

The Wonders of the Inca Empire

Machu Picchu – Cuzco -Amazon forest

March 20 - 31, 2022

This Morris Columbus Travel tour is a unique experience. In addition to visits to expected sites, such as Cuzco and Machu Picchu, our tour will take us to off-the-beaten track places, and immerse ourselves in the world of the Incas. We visit historic cultural sites, temples and archaeological remains that see few outsiders. We visit UNESCO World heritage sites. The Amazon rainforest, Late Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, The Sacred Valley of the Incas and now, for those eager hikers, we are offering a day trekking the Inca Trail, following the steps of the Incas

Of course, no journey to the empire of the Incas would be complete without a visit to Cuzco and Machu Picchu. Cuzco is nestled high in the Andes Mountains. It is a UNESCO World heritage site. It was the former capital of the Inca Empire. Cuzco still retains its indigenous and colonial heritage and architecture. Machu Picchu, the ancient Inca citadel, boasts more than 150 buildings and sits above the Urubamba River valley. Our one-night stay in the village of Aguas Calientes allows us to enter the Lost Citadel of the Incas twice. It also allows the traveler to add to the tour a hike to the top of the iconic Wayna Picchu Mountain.

This is no ordinary tour. This is an adventure for travelers who want to see, feel, and experience the Inca Culture, its people and heritage. While staying some 5 start hotels. You will journey in what can only be described as a daily *National Geographic* type experiences, with expert guides and some meals included. Join Carlos in this adventure of a lifetime.



Tour Host Carlos Fida: I am a native of Argentina where I held teaching positions at the University of Patagonia and at the Military Academy. I have lectured for university groups on the rich history of pre-Colombian and modern Latin American history.

I immigrated to the United States and after working for five years in the travel industry, I earned my Certified Travel Agent degree in 1985. Since then, I have devoted 39 years of my life as a highly qualified specialist in Latin American travel. This will be number 78 travel to see the wonders of Peru.

Itinerary:

March 20: Los Angeles to Lima

We depart from Los Angeles to Lima on Latam Airlines, the premier airline of South America. Our departure is scheduled at 7:00pm. Your booking agent can schedule your flight from Salt Lake to Los Angeles.

March 21: Lima

We arrive in Lima at 6:35am. Our afternoon tour of Lima includes the highlights of this colonial city, once the capital of the Viceroyalty in northern South America. We visit the Larco Museum, where lunch will be served for our group. Included in this amazing tour is the main square of Lima, surrounded by the government palace, the Metropolitan Cathedral and the other public buildings that shows the glory of the colonial days. Our visit to the San Francisco Convent, built in the 17th century with its catacombs and work of art is more than what you may expect from a city tour. We have an early check in and breakfast included at the Inside Melia Hotel (**B**)

March 22: Lima to Puerto Maldonado – Amazon.

This morning we transfer to the Lima Airport for a short flight to Puerto Maldonado, gateway to the Amazon basin and the Tambopata National Reserve. The best wildlife viewing in the heart of the headwaters of the Amazon. We travel by boat up the Madre de Dios River to our Amazon jungle lodge considered one of the best accommodations in the primeval jungle. The diversity of wildlife is due to its location at the confluence of the lowland Amazon Forest and three other ecosystems. This area is home to at least 13 endangered animals, including the jaguar, giant otter, ocelot, harpy eagle, and giant armadillo. During the two-hour navigation, we may spot caimans, turtles, cormorants and other species that make their home on the river bank. Overnight in our Amazon jungle lodge. After lunch our bilingual guide will take us to a small lake, to observe black caimans and other wildlife species. From this point you will enjoy a spectacular sunset in the Amazon. This really is right out of *National Geographic!* (**B, L, D**)



March 23: Lake Apu Victor and Monkey Island

Today, our morning excursion takes us through the flooded forest to view the flora and fauna. From the top of the observation deck, we can enjoy a magnificent panorama of the lake and the forest. We also go spotting for caimans, macaws and other endemic species that inhabit the Amazon rainforest. Upon returning from the lake, we climb to the observation deck for a complete overview of the area. After lunch we visit Monkey Island, a very special place in the heart of the Madre de Dios River. The Island is the habitat of several species of monkeys and birds. Talk about spectacular sunsets! (**B, L, D**)



March 24: Cocha Perdida (Lost Lake)

The morning starts with the birdsongs of numerous bird living by the lodge. After breakfast we hike through the primeval forest, to reach Cocha Perdida, a place out of "Animal Planet. This morning a boat ride takes us to a parrot clay lick, similar to what you have seen on "Animal Planet." Otters, macaws, tapirs, and bird of multi-colored feathers make their home by the Lost Cocha.

During the afternoon we offer a canoe ride around the lake, while you immerse in the magic of the rainforest. Overnight in our Amazon jungle lodge. This is simply another spectacular day! (**B, L, D**)



March 25: Puerto Maldonado - Cuzco

After breakfast we bid farewell to the Amazon Forest; its flora, and wildlife. Return to Puerto Maldonado, sailing past indigenous villages while spotting wildlife along the way. Return to Puerto Maldonado and transfer to the airport for our flight to Cuzco via Lima, the former capital of the Inca Empire, located in the Andes Mountains. Upon arrival our guide will meet us and transfer to the **Palacio del Inca Hotel**, one of the best hotels in Cuzco, and a former residence of the Conquistador. **(B)**

March 26: Sacred Valley of the Incas.

Our visit to the *El Valle Sagrado*, the Inca “Sacred Valley”, will connect us to the glorious past of the Ollantaytambo fortress and is an area packed with Inca sites, colonial towns, and isolated villages. Ollantaytambo, a former Inca administrative center and gateway to the Antisuyo (the Amazon corner of the Inca Empire), sits at the northern end of the Sacred Valley. At the time of the Spanish invasion and conquest of Peru, Ollantaytambo served as the last stronghold for the Inca resistance at the time. We tour to the quaint village of Pisac and its famous native market, a world-renowned market famous for handmade textiles, articles in gold and silver, handicrafts, and ceramics. Overnight in the heart of the Sacred Valley in a former convent turned into hotel. **(B, L)**



March 27: Machu Picchu

Today we experience the highlight of any journey to Peru: Machu Picchu, the Lost Citadel of the Incas. We take the morning train to Aguas Calientes, a wonderful and exciting village at the base of the Machu Picchu Mountain. Vans are waiting to ferry us to the top of the mountain and Machu Picchu, perched high atop the Andes Mountains. An expert guide will introduce us to the history of the city and its mysterious abandonment. Following the tour and some free time to enjoy the overwhelming majesty of the site. Overnight in the charming village of Aguas Calientes. Our hotel Sumaq a 5-star property is right on the main street, close to native markets and restaurants. **Those who book the Inca Trail will descend from the train a few miles before arriving to Machu Picchu. (B, L)**



March 28: Machu Picchu – Cuzco

Early morning, we ride the bus once again to revisit the magnificent Machu Picchu, the Lost Citadel of the Incas. We visit areas not visited on the previous day. This will also give the opportunity to the travelers to climb the iconic Wayna Picchu, shown in this photo. Reservations must be made months in advance, as the Machu Picchu Park rangers allow no more than 100 visitors per day. After visiting the ruins, we return to Aguas Calientes, pick up our luggage, have a bite in one of the close restaurants and board our train to Cuzco. **(B)**



March 29: City Tour of Cuzco

After breakfast we prepare for a sightseeing of Cuzco, the former Capital of the Inca Empire. Our tour includes a visit to the Temple of the Sun, where the Incas worshiped, the 17th century old cathedral with its amazing treasure in altars made of solid silver and art work of the famous Cuzco School of Painting. A large painting of the Last Supper depicts Christ surrounded by the 12 apostles, but the symbols on the table are typical of the area, not like the Last Supper in Milan. Most of the paintings were done by the native Incas. Also included is a tour of the famous fortress of Sacsayhuaman, where rocks of huge sizes were carved by the natives and fitting on top of each other with incredible precision. The Incas did not have iron tools. The massive walls were shaped by hand using harder rocks. (B-L)



March 30: Cuzco to Lima

Morning free to enjoy a walk in the former capital of the Empire of the Incas. Afternoon transfer to the airport for flight to Lima and Connection to Los Angeles.

March 31: Los Angeles

Arrive in Los Angeles. Connecting flights to our final destination.

Optional Short Inca Trail: \$ 480.00 pp

On this 12 Kilometers / 7.5 Miles Machu Picchu trek, you climb a total of 2,600 ft/800 m from the starting point at the Vilcanota River footbridge (km 104 on the Cuzco/Machu Picchu railroad). With stops for lunch and photography, most hikers complete the walk in 6-7 hours. Chachabamba, an intimate cluster of masonry buildings facing a ceremonial plaza, is an exquisite introduction to the Inca integration of landscape, architecture and religion. You climb gradually up from the river, traversing a grassy hillside with the river curling below. After entering a delightful cloud forest glade, you reach a spectacular waterfall. Many hikers enjoy a refreshing all-natural shower here. Soon after, you come upon the massive lower terrace walls of the Wiñay Wayna ruins. You climb a long stone staircase flanked by ritual baths, leading to upper Wiñay Wayna. From Wiñay Wayna, you merge with the regular Inca Trail for 1.5 hours of mainly level walking to Inti Punku, the Gate of the Sun (8,859 ft/2,700 m). At this point, the highest elevation on the route, you enjoy your first inspirational view of Machu Picchu. Once you reach Machu Picchu, you will have time to take more photos from the viewing platforms above the site. You will arrive in the afternoon, as the archeological area starts to empty of tourists, which gives you the opportunity to take beautiful photos in the afternoon light with fewer people in your shots. Take your time enjoying this magical experience before you take the bus down to Aguas Calientes to check into your hotel.

LAND PACKAGE PRICE: \$ 3,399 pp, Double Occupancy (Includes tips to guides and drivers)
\$ 4,350.00 Single Occupancy (Includes tips to guides and drivers)

ESTIMATED AIRFARE FROM LOS ANGELES:

\$ 1,329.00 including Taxes

DEPOSIT: \$ 500.00 per person at the time of booking

FINAL PAYMENT FOR AIR AND LAND: February 3, 2022

CANCELLATION & REFUND:

In case of cancellation, the following deadlines and penalties apply:

Land & Air package

Prior to February 3, 2022	No Penalty
After February 3, 2022	No Refund

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