

**Title:**

Taking the Train from Cusco to Machu Picchu

**Word Count:**

466

**Summary:**

Besides the strenuous Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, which usually takes 3 days of hard trekking through a beautiful yet arduous landscape, train transport is the best option to travel from Cusco to Machu Picchu. Ok, you can reach the Inca citadel by helicopter, but only the few can afford it -besides, you'll miss the beautiful Andean scenery that comes with the journey.

**Keywords:**

peru, cusco, machu, picchu, travel, train, rail, inca, trail

**Article Body:**

If you are the comfortable-type, train transport is the best option for travelling from Cusco to Machu Picchu. The other common alternative to reach the Lost City of the Incas, the strenuous Inca Trail, involves 3 days of hard trekking through a beautiful yet arduous landscape. And taking a helicopter is most probably not an option, both because it's unaffordable and it misses the beautiful Andean scenery that comes with the land journey.

Besides the strenuous Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, which usually takes 3 days of hard trekking through a beautiful yet arduous landscape, train transport is the best option to travel from Cusco to Machu Picchu. Ok, you can reach the Inca citadel by helicopter, but only the few can afford it -besides, you'll miss the beautiful Andean scenery that comes with the journey.

Train transport to Machu Picchu is indeed the best alternative for the trekking-adverse: not better nor worse, just different. Still charming and attractive, yet much more comfortable.

Rail services to Machu Picchu, Peru's most important tourist site, are managed by Peru Rail, a company of the Orient Express group (which also runs the exclusive Monasterio Hotel in Cusco and Miraflores Park Plaza hotel in Lima). Trains depart from the San Pedro station in Cusco (close to the Huanchac market), and arrive at Machu Picchu city (Aguas Calientes) some 3 hours and 40 minutes later.

The spectacular journey begins at Cusco with a series of switchbacks, or zig-

zags, as they are know locally, that last for half-hour: the trains ascends the Picchu mountain, up to the city's highest point (El Arco or The Arch) and out of Cusco into the village of Poroy.

The train then descends into the Sacred Valley and the foothills of the Andes, along the Urubamba River, passing through a beautiful landscape packed with typical Andean crops and grasslands, herds of llamas, and colourful villages. Many old Inca buildings and archaeological sites can be seen along the journey, in particular the magnificent Wiñay Wayna ruins and Q'ente (hummingbird in Quechua), amidst a lush vegetation where a nearby waterfall attracts oversize hummingbirds and colourful flowers blossom all the time.

In alternative to the Cusco departure, travellers can choose to take the train at Ollaytantambo or Urubamba, in the heart of the Sacred Valley of the Incas. This offers the possibility of staying longer in Machu Picchu -that is, without having to pass the night there-, as the first trains arrive before any other, at 7am, and depart from the Lost City of the Incas after every other train has left, at 6.10pm.

Regarding carriage qualities, you can choose among the plain Backpacker train, the more upscale VistaDome train, or the luxurious Hiram Bigham train (which departs from the village of Poroy, some 20 minutes from Cusco's city centre).