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SACRED PERU 15 DAY ESCORTED TOUR 07 -21 AUGUST 2021

As at 03 Dec 2020

After the long global lockdown during the Corona virus pandemic of 2020, and how it has changed our thinking in many ways, we have little desire to visit large busy cities and wander aimlessly around countless buildings, no matter how much they may be a part of the tourism routine. This is why we have again chosen one of our favourite destinations, Peru, for a very special escorted tour in 2021. Here more than almost anywhere else on the planet, we can reconnect with “Pachamama”, Mother Earth and we welcome the opportunity to restore our minds, bodies and souls as we immerse in the Natural and the Spiritual in this land of the ancient Incas.

Our accommodation will be comfortable and sufficient, rather than luxury, thereby allowing us to experience a more realistic way of life in Peru. But the cuisine and the service will be first class! And your Tour Leader from Custom Touring will take care of everything, including luggage control and all the tipping.

If you are of like mind as the world of travel returns to the new normal, join us on a tour you will never forget and fall in love, as we have, with a truly unique destination. (Subject to prevailing travel conditions in 2021.)

Day 1 – Sat 07 Aug: ARRIVAL IN LIMA

Dinner

On arrival at Lima airport, you will be met and transferred to [El Tambo Uno Hotel](#), standard room in the residential suburb of Miraflores.

Welcome dinner this evening, to meet your tour leader and fellow travellers: Peruvian buffet at a local restaurant, including transfers.

Overnight in Lima.

(Pre-tour night in Lima available on request, to allow time to relax and recover from flights.)

Day 2 – Sun 08 Aug: LIMA

Breakfast, Lunch

Half day city tour, including a walking tour through the bohemian district of Barranco. Visit to the Larco Museum, followed by lunch at Café Museo Larco at the museum.

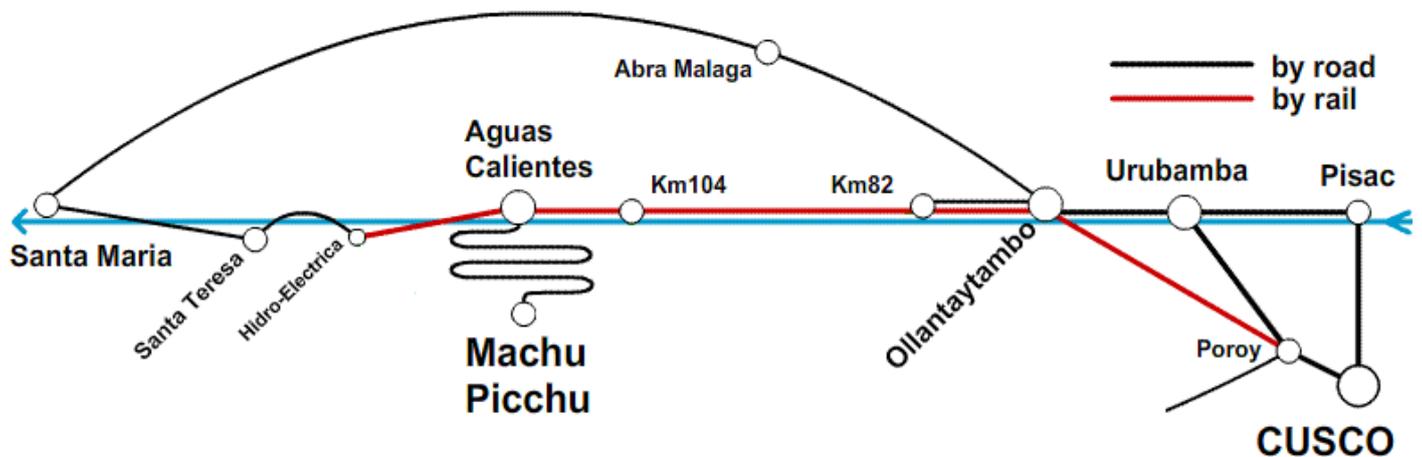
Return to our hotel. Free for dinner this evening.

Day 3 – Mon 09 Aug: LIMA - SACRED VALLEY

Breakfast, Lunch

Early breakfast, followed by transfer to the airport for our flight to Cusco.

Possible flight time 09h40/11h00



We will be met at the airport and transferred to the Chinchero plateau with its mesmerizing views of snow capped mountains, the revered Sacred Apus of the Incas. In Inca mythology, apu was the name given to powerful mountain spirits; they also used apu to refer to the sacred mountains themselves, each mountain having its own spirit going by the name of its mountain domain.

In this area, known as the Sacred Valley, we will visit the Chinchero weavers and discover how they create and dye their alpaca wool, how they make their different natural colours from local plants and insects like the “cochinilla” beetle (cochineal). Their beautiful products are available for purchase in their shop.



Chinchero weavers in their traditional dress

Lunch at a local restaurant.

Visit to the [Ceramic Shop of Pablo Seminario](#) in Urubamba.

Then on to the village of Pisac to check in at the [Pisac Inn](#), standard room.

Free for dinner in the village.

Pisac is an increasingly popular option for travellers looking to escape the crowds and get a little closer to day-to-day life in Peru. Set within a gorgeous part of the Sacred Valley, its cobblestone streets play host to photogenic glimmers of traditional rural life and costume, Incan architecture, and a great market.

Day 4 – Tue 10 Aug: PISAC

Breakfast, Lunch

After breakfast, we depart to the sacred site of Pisac, famous for its Inca ruins, known as Inca Písac, which lie atop a hill at the entrance to the valley. The ruins are separated along the ridge into four groups: P'isaqa, Inti Watana, Qalla Q'asa, and Kinchiraqay. Inti Watana group includes the Temple of the Sun, baths, altars, water fountains, a ceremonial platform, and an Inti Watana, a volcanic outcrop carved into a "hitching post for the Sun", *Inti*. The angles of its base suggest that it served to define the changes of the seasons. Qalla Q'asa, which is built onto a natural spur and overlooks the valley, is known as the Citadel.

After about a 3 hour visit to the sacred site, we will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Free time in the afternoon to visit the Pisac market which is famous for fine art crafts, textiles, and unique gifts. Take your time to explore and find some precious gifts for family and friends. Make sure, when you pack your suitcase, to leave some space for the beautiful products available in Peru!

Free for dinner in the village.

Overnight in Pisac.

Day 5 – Wed 11 Aug: PISAC - OLLANTAYTAMBO

Breakfast, Lunch

Today we will visit a Waldorf inspired school, Kusi Kawsay. Meet the amazing children of Pisac's farmers - bright, inspiring, creative, well-rounded. The Waldorf education has been adapted to Andean life, the Inca, and the Ñusta as well as to the change of seasons. We encourage visitors to leave a donation to show their support for this project.

Lunch at a local restaurant, Orishas Restaurant, one of the best meals in town.

Transfer to Ollantaytambo town where we will spend two nights before going on to Machu Picchu.

Check in to [El Albergue Hotel](#), standard room.



Inca farming terraces and hilltop ruins, Pisac

The town of Ollantaytambo, continuously inhabited since the 13th century, was actually the only place in Peru which defeated the Spanish army (or at least held them back successfully until they returned with more forces) and remains a leading example of Incan architecture. Its location within the Sacred Valley is simply stunning.

Day 6 – Thu 12 Aug: OLLANTAYTAMBO

Breakfast, Lunch

After breakfast, we will visit the Citadel of Ollantaytambo. During the Inca Empire, Ollantaytambo was the royal estate of Emperor Pachacuti who conquered the region and built the town and a ceremonial center. At the time of the Spanish conquest of Perú, it served as a stronghold for Manco Inca Yupanqui, leader of the Inca resistance. Built strategically to stop any invaders, it is the last fortress protecting Machu Picchu. We will enjoy a guided tour of the sacred site, followed by a typical Inca meal called **Pachamanca**. The Inca cooked their meats and vegetables inside the earth by heating up lava rocks and placing the meats on top of them and then covering everything with banana leaves prior to burying it with soil. This way of cooking allows the meats and vegetables to slow simmer and retain their moisture. An Incan delicatessen indeed!



Exploring Ollantaytambo ruins

The remainder of the day at leisure to enjoy Ollantaytambo, a delightfully quaint village where in parts it sounds as though it's raining, because of the town's unique and incredibly well preserved Incan open-draining system which runs straight through the centre of many of its pretty cobblestone streets (if you don't spot them in time, expect wet feet!)

Walking the town's narrow backstreets feels like stepping 200 years back in time and, as Ollantaytambo is so compact, you cannot get lost. Just off the central plaza, the locals' market – Mercado San Pedro - is a joy to walk through for insight into day-to-day life here. Despite no shortage of tourists, Ollantaytambo has remained defiantly authentic.

If you have the energy, take a hike to enjoy the view from The Depositos de Pinkuylluna (old storehouses) which offers a great view over Ollanta (as the locals call it) and its imposing mountains. They are much less visited than the Terraces and Ruins, so offer the opportunity to escape the crowds and work up a sweat at the end of the day! To find the trail, simply go down Lare Street and you will see a set of the stairs and a sign on your right to take you on the trail; the start point is also clearly pinpointed on Google maps if you type in 'Pinkuylluna'. The walk up takes 30-45 minutes, and be careful on the way down!

Free for dinner. Overnight in Ollantaytambo.

Pack a small backpack for our 2 nights at Machu Picchu. No large luggage is allowed on the trains. Our main luggage will be taken on ahead to our hotel in Cusco.

Day 7 – Fri 13 Aug: OLLANTAYTAMBO – MACHU PICCHU

Breakfast

Today is a day to connect with *Pachamama*, as we experience a genuine **Inca Priest 'despacho' ceremony**, a beautiful prayer mandala offering to *Mother Earth*. We should all prepare our intentions and be ready to connect deeply as the priest will bestow a blessing on us, an energetic transmission or spiritual activation to connect us to the Earth and the Cosmos. Inca priests are renowned worldwide, a real ancestral Inca gift to humanity. Expect the unexpected and surrender to this wonderful mystical experience.

This afternoon, we take **PeruRail Expedition train** from Ollantaytambo railway station to Aguas Calientes, (Machu Picchu town) where we stay at the delightful [Gringo Bills Hotel](#), just off the main square. Free for dinner this evening.



PeruRail train from Ollantaytambo arrives in Aguas Calientes

Day 8 – Sat 14 Aug: MACHU PICCHU

Breakfast

After breakfast, together with our local guide, we take the bus from Aguas Calientes up to **Machu Picchu**, a winding mountain track journey of about 25 minutes through the jungle, in 4 x 4 Mercedes Benz buses. On arrival at the top, before passing through the entrance gate, be sure to have a Machu Picchu stamp entered into your passport! Our guide will take us on a tour of the citadel for about 3 hours. There will be plenty of time to absorb the beauty and take photos. Maximum time allowed per visit is 4 hours.



Exploring Machu Picchu citadel

Free for lunch when we arrive back in Aguas Calientes, and an afternoon at leisure in this delightful town. Aguas Calientes is like one big market, so enjoy this free time to explore and find more gifts to take home.

TIP: Stash a cloth shoulder bag in your backpack, to accommodate your purchases!

Day 9 – Sun 15 Aug: MACHU PICCHU - CUSCO

Breakfast

Morning at leisure in Aguas Calientes. There is the possibility of a 2nd visit to Machu Picchu, but without guide. (Subject to prevailing restrictions at Machu Picchu at the time.) Mid to late afternoon, we take the return train from Aguas Calientes to Poroy Station near Cusco, if available, otherwise only as far as Ollantaytambo.

Private transfer to [Prisma Hotel](#), standard room, in Cusco, where we will be reunited with our luggage. Free for dinner. Overnight in Cusco.

Day 10 – Mon 16 Aug: CUSCO

Breakfast, Lunch

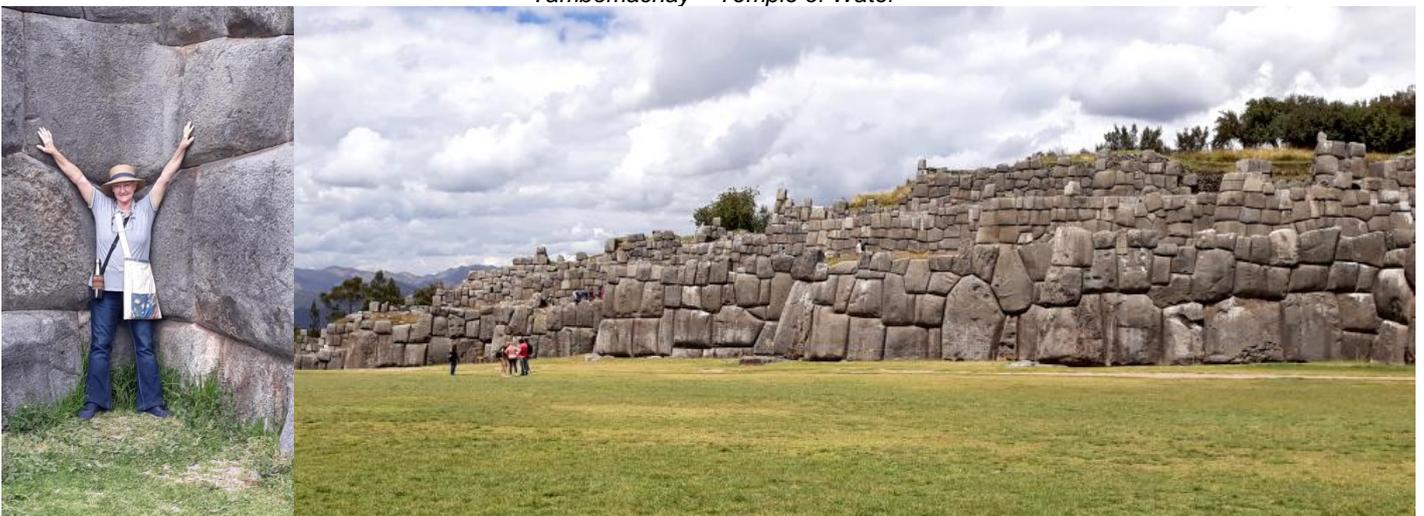
After breakfast, we will visit the local market with our guide, followed by time spent until early afternoon exploring the many Inca ruins in the area: Tambomachay - the Inca temple of the water; Pukapucara - a special ceremonial place for the Incas; the UNESCO World Heritage site of Sacsayhuaman with its gigantic stones.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Free time for the rest of the day and for dinner.

Overnight in Cusco.



Tambomachay – Temple of Water



A small section of Sacsayhuaman

Day 11 – Tue 17 Aug: CUSCO

Breakfast

Free day today to explore the city of Cusco on your own, making use of the included **Boleto Turistico** to access many of the sights in Cusco.

Overnight in Cusco.

Day 12 – Wed 18 Aug: CUSCO – PUNO by train

Breakfast, Lunch

Morning departure to Wanchaq railway station in Cusco for our full day train journey to Puno, about 10 ½ hours. This breath-taking journey through the Andes, aboard the **PeruRail Titicaca Train** takes travellers from the ancient Inca capital of Cusco to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world. As it climbs, the train winds through mountains and valleys, from Andean peaks to the Altiplano (high plains), offering spectacular views of the Huatanay River valleys, traditional Andean villages and picturesque scenes of grazing herds of vicuña and alpaca. The route covered on this journey is considered by many travel magazines to be one of the most beautiful in the world.



Being a gentle slow train journey, you will be able to truly admire the varied landscapes of Peru, soaking up the scenery in style and comfort, either from your seat or from the observation coach.

The train's style is elegant and cozy, with large armchairs, tables covered in white tablecloths and dark-brown panelled wood in 'Pullman Style' decoration from the 1920s. Of the six coaches, four are for table seating, one is a dedicated bar and semi-open air observation coach and there is also a separate coach for luggage.

Our gourmet lunch onboard will showcase fresh, local Andean ingredients.

The train stops at La Raya market, the highest point in the journey at 4,300m above sea level. Here we can stretch our legs, enjoy the scenery and browse in the market.

Live music and traditional dances from the Peruvian Altiplano provides on-board entertainment.



Today we will disconnect from the rest of the world as there is currently no wifi on board.

On arrival at the station in Puno, we will be met and transferred to [La Hacienda Plaza de Armas Hotel](#) in Puno's main square, standard room.

Free for dinner. Overnight in Puno.

Day 13 – Thu 19 Aug: FULL DAY LAKE TITICACA NAVIGATION

Breakfast, Lunch

Early morning departure to the Floating Islands of Uros and Taquile. This will be an amazing journey back in time and a real Cultural experience. The Uros people are descendants of one of the oldest South American native tribes.

Stepping on the reed islands feels like walking on a waterbed.

We will see the houses, the islands and meet the friendly inhabitants.

TIP: Take some cash as they will probably offer their embroidered products for us to buy. As this is one way they have to supplement their income, it is recommended to support this initiative.

Traditional Family Lunch in Taquile Island.

At the end of our day on Lake Titicaca we return to our hotel in Puno for overnight. Free for dinner.



The Islands of the Uros, ladies in typical dress - and a cushion cover being offered.

Day 14 – Fri 20 Aug: ARAMU MURU PORTAL

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we visit the Aramu Muru Portal, the "Gateway to the Gods". The myths of the Inca Culture speak about this big door carved on the rocky mountain as an inter-dimensional portal connecting to the Gods and Star Beings. Travelers bring their offerings to connect with this sacred site. Aramu Muru is a powerful vortex where you should allow yourself to flow and receive the energy of this place.

Lunch at Aramu Muru: Fruits, vegetables, bread, and water.

Return to our hotel in Puno.

Farewell dinner this evening at a local restaurant.

Overnight in Puno.

Day 15 – Sat 21 Aug: PUNO - LIMA

Breakfast

Relaxed morning and transfer to the airport in Juliaca for our flight to Lima and onwards.

Depending on international flight times, it may be necessary to overnight at the Wyndham Airport Hotel in Lima for connection with flights the next day. Rates available on request.



A private post-tour trip to the Peruvian Amazon can be arranged on request, subject to availability.

RATE PER PERSON SHARING, DOUBLE	USD 4055
RATE PER PERSON SHARING, TRIPLE	USD 4003
RATE PER SINGLE	USD 4635

Rate is based on a minimum of 10 passengers. A supplement may be charged for lower numbers.

FLIGHTS

Rates for in-tour flight will be advised closer to the time. To ensure we are all on the same flight, the Lima/Cusco flight will be booked by our operator in Peru. Luggage weight restrictions may apply. The flight from Juliaca (Puno) to Lima at the end of the tour can also be booked by our operator, or alternatively, this one can be included in international round trip tickets which passengers will book themselves.

NOTE re accommodation: As we will have secured hotel space well in advance of our tour, we are confident of availability at our preferred hotels. However, should it become necessary, for whatever reason, to change any of the hotels, we will ensure similar hotels in the same category.

INCLUDED IN RATE

- Private arrival transfer airport/hotel in Lima
- 2 nights accommodation in Lima
- 2 nights accommodation in Pisac
- 2 nights accommodation in Ollantaytambo
- 2 nights accommodation in Aguas Calientes
- 3 nights accommodation in Cusco
- 3 nights accommodation in Puno
- Daily breakfast, 9 lunches and 2 dinners
- Private transport, train to and from Aguas Calientes, bus tickets to and from Machu Picchu, entrance fees to Machu Picchu, private guided tour of the site on first day only, 2nd day without guide (if allowed at the time.)
- PeruRail Titicaca train ticket from Cusco to Puno (*rate is subject to change until tickets are issued*)
- Local, professional English speaking guides per sector
- Services of Custom Touring's tour leader throughout the tour
- Inca Priest Ceremony
- Pachamanca lunch on Day 6
- Tourist Ticket, "Boleto Turistico", for entrance into Ollantaytambo, Pisac, Chinchero, multiple museums in Cusco, and Sacsayhuaman.
- All tips and gratuities for drivers and guides

NOT INCLUDED IN RATE

- Flights Lima/Cusco and Juliaca/Lima.
- International return flights from your home country
- Visas if required
- Travel insurance which is imperative and should include sufficient cover for cancellation and curtailment
- Drinks at included meals
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal expenses
- Early check-in, late check-out
- Extra arrival or departure nights as may be required to tie in with international flight times

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Travel documents: A passport is required, valid for six months after arrival date with two blank pages in the visa section. Citizens of the United States, Canada, Great Britain, the European Union, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia do not currently require visas to enter Peru as tourists - only valid passports.

Health: Travelers who are limiting travel to Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca do not need yellow fever vaccination. However, vaccination is recommended for those who intend to visit any jungle areas of the country. Anti-malarial prophylaxis is recommended if visiting the Peruvian Amazon.

Currency: The currency of Peru is the Nuevo Sol

Exchange Rate Indicator as at December 2020:

US\$ 1.00 = 3.61 S (Peruvian Nuevo Sol); SA Rand (ZAR) R1.00 = 0.24S (1S = R4.23)



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