

Trekking in Incan Footsteps

Adventures in Good Company's General Information

International travel takes some planning, but the rewards are well worth it! This information will answer many of your questions, but please don't hesitate to call Adventures in Good Company if we can be of assistance in any way.

Passport: A valid passport is required for travel in Peru. You will need to present it at the airports before and after your flights. A visa is not required. Be sure to carry a photocopy of your passport in a separate location, for security's sake. It is also a good idea to leave one with somebody at home. If you already have a passport, check to make sure it is still current (they expire every 10 years). Passports can be renewed through the mail. If you are getting a passport for the first time, you must submit your application in person. For information on how to obtain a passport, you can download an application at the State Department's web site (http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/get_840.html) or call the Passport Office at 202-647-0518. Allow at least 6 weeks.

Health: Peru is a very safe place to enjoy on vacation. There are few serious health concerns, and no immunizations are required. However, Adventures in Good Company and the Department of Health recommend that you consult your family doctor concerning what medications, shots or inoculations he or she may recommend. The occasional case of travelers' diarrhea can be rapidly treated with Cipro or other medication that your doctor may suggest. We have a very low incidence of illness on our trips. We eat in only the best restaurants and our own cooks are carefully sanitation trained. We have had good results with Diamox as an aid in acclimatization and alleviation of the effects of altitude.

Language: You can often times find someone who speaks English in the more populated areas, but in the rural areas where we will be traveling, comprehension of English will be rare. Although Spanish is considered "essential" in Peru, Quechua (qhesh-wa), the language of the Incan Empire, is the official one.

Conditioning: Additional aerobic conditioning is unnecessary for anyone who already exercises regularly and is in sufficient condition to walk up and down hills at a moderate pace for an hour at a time while conversing. About two weeks before your trip it would be ideal if you could fit in several longer day hikes, 2 to 4 hours, with your pack packed with all your clothes and equipment for the trip. If you don't already exercise, you should start a moderate exercise program at least a couple of months before your trip. For example, you might start walking 3 or 4 times a week for half an hour, at a pace that is brisk enough to make you breathe deeply. Hills are good for this. Other options are working out at a health club on a stairmaster or treadmill, aerobics classes, cross country skiing or any activity that makes you breathe deeply. Gradually

increase the level of your activity until you can hike up and down hills for an hour at a time. Again, fitting in some 2 to 4 hour day hikes with your pack loaded would be ideal. Please call us if you would like more specific advice on a conditioning program. Being in reasonably good physical condition will definitely enhance your enjoyment of this trip.

Accommodations and meals: This is a safari style quality adventure using pack-stock to carry all gear and camping amenities. Comfortable camps offer delicious meals prepared from fresh meats, grains and vegetables served in our large dining tent with tables and chairs.

One or two persons are assigned a weather-tight, four person sleeping tent. Each day begins with a pan of hot water and coffee or tea served at your tent. Before the evening meal, we enjoy happy hour with popcorn and assorted beverages.

Electrical Appliances: Peru runs on 220V, 60HzHz. Be sure to bring a plug adapter for any electrical items you travel with - plugs have two round pins. Some specialty travel stores carry adapters and can help you chose the right one.

Spending Money: The Peruvian currency is the Nuevo Sol (100 centimos), and is currently equal to 0.29 U.S. dollars. Travelers checks are not as easily converted as cash, nor as convenient as credit cards, but they are a safe way of carrying money. ATMs are convenient, fairly available, and often offer the best exchange rate (check with your bank to make sure that yours will work there). Visa is widely accepted; and other cards are pretty much so. Once we leave Cuzco you will need cash. Credit cards are not as frequently accepted in rural areas, only in towns. You will need money for snacks, beverages, personal excursions, gifts, and other items of a personal nature.

Weather: May through September is considered the best time to visit the mountains (lucky us!). The temperatures can vary significantly, depending on what elevation we're at. It can get into the 30s at night and be in the 70s during the day. When we descend into the cloud forest temperatures can rise into the 80s. This is normally the dry season, but it can rain (or snow). Please come prepared.

Packing: Traveling light enhances the feeling of freedom on vacation. However, do not forget your *raingear*. You will need a daypack to carry water, raingear and snacks when hiking. There can be pickpockets in crowded markets, and you may want to carry most of your money in a moneybelt or neck wallet when in those settings. Although Peru is generally safe, we recommend leaving valuables at home.

Getting there: Wednesday the 5th will probably be a travel day from home and you may arrive on an overnight flight to Lima, especially if traveling from North America, and connect directly to Cusco early Thursday morning. On your way home, flights from Cusco to Lima arrive between 8:30 AM and 2:00 PM. Depending on your connecting flight schedule home, you have several options. U.S. bound flights seems to leave either late at night or early in the morning.

You may choose to spend the night in Lima as it will help you arrive feeling more refreshed. If you do, we can reserve a hotel room for you at the Hotel Manhattan for \$55/double and \$40/Single with airport transportation \$100 per person each way. Your flight will be met, so this can be quite convenient.

Tipping Guidelines

Tipping at the end of the trip is optional. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward him or her for their efforts, a suggested rule of thumb is US \$5-\$10 per person, per day. Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it to the guides at the last shared meal.

Suggested bibliography:

1) **Lost City of the Incas: The Story of Machu Picchu and its Builders.** Hiram Bingham. Orion, London.2001.

A first-rate tale of adventure by the man who rediscovered Machu Picchu in 1911. This classic account is a gripping story of exploration, archaeology and natural history -- and still an outstanding overview of the site itself. Originally published in 1952, the book is still an excellent account, not only of the expedition but also of the site itself.

2) **Realm of the Incas.** Max Milligan 2001

A spirited, photographic tour of the culture, monuments and festivals of the Inca. Milligan, who has traveled widely through Peru, goes beyond the typical pictures of Cusco and Machu Picchu in this stunning collection of photographs, all taken in natural light.

3) **The Conquest of the Incas,** John Hemming. Hartcourt Brace 1970

A masterful, prize-winning history of the Inca struggle against the Spanish invasion. This classic account, by one of the best writers on South America, brings together wide-ranging scholarly material in the interests of telling a good story.

4) **The Incas And Their Ancestors,** Michael Moseley. Thames and Hudson, 1993.

An outstanding illustrated survey of the archaeology of the Inca, Moche and Nasca civilizations. With hundreds of color illustrations and line drawings, it's an in-depth look at the ancient cultures and history of Peru. A great general introduction

5) **The Machu Picchu Guide Book,** Ruth Wright and Alfredo Valencia

A compact, detailed guide to Machu Picchu, with chapters on each section of the site, many photographs and useful site diagrams of individual buildings and sectors. With information on new discoveries and research, a section on wildlife, and a full-color depiction of the city as it may have appeared during a solstice celebration in 153

6) **The White Rock, An Exploration of the Inca Heartland** by Hugh Thomson. Author, explorer and archaeologist Thomson recounts 20 years spent journeying throughout the Andes of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador in search of lost Inca cities. His engaging account is a pleasing mix of discovery, colorful personalities, history and archaeology

7) **A Field Guide to the Birds of Peru**

A comprehensive field guide to the birds of Peru, featuring 127 color plates and illustrating almost 1,800 species, focusing on their identification, habitat, and distribution.

8) **Footprint Cuzco & the Inca Heartland Handbook**

Ben Box and Stephen Frankham

Comprehensive and up-to-date, this exceptional guide covers Cuzco and surroundings, including Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley, Tambopata, Manu Park and Lima in detail.

Some interesting websites:

www.lonelyplanet.com can usually give pretty good basic information.

<http://www.geographia.com/peru/> is very similar to lonely planet.

http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/latinamerica/south/sites/machu_picchu.html will give you an overview of Machu Picchu along with some great photos.

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/6502/cuzco.htm> gives a bit of information on Cuzco, as well as Machu Picchu and some pictures