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Expedition Details

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Within the mountains of Peru lies a wealth of ancient Inca temples, Spanish colonial towns, and breathtaking Andean vistas. Discover the magnificent capital of Cusco, hike to ruins in the Urubamba Valley, meet artisans and archaeologists, and examine pre-Colombian treasures at the renowned Larco Herrera Museum. Then spend the night among the enchanting ruins of Machu Picchu, excavated by Hiram Bingham with funding from National Geographic more than a century ago.

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conquistador Francisco Pizarro. Transfer to our hotel upon arrival and enjoy an evening to relax.

Wyndham Costa del Sol Lima Airport Hotel

Day 2 — Cusco/Sacred Valley of the Inca

Fly from Lima to Cusco this morning, and drive into the Sacred Valley of the Inca, stopping for a visit to Awanacancha, a farm where llamas and alpacas are bred. At our lodge and spa, nestled in tropical gardens in the hills just outside of Urubamba, settle into your private bungalow. Before dinner, enjoy a talk by National Geographic grantee Peter Frost*, who has been exploring the Andes for 35 years. In 2001 and 2002, Peter led National Geographic Society-sponsored expeditions into the remote region of Vilcabamba, Peru, finding and exploring the previously unknown Inca and pre-Inca site of Qoriwayrachina (*National Geographic* magazine, February 2004).

Hotel Sol y Luna (B,L,D)

Day 3 — Sacred Valley of the Inca

Travel further into the valley to Ollantaytambo this morning. Peter will join us here to explore the massive stone fortress where the Inca won their greatest victory against the conquistadores. Back at the lodge, meet National Geographic grantee Nilda Callañaupa, who has helped preserve and revive traditional Inca textiles. Learn about her ancient craft and watch a weaving demonstration. After a barbecue lunch, witness the delicate dance of paso horses during a presentation of traditional horsemanship, and enjoy a chance to ride these elegant creatures, known for their unusual gait. During a free afternoon, go for a walk or a horseback ride in the hills, visit a local pottery studio, or indulge in the spa. Gather for a captivating performance of folkloric stilt dancing tonight.

Hotel Sol y Luna (B,L,D)

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Day 4 — Machu Picchu

An exhilarating morning train ride brings us through the valley and then up steep slopes to magnificent Machu Picchu. Isolated among mountain peaks, Machu Picchu is one of the world's most awe-inspiring sites. The sacred citadel was abandoned by the Inca, reclaimed by the jungle, and lost to history until it was rediscovered by Hiram Bingham in 1911 and excavated with support from the National Geographic Society. Discover the mysteries of the "lost city of the Inca" on a guided walk of the citadel and then check into our incredible lodge overlooking the ruins—the only accommodation adjacent to Machu Picchu. This afternoon, return to the site to explore with a guide; head off on your own to see the Inca Bridge, built on a stone path that the Inca cut into a sheer cliff face; or request a private soak in the hotel's hot tub, which is hidden in the surrounding cloud forest and has stunning views of the ruins. Watch twilight descend on Machu Picchu after the crowds have disappeared, and soak up the quiet enchantment of this legendary site.

Sanctuary Lodge (B,L,D)

Day 5 — Machu Picchu/Cusco

Before sunrise, hike up to the Sun Gate, the final checkpoint of the Inca Trail, and watch day break over the timeless ruins of

Machu Picchu. Spend the rest of this morning wandering through the site on your own. After lunch, board the train and ride back to Cusco. Once the capital of the Inca Empire, Cusco is a city of astonishing charm and beauty. Our home here is an exquisite 16th-century monastery just steps from the city square. Take a stroll in the elegant arcaded courtyard and admire the 16th-century antiques and paintings decorating the halls before a special dinner with opera singers in the vaulted dining room.
Hotel Monasterio (B,L,D)

Day 6 — Cusco

Delve into the legacy of the Inca and the Spanish during a full day of exploration in Cusco. Examine the massive stone boulders that make up the 15th-century Sacsayhuaman fortress, site of one of the bloodiest battles in the Spanish conquest. See the Coricancha, a 17th-century cathedral and convent built atop the ruins of an opulent Inca temple. Then enjoy the afternoon at leisure to stroll around this beautiful city or relax at our historic hotel. This evening, experience the music of the Andes at a presentation of indigenous instruments.
Hotel Monasterio (B,L)

Day 7 — Cusco/Lima

After our flight back to Lima, visit the renowned Larco Herrera Museum to view the world's largest private collection of pre-Columbian art. Catch the changing of the guard at the Plaza Mayor before we gather for a farewell lunch at Casa Aliaga, a lovely colonial home. Later, check into our hotel, perched on the waterfront in the elegant Miraflores district, and take the rest of the day to relax or explore on your own.
Miraflores Park Hotel (B,L)

Day 8 — Lima/U.S.

After breakfast, transfer to the Lima airport for the return flight home.
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