure point as there are usually long queues.

#### Bus timetable:

Buses start leaving for Machu Picchu from 05.30am. The last bus goes up to Machu Picchu at 15.30pm. Buses leave once they are full.

The last bus leaves the Machu Picchu Citadel for Machu Picchu Pueblo at 17.30.

# GETTING FROM MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO TO THE MACHU PICCHU CITADEL

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## Ticket price:

Adults - US\$24 return. **Children** - US\$12 return.

**Peruvian adults** - US\$15 return.

**Peruvian children** - US\$8 return.

You don't need to buy your bus ticket in advance as you can buy it on the spot in Aguas Calientes. If however you like being super organized, head to the **CONSETTUR** office in Cusco where you can buy your bus ticket in advance.

**Address:** Avenida Infancia 433, Wanchaq, Cusco

## Hours of opening:

08.00 – 12.45 and 15.00 – 18.00 Monday – Saturdays and  
08.00 – 12.45 on Sundays.

(You can also buy bus tickets in the Interbank branch at 380 Avenida del Sol, Cusco, but be warned as queues can be quite long in this bank and you might have to wait a while.)

## Our tip:

If you are going to be arriving in Machu Picchu Pueblo the day before your Machu Picchu visit we recommend you buy your bus ticket then. At busy times like early morning and mid-day there can be queues to buy bus tickets so this will save you time.



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## OPTION 2: ON FOOT

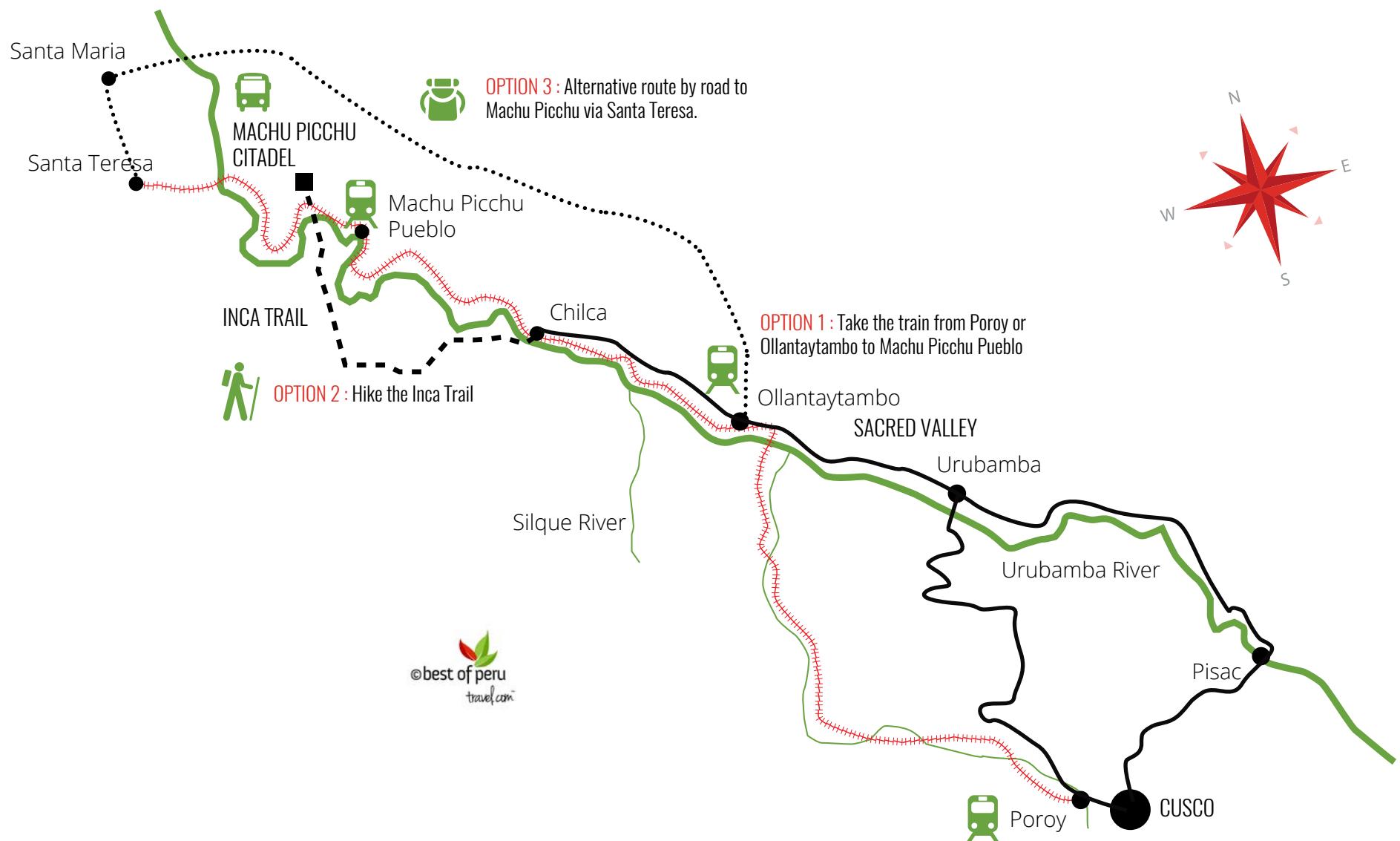
There is an alternative 8km route on foot from Aguas Calientes up to the ruins for those that are in good physical shape only. Follow the main road out of town towards the Machu Picchu ruins. Once you cross the Puente Ruinas or Ruinas Bridge on the right, a series of steep steps will lead you up the same switchbacks the bus takes to the entrance of Machu Picchu.

Allow 1-2 hours for the ascent and 1 hour for the descent. Steps are slippery when it rains. (**Note:** This is a very steep climb and after seeing many travellers arrive at the entrance to Machu Picchu red-faced and exhausted before even entering Machu Picchu, we recommend that you save your energy for climbing Huayna Picchu or Machu Picchu Mountain as you don't get any special or 'extra' views on this hike that you don't see on the bus up.)

**Journey time:** Approximately 1 – 2 hours depending on your fitness level.

# GETTING TO MACHU PICCHU MAP

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A scenic view of the ancient Incan city of Machu Picchu, nestled in the Andes mountains of Peru. The stone structures of the city are visible through a dense foreground of lush green tropical plants and flowers, including several vibrant purple orchids. The background features the majestic, misty peaks of the Urubamba mountain range under a clear blue sky.

Section 2

# MACHU PICCHU ITINERARIES



## 1 DAY ITINERARY

Most people tend to do a one day trip to Machu Picchu which is possible but quite rushed and makes for a very long day.

If you opt for this option, take an early train from Cusco or Ollantaytambo to the town of **Machu Picchu Pueblo**, and then take the bus straight up to Machu Picchu once you arrive. Take an evening train back from Machu Picchu either to Ollantaytambo or Cusco.



## 2 DAY/1 NIGHT ITINERARY

Machu Picchu Pueblo (also known as Aguas Calientes) was created to serve the needs of the thousands of tourists that flock here each year to visit Machu Picchu. If you have spent a few days immersed in the natural beauty of the Inca trail and the Sacred Valley, you might feel a little overwhelmed by the crowds of tourists and

innumerable restaurants and souvenir shops. Don't be put off however, as there are some great hidden gems to be found...

It's a good idea to spend a night here either before your Machu Picchu visit, purely to enable you to get an early start and maximise your time at the Machu Picchu Citadel itself. After all, you have travelled around the world to get here! Our advice is to get to Machu Picchu Pueblo the day before your Machu Picchu visit, treat yourself to a nice hotel, and a good meal.

The next day get up early to be at the Machu Picchu citadel for 6am opening. Then, depending on the weather you will get to see the sun rise and get the amazing morning light for your photos, as well as a less crowded visit as the busiest time at Machu Picchu is between 10am – 2pm.



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## 3 DAY/ 2 NIGHT ITINERARY

If you have the time, it's worth spending two nights at Machu Picchu Pueblo. Head there on day 1 and spend the afternoon exploring some of the **local attractions**, visit Machu Picchu for the entire day on day 2 and then spend part of day 3 visiting some of Machu Picchu's other attractions before heading back to Cusco or Ollantaytambo.

This allows you to see some of the other nice **things to do in Machu Picchu** as well as allowing you to take your time and explore without rushing.



## DON'T FORGET!

If you are organizing your trip yourself, your first port of call should be booking your entry and train ticket to Machu Picchu as soon as you know what date you want to visit the famous Incan citadel. Only 2500 people a day are allowed entry into this world renowned site, so tickets sell out fast particularly during **high season**.



## MACHU PICCHU VISIT TIPS

- The **Machu Picchu citadel** opens at 6am and closes at 5.30pm.
- The first bus leaves from Machu Picchu Pueblo to the citadel at 5.30am every morning and the last bus comes down at 5.30pm every afternoon.
- Make sure the name on your ticket matches your passport exactly. Don't forget your passport as you will need to show it at the entrance.
- Bring a small backpack only as they don't allow larger backpacks into the citadel.
- There are no toilets inside the citadel so visit the public toilets just outside the entrance before you head in to the citadel to avoid having to come back out in the middle of your visit.
- Monday is one of the busiest days at Machu Picchu with many tourists travelling here after visiting the **Pisac market**. Sundays are free for local Peruvians and can also be busy.

A photograph of a rustic wooden cabin interior. The room is made of light-colored wood with a prominent grain. On the left, there's a large window looking out onto lush greenery. In the center, a double bed with white linens is positioned. To the right, a bathroom area is visible with a bathtub, a small window, and a wooden vanity with a mirror. The lighting is warm, coming from recessed lights in the ceiling and a lamp on the vanity.

Section 3

# MACHU PICCHU TRAVEL INFO

# MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO MAP

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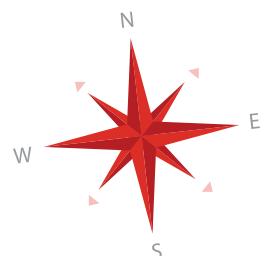
MACHU PICCHU CITADEL

- 1. INKATERRA MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO HOTEL
- 2. SUMAQ MACHU PICCHU HOTEL
- 3. EL MAPI HOTEL
- 4. RUPA WASI ECO-LODGE
- 5. GRINGO BILL'S
- 6. BELMOND SANCTUARY LODGE
  
- 7. TREE HOUSE RESTAURANT
- 8. LA BOULANGERIE DE PARIS
- 9. QUNUQ RESTAURANT

- 10. MANUEL CHAVEZ BALLOON MUSEUM
- 11. BUTTERFLY FARM
- 12. HANDICRAFT MARKET
- 13. THERMAL BATHS
- 14. MANDOR WATERFALL

- 15. TRAIN STATION
- 16. BUS TO MACHU PICCHU
- 17. TOURIST INFO OFFICE
- 18. MAIN SQUARE
- 19. ATM

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Machu Picchu Pueblo was built to accommodate the millions of tourists that visit Machu Picchu every year and as a result is full of accommodation options.

Apart from a handful of the higher-end hotels, very basic rooms are often grossly over-priced so bear this in mind when booking accommodation so you don't get stung. Here is our hand-picked 2016 selection of the best hotels in Machu Picchu for all budgets!

## LUXURY OPTIONS



### INKATERRA MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO HOTEL

Nestled in the cloud forest on the outskirts of the town, this is possibly one of our favourite hotels in Peru. This eco-friendly 'hacienda' is a fabulous place to stay with comfortable rooms with fireplaces, great bathrooms, nature excursions on-site, tea-time every day at 4pm with tea from their own plantation and friendly, helpful staff. Need we say more...?



[BOOK A ROOM](#)



[FULL REVIEW](#)



RATES FROM  
**539**



## SUMAQ MACHU PICCHU HOTEL

This is Machu Picchu's only official five star hotel and is definitely a good choice if you're looking for a modern, luxury hotel in Machu Picchu. Don't expect a rustic, traditional hotel but do expect excellent service, comfortable rooms decorated in a modern Andean style and room rates that include a three course meal at the [Qunuaq](#) restaurant and a pisco sour making class.

[BOOK A ROOM](#)[FULL REVIEW](#)

RATES FROM  
**438**



## BELMOND SANCTUARY LODGE

This is perhaps Machu Picchu's most iconic hotel and is the only hotel situated just outside the gates of the Machu Picchu citadel. Rooms are comfortable and are currently being remodeled to update the décor and comfort level. Rates with full-board at the Sanctuary Lodge start from a steep US\$1000 which some might say is worth it for a stay at the entrance to iconic Machu Picchu.

[BOOK A ROOM](#)[FULL REVIEW](#)

RATES FROM  
**1025**

## MID-RANGE OPTION

33



## BUDGET OPTIONS



### EL MAPI HOTEL

Walking into the lobby of the El MaPi by Inkaterra boutique hotel is like walking into a hip Soho boutique hotel. While not at all what you might expect from a hotel at the foot of Machu Picchu, it is a nice surprise and a great mid-range option for comfortable accommodation with all the amenities you would expect at a fair price for this town where over-priced rooms are the norm.



BOOK A ROOM



FULL REVIEW



RATES FROM  
**220**

### RUPA WASI ECO-LODGE

This is one of our favourite budget places to stay in Machu Picchu. This small six-room eco-lodge oozes charm. Rooms are stunningly simple and minimalist with wooden floors and walls and crisp white linen for a great night's sleep. Balconies in some of the rooms provide incredible views of the surrounding mountains and a great space to sit and relax. The comfortable simplicity and friendly, helpful staff makes this a great place to stay.



BOOK A ROOM



FULL REVIEW



RATES FROM  
**75**



### GRINGO BILL'S

Gringo Bill's is another good choice for budget, quality accommodation under \$100. This was one of the first hotels in town and some of the rooms are a little dated décor-wise with temperamental showers. However, ask for one of their newer rooms on the upper floors for great views of Machu Picchu Mountain and a more modern feel. Nice option for a comfortable, laid-back, family-friendly hotel.



BOOK A ROOM



FULL REVIEW



RATES FROM  
**75**



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Machu Picchu Town is full of cafes and restaurants particularly around the Main Square and Pachacutec Street. Be warned however, as they all tend to offer the same fairly standard menu including pizza, pasta and Peruvian dishes like guinea pig or lomo saltado (stir-fried beef) at inflated tourist prices.

Many also add an extra (illegal) tourist tax of 10 -20% to your bill without telling you until the end of your meal, so do make sure to check before you sit down to dinner!

There are however some great little gems of restaurants in town that don't charge the 'gringo tax' and do great food. Here are our favourite places to eat in Machu Picchu Pueblo in no particular order. Bon appetit!





## TREE HOUSE RESTAURANT

It's always a pleasure to visit the Tree House if you are looking for quality, Peruvian fusion cuisine cooked in innovative ways in an informal, laid-back atmosphere. Try the scrumptious Peruvian pumpkin soup with wild Andean mushrooms and the trout fillet served with golden berry sauce for a delicious meal!



FULL REVIEW

\$  
**14**

MAINS FROM  
**14**

A scenic view of the ancient Incan city of Machu Picchu, perched high in the Andes mountains. A large green rectangular overlay contains the text "Let us help you plan your dream Machu Picchu adventure!" and "Click here to learn how...". The "best of peru" logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the image.



## LA BOULANGERIE DE PARIS

A great choice if you want a quick breakfast or snack. Unlike most restaurants in Aguas Calientes that offer the same generic pizza or pasta dishes, La Boulangerie brings a fresh breath of air to the town with their offering of authentic French pastries, quiche, panini and decent coffee.



FULL REVIEW



PASTRIES FROM  
**2**



## QUNUQ RESTAURANT

Qunuq has a well-rounded if somewhat traditional menu offering a nice selection of novo-Andean and Peruvian cuisine with excellent service in the luxurious setting of the Sumaq Hotel. The trout ceviche is delicious and they do a good grilled alpaca fillet in a béarnaise sauce. A good option for a higher-end hotel-style dining experience.



FULL REVIEW



MAINS FROM  
**17.50**

# THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN MACHU PICCHU

38

Machu Picchu is on most peoples' bucket list and over a whopping one million people a year travel to this iconic World Heritage Site. However, most people head straight up to the citadel itself and miss out on some of the other great things to do in the town of Machu Picchu Pueblo (also called Aguas Calientes), the departure point for any visit to Machu Picchu. Take a few extra hours to discover some of our favourite things to do in Machu Picchu besides visiting Machu Picchu!

EL ALBERGUE  
OLLANTAYTAMBO  
HOTEL & RESTAURANT  
Chacra Organica



Pachamanca Farm Lunch



Fresh picked Andean meal.



Cafe Mayu Coffee Roasters



Matacuy Distillery

Try handcrafted, small-batch spirits  
aged with our organic herbs.

[www.wendyweekshotels.com](http://www.wendyweekshotels.com)

Walking Tours Available

+51 84 204 014 +51 84 204 049 [reservations@elalbergue.com](mailto:reservations@elalbergue.com)

Ollantaytambo Train Station



## MARVEL AT THE MANUEL CHAVEZ BALLOON MUSEUM

This little-visited gem is a thirty minute walk from the town of Aguas Calientes and is one of the must-see attractions in Machu Picchu. Learn about the discovery and history of Machu Picchu and see interesting artifacts like the original edition of the 1913 National Geographic magazine that published and announced Hiram Bingham's discovery of Machu Picchu to the world. There is also a nice botanical garden next to the museum with samples of local plants and trees.



FULL REVIEW



OUR TIP

Stop here before you visit the citadel to get a better insight into Machu Picchu.



ENTRY FROM  
\$ 3





### BRING THE KIDS TO THE BUTTERFLY FARM

There is something about this run-down butterfly farm that charms us every time we visit. Run by Machu Picchu local Leonardo and most definitely off the tourist track, the butterfly farm is a great place to bring the kids and show them the life-cycle of the butterfly and the importance of conserving the 8 species of butterfly found in Machu Picchu.



FULL REVIEW



ENTRY FROM

**3**



### VISIT THE MANDOR WATERFALL & GARDENS

The Mandor Gardens are a 45 - 60 minute walk from Machu Picchu Pueblo and are a peaceful paradise away from the crowds. Run by a local family, a short trail takes you through wild gardens filled with local flora and fauna to a small waterfall. Bring a swimming costume for a refreshing dip!



FULL REVIEW



ENTRY FROM

**3**



### VISIT THE HANDICRAFT MARKET

You can't miss the handicraft market in Machu Picchu Pueblo as it is right in front of the train station when you arrive. It is packed with colourful Andean weavings, clothing and lots of trinkets and souvenirs for your Machu Picchu trip. You'll probably already have seen much of what's on offer in Cusco and the Sacred Valley but it's worth a browse.



FULL REVIEW



RATES FROM  
**FREE**



### VISIT THE THERMAL BATHS

The thermal baths are located at the top of the main Pachacuteq Street and are a series of man-made pools filled with thermal water of different temperatures that is channeled from the surrounding mountains. Not the most amazing of baths and they get quite crowded but a dip can be refreshing after a long day hiking!



ENTRY FROM  
**\$3**

Peak season in Machu Picchu and Cusco is from June to August when tours and accommodation are usually booked out well in advance. An ideal time to visit Machu Picchu is right before peak season in April or May or just after peak season in September or October before the rains begin. The weather is good during these periods and everywhere is less crowded.



## TORO WASI

CERAMICS BY GUSTAVO SALAS



Taller en Lima

Calle Jose Olaya 117, Dpto 101,  
Chorrillos

Tienda en Pisac

Calle Pardo S/N,  
Pisac



## Rainy Season

The rainy season usually begins in October and runs until March with January and February being the wettest months. The rains can be fierce when they hit, causing landslides and disrupted transportation schedules. Average temperatures during the rainy season range from 5°C (41°F) degrees to 19°C (66°F) degrees.



## Dry Season

The dry season runs from April until September. June and July are the driest months but also the coldest with temperatures sometimes dropping below zero. Average temperatures during the dry season vary from 0°C (32°F) at night to 25°C (77°F) during the day. Temperatures tend to rise around noon and then drop in the evening, night and early morning.

Machu Picchu is located at an altitude of 2,400 metres (7,874ft) and it is common for many visitors to experience some mild symptoms of altitude sickness or 'soroche' as it is known locally. It's hard to tell if you will be affected by altitude sickness as some people can be more susceptible than others regardless of age, sex or physical condition.

## HOW MIGHT ALTITUDE SICKNESS AFFECT MY TRIP?

Mild altitude sickness should not interfere too much with your normal activity. Symptoms are usually felt within 12 – 24 hours of arrival and tend to subside within 3 days. If you continue to feel unwell ask your hotel to call you a doctor as more severe reactions may require medical attention.

Altitude sickness can be a very serious illness so before travelling to Machu Picchu consult your doctor particularly if you have any heart, lung or other severe health problems as not all people can travel to Cusco and Machu Picchu due to the altitude.

However, do bear in mind that almost two million people from all over the world visit Cusco and Machu Picchu each year with only a small percentage suffering from altitude sickness. Cusco and Machu Picchu are one of the world's major tourist destinations and medical facilities are available if needs be.

For more detailed information on altitude sickness visit:  
[WebMD](#) / [Medex](#)



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# TIPS TO AVOID ALTITUDE SICKNESS IN MACHU PICCHU

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**1** Relax and take it easy!. Take a few days at the start of your trip to acclimatise to the altitude before attempting any treks or strenuous activity. This is the easiest advice we can share, take it easy for the first few days and your body will thank you later...

**2** Avoid alcohol & drugs including sleeping tablets and tranquilisers as they hit harder at altitude.

**3** Drink lots of water. Staying hydrated prior to and throughout your trip is crucial.

**4** Drink coca tea. Nearly every hotel in Cusco and Machu Picchu offers fresh coca tea to guests and for a good reason too! Coca tea is completely safe to drink and a cup or two each day can ease altitude symptoms.

**5** Get some extra oxygen! Oxishot is a small dischargeable can that contains 8 litres of oxygen that you can take when you arrive in Cusco and anytime you need a boost. It can help reduce headaches and fatigue associated with altitude sickness. They are on sale everywhere in Cusco & Machu Picchu and cost approximately S/.45 (Approx. US\$13.50).



After spending a LOT of time travelling around Cusco & Machu Picchu we have come up with our definitive list of what to pack for a Machu Picchu trip.

Your **Passport!** They will check your passport or ID matches your ticket at the entrance to Machu Picchu so make sure you bring it with you.

A good pair of **hiking boots** or **walking shoes**. This is not the place to bring those high heels ladies! Steps and uneven cobble stone surfaces abound and if it rains the stones get slippery.

A **poncho** for those downpours. The weather changes very quickly here. An ideal solution is to carry a good quality poncho in your daypack at all times particularly during the rainy season from November - March. Invest in a decent quality poncho that will keep you, your day pack and camera gear dry if it rains.

A **lightweight jacket**. Mornings can be cool and misty particularly between November - March so a good quality, waterproof and ideally windproof jacket is ideal.

Good quality **sunscreen and a sunhat**. Due to the altitude at Machu Picchu frequent application of sunscreen is advised to avoid any nasty sunburn. Be warned, even when it's cloudy here you can get very burnt...

Bring **clothes that you can layer**. Cool mornings mean you may want to wrap up as you set off for a day's exploring, however by 11am you might want to strip down to a t-shirt and shorts. Warm layers and trousers that can be unzipped into shorts are great but if you are wearing shorts just remember to spray on some insect repellent.

A small **day-pack** to carry all your bits and pieces, ideally with a hip strap to make long days hiking and exploring more comfortable. You can only bring a 20L size back pack into Machu Picchu so plan accordingly. Your hotel will store your luggage for you.

A **water bottle**. Plastic disposal is a real problem in Peru so we recommend you buy large bottles and refill water into your own re-useable bottle.

A **duckpack or rainproof covering** for your daypack or backpack is a must particularly if you are travelling during the rainy season to avoid wet clothes and personal items. This is particularly important if you are going to be doing any multi-day hiking including the Inca Trail.

**Insect repellent.** Machu Picchu has mosquitoes nearly all year round so if these little critters favour your sweet blood make sure to bring some repellent with you. from home.

**Camera** with lots of memory and battery for all those great shots you are definitely going to want to take!

Peru uses the Peruvian Nuevo Sol (PEN) currency which is most commonly known as the 'sol'. The sol symbol is S/. and it trades at approximately 3.4 soles to 1 US\$ or 3.7 soles to the euro. These rates do fluctuate so check with your bank or foreign exchange provider before you travel.

## FOREIGN EXCHANGE IN PERU

The US dollar and euro is widely accepted in most 3 star plus hotels and more upmarket restaurants although rates might be slightly higher than those found in a 'casa de cambio' or foreign exchange outlet. The dollar is more widely accepted than the euro. Out on the street you will need to have soles in your pocket, so ask for small notes of 50 or twenty soles when you change your money.

## CREDIT CARDS IN PERU

Visa is the most widely accepted credit card in Peru but Mastercard, AMEX and Diners Club cards are also accepted. It's a good idea to let your bank know that you are travelling to Peru so that they will continue to authorize any purchases you make while abroad. Most good restaurants, travel agencies and hotels will accept payment by Visa.

Where to Exchange Money & find ATM's in Machu Picchu

## MONEY EXCHANGE IN MACHU PICCHU:

It's best to [exchange your money](#) in Cusco (see here for info on where to change money in Cusco) as you will usually get a better

rate than in Machu Picchu Pueblo. Most hotels, restaurants and shops will exchange money for you in Machu Picchu also. Like in any destination, it's best to exchange your money in official banks to ensure you get authentic notes and the right amount of money back.

## AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINES (ATM'S) IN MACHU PICCHU:

There are **NO ATM's AT THE MACHU PICCHU CITADEL** but there are ATM's in Machu Picchu Pueblo. We recommend the Banco de Credito de Peru (BCP) located just across the bridge on Avenida Imperio de los Incas. Do be aware though that often the ATM'S don't have cash or when there is power cuts won't work. So our advice is to bring enough cash for your Machu Picchu trip with you from Cusco or Ollantaytambo. There is usually a charge for withdrawing money from ATM's plus whatever amount your own bank charges back home. This can add up quickly so be prepared.



Machu Picchu is Peru's biggest tourist destination and as such is well policed by the local tourist police and has relatively little crime or safety issues.

However, like every tourist destination petty theft can occur. Remain alert, use common sense and stick to the usual travel rules for Peru that you can read more about here.



## CARING FOR MACHU PICCHU

Machu Picchu is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is under more and more pressure from tourist numbers increasing. Do your bit to protect this **unique site**:

- Don't leave any garbage.
- Don't remove or buy any flora or fauna from Machu Picchu.
- Don't bring food into Machu Picchu.
- Respect local traditions and etiquette and behave respectfully.
- Have an open mind.
- Conserve natural resources like water during your stay.



## DO I NEED A TOUR GUIDE FOR MACHU PICCHU

You don't need an official tour guide for your visit to Machu Picchu and can wander through the citadel on your own. However, if you want really learn about Machu Picchu and its history, hiring a guide for a few hours is a good idea so you know what you are looking at on your visit.

You can hire Machu Picchu guides at the entrance to the citadel for approx. S/.100 – 180 (Approx. US\$30 – 54) for two hours. Have a chat with the guide first to make sure they speak good English and seem of decent quality.



## ESTIMATED MACHU PICCHU TRIP COSTS



Private taxi  
from Cusco to  
Ollantaytambo

**US\$ 30**



Return  
train from  
Ollantaytambo  
to Machu  
Picchu Pueblo

**US\$ 120**  
US\$ 800

depending on train  
type



1 night hotel  
accommodation  
in Machu Picchu  
Pueblo

**US\$ 50**  
US\$ 1000

depending on type  
of hotel



Return bus trip  
up to Machu  
Picchu citadel

**US\$ 24**



Machu Picchu  
entrance  
ticket

**US\$ 38**

Machu Picchu  
Citadel only



3 hour tour  
with private  
guide

**US\$ 30**  
US\$ 50

depending on  
guide quality



Private  
taxi from  
Ollantaytambo  
to Cusco

**US\$ 30**

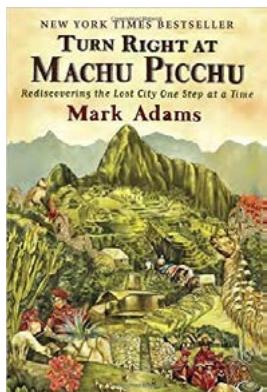


These are approximate reference costs only and will vary depending on category of hotel, train, guide etc. you choose.

# OUR RECOMMENDED READS

49

These are some of our favourite books to help you prepare for an epic Machu Picchu adventure!

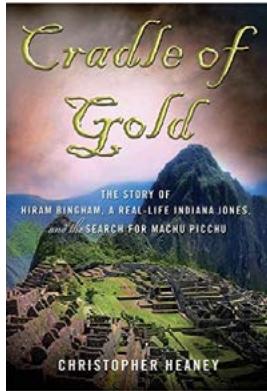


## Turn Right at Machu Picchu. Rediscovering the Lost City One Step at a Time by Mark Adams.

Turn Right at Machu Picchu is Adams' fascinating and funny account of his journey to answer one nagging question: Just what was Machu Picchu?



BUY NOW

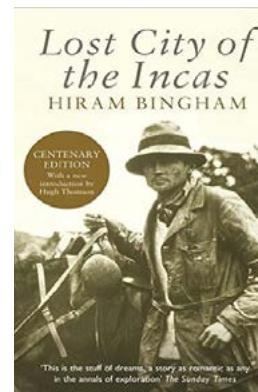


## Cradle of Gold: The Story of Hiram Bingham, a Real-Life Indiana Jones, and the Search for Machu Picchu by Christopher Heaney

A journey into the heart of Peru's past to relive the dramatic story of the final years of the Incan empire, the exhilarating recovery of their final cities and the thought-provoking fight over their future.



BUY NOW

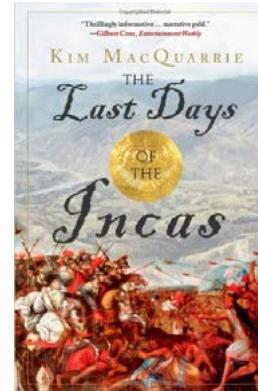


## Lost City of the Incas by Hiram Bingham

In 1911 Hiram Bingham, a pre-historian with a love of exotic destinations, set out to Peru in search of the legendary city of Vilcabamba, instead he stumbled on the ruins of Machu Picchu.



BUY NOW



## The Last Days of the Incas by Kim MacQuarrie

The epic story of the fall of the Inca Empire to Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro in the aftermath of a bloody civil war.



BUY NOW

# What to Expect on Your Machu Picchu Journey

Watch video now





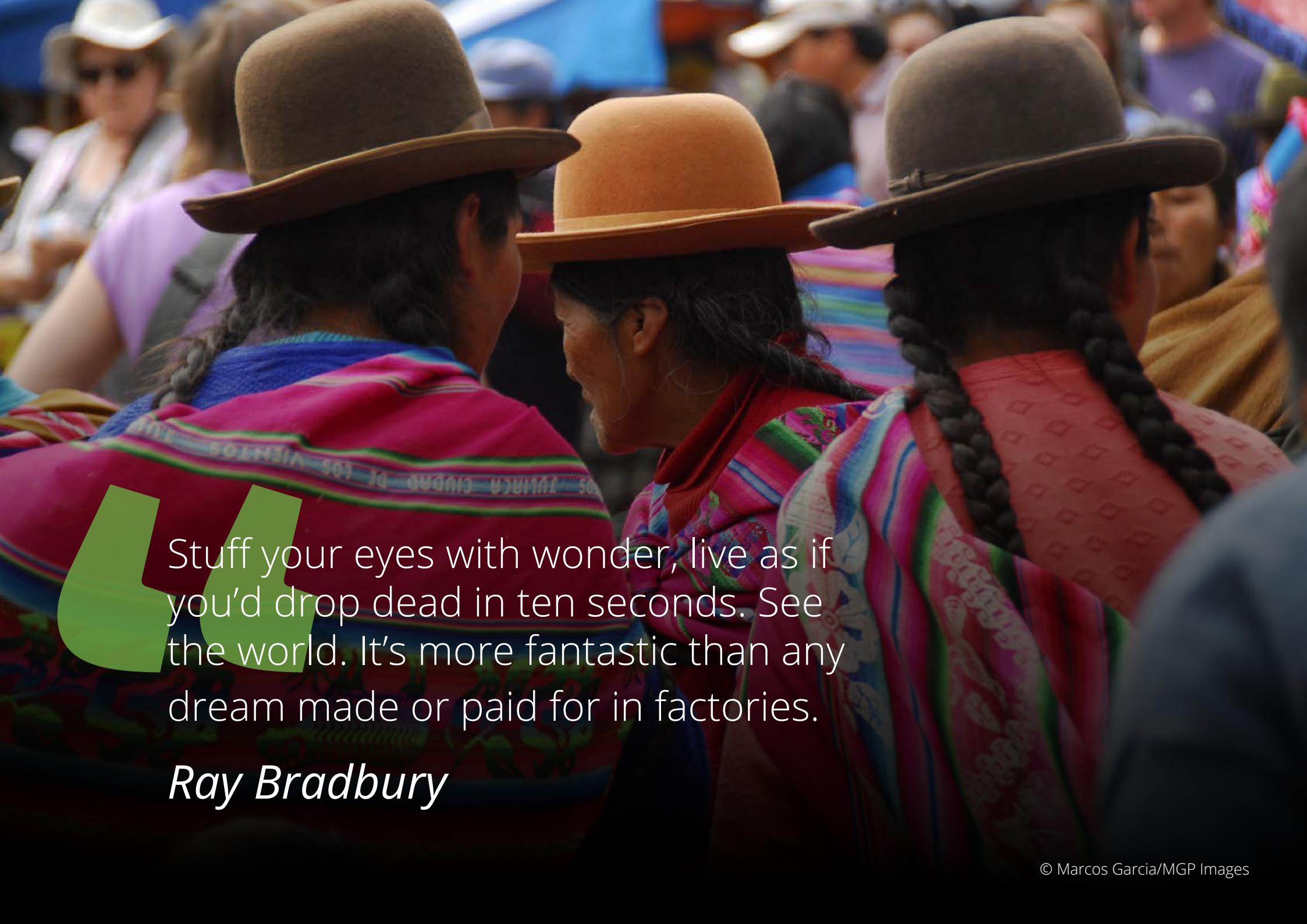
## Got any questions?

Go ahead and hit 'reply' on the e-mail that delivered this pdf to your inbox and we'll make sure to get back to you ASAP!

If your tribe is made up of people who have always dreamed of or are planning on visiting Machu Picchu, do them a favour and hook them up with this guide! They'll thank you later (and so will we!).

Share on





Stuff your eyes with wonder, live as if you'd drop dead in ten seconds. See the world. It's more fantastic than any dream made or paid for in factories.

*Ray Bradbury*