THE CONNECTICUT Audubon SOCIETY

2027

EcoTravel

Overnight Natural History Tours and Day Trips

Peru: Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley

April 9 – 21, 2027



Overview

Our journey begins in the “White City” of Arequipa in Southern Peru, dominated by the stunning conical “El Misti” mountain. At 8,530 feet, Arequipa is the ideal place to begin your acclimatization to the rarefied air of the Andes. You can explore Arequipa’s fine plaza and ice mummy museum or visit the many alpaca textile shops. We’ll then head off through remote villages to the impressive Colca Canyon and the delightful Colca Lodge. Here, we have the chance to see Andean Condors over one of the world’s deepest canyons, hike to local ruins, or just relax in some of the finest hot springs imaginable.

A spectacular drive through the altiplano brings us to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca. This busy lakeside town is the base for our day trip on Lake Titicaca. We’ll take a private boat to visit the floating reed islands of Uros and beyond to Taquile Island, renowned for their ancient way of life, weavings, and spectacular views.

We’ll then take one of the world’s classic railway journeys from Puno across the high plains and spend a day exploring Cusco, the former Inca Capital—a wonderful place to dive into, full of culture, history, good restaurants, and fun nightlife.

Now fully acclimatized, our next adventure takes us to the local ruins surrounding Cusco, through the Sacred Valley of the Incas, and to the Inca Fortress town of Ollantaytambo before moving on to Machu Picchu. After a night in the colorful town of Aguas Calientes, we spend a whole day exploring the awe-inspiring citadel of Machu Picchu, then return to Cusco and the airport for flights home.

Cover photo of Machu Picchu is graciously provided by Ava Michelangeo/CT Audubon.

Climate

Temperature and Season

April brings about the end of the rainy season in Peru, with days typically being partly cloudy to sunny but with rain still a daily possibility. Temperatures at elevation are typically mild, ranging from lows in the mid 40s during the evenings to highs around upper 60s and lower 70s. Due to the high elevation, sun protection is suggested regardless of weather.

Elevation

7,500 – 12,500 feet above sea level

Accomodation

Hotels vary between 4- and 5-star level, and are equipped with modern amenities including wifi, air conditioning, and hot water. With exquisite beauty all around, wildlife, especially birds, can be common.

Pace and Physical Difficulty

The most strenuous portions of the trip will be understanding one's own abilities in regards to elevation. The trip is designed to slowly acclimatize everyone, starting at lower elevations before moving to the highest points around Cusco. Everyone should feel comfortable walking at their own pace, making sure not to overexert. If a break is needed, please let your local guide and escort know. Many of the hikes that traverse over variable terrain are optional, while most walks are over relatively flat surfaces.



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Itinerary

Day 1
We'll depart our airports on overnight flights towards Peru.

Night: In the air

Day 2
When you exit the customs hall, look for your transfer guide, who'll be holding a sign with our names on it. They'll then take us to the check-in desk for our onward flight. At the desk, we'll present our passports, tickets, and luggage. After receiving our boarding passes, we'll head upstairs to the departures area. The transfer guide is there to assist throughout the process. Be sure to find the gate in plenty of time, since flights are not announced and gate allocations may not follow those written on the boarding pass.

The flight from Lima to Arequipa follows the coast before heading past volcanoes when landing. The journey takes just over an hour. We'll meet our local guide on arrival in the "White City" of Arequipa. This is a beautiful city to explore, and the ideal place to start acclimatizing to the rarefied air of the Andes. Arequipa boasts the magnificent marble Plaza de Armas, quaint old town streets, the picturesque Santa Catalina Monastery (included in your tour), and the Juanita the Ice Maiden museum (optional). Alpaca wool is Arequipa's finest export, and there are plenty of opportunities for treating oneself to some stunning textiles.

Night: Hotel Casa Andina Select Plaza De Armas Arequipa
Meals: D

Day 3
Driving out of Arequipa, we'll enjoy spectacular views of the mountains surrounding the city before climbing high into the Andes and descending into the amazing Colca Canyon. One of the world's deepest canyons, it's home to a fascinating local culture, different from any other location we'll visit. We'll spend the night at the charming Colca Lodge. Soaking in the world-class hot springs is the prime activity here, closely followed by enjoying one of their spa services overlooking the river.

Night: Colca Lodge
Meals: BLD

Day 4
An early morning drive to Cruz del Condor is where we'll search of one of the world's largest birds, the **Andean Condor**, which nests on the cliffs. From here, we'll return to the lodge while making several stops to visit local towns and make the most of the many beautiful photo opportunities along the way. After lunch, we can either hike to the nearby pre-Inca ruins, explore the Yanque Museum, or have a tour of the unique native culture and weavings in the area. You could also take advantage of the many activities available at the lodge and make the most of the fantastic spa facilities.

Night: Colca Lodge
Meals: BLD


Arequipa © locoterrolr


Colca Canyon © world-wide-gifts.com CC BY-SA 2.0


Andean Condor © Charles J. Sharp CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 5

On a spectacular drive through the high Andes, passing beautiful lakes, Vicuña herds, and huge vistas, we'll travel through Juliaca to our destination of Puno. En route, we can visit the Silustani Ruins, whose fascinating circular burial chambers predate the Incas. The amazing stonework of this early civilization was clearly a strong influence on the famous Inca stone masons. In Puno, we'll check into our hotel and have time to explore this interesting town. Don't miss the chance to barter for locally hand-knitted woolen goods!

Night: Hotel Casa Andina Premium Puno
Meals: BLD



Silustani Ruins © bobistraveling CC BY-SA 2.0

Day 6

Lake Titicaca is a photographer's dream: its clear sapphire water and astounding blue skies are mesmerizing. A full day's boat trip ensures that we'll see all the sights in safety and style. The famous floating reed islands of Uros and the ancient traditions and weavings of Taquille Island are explained and viewed at leisure. We'll hike to the top of the island (optional), rewarded by spectacular views of Lake Titicaca.

Night: Hotel Casa Andina Premium Puno
Meals: BLD



Lake Titicaca © Diego Delso, delso.photo, License CC BY-SA

Day 7

A transfer from the hotel will take us to the nearby Puno train station, where we'll board and travel across the high plains to Cusco. This classic Orient Express journey, repeatedly voted "one of the top-ten railway journeys of the world," cuts across the formidable Peruvian Altiplano, whose high plains are rich with llama herds, glimpses of the rare wild vicuña, and mountain villages where the resilient locals keep their communities with pride and good humor despite the harsh environment.

Night: Antigua Casona San Blas
Meals: BLD

Day 8

Today, we'll have an expert at our disposal to show us some of the highlights of Cusco. The day can be customized to the group's desires. A suggested itinerary is: First, visit the impressive site of Sacsayhuaman. Here, huge stone ramparts surround a beautiful grass amphitheater. Once the scene of fierce battles, it now hosts the recreation of traditional Inca ceremonies. Next is the Inca water temple of Tambo Machay. With intricately carved water channels, it's thought to have been used both for ritual cleansing and for the worship of water. From here, we'll return to Cusco, stopping along the way at other historical sites. Once in town, we may visit the Plaza de Armas and its impressive cathedral. Qoricancha Temple, once home to life-sized statues of solid gold, is another popular option. If time permits, we can visit one of the bustling markets, full of tropical fruits, or visit the San Blas artisan district.

Night: Antigua Casona San Blas
Meals: BLD



Cusco © Diego Delso, delso.photo, License CC BY-SA

Day 9
Departing early in the morning, our first stop is the picturesque Andean village of Pisac, famous for its daily handicraft market. We'll have the option to visit a traditional bakery to try freshly baked empanadas. Afterwards, we'll head along the Urubamba River towards Ollantaytambo, stopping for lunch in one of the many local restaurants. In Ollantaytambo, we can climb the steps of its impressive fortress for a fantastic view over the Sacred Valley. The building remains half finished, as it was here that the Incas were defeated in their last great battle with the Spanish before they fled to the jungle of Vilcabamba. In the late afternoon, we'll take the train to Machu Picchu Pueblo.

Night: Hotel Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo
Meals: BLD


Machu Picchu © Ava Michelangelo/CT Audubon

Day 10
In the early morning, we'll set off to the fabled "Lost City of the Incas," Machu Picchu. A short bus ride (or hike) takes us directly to the ruins, where we'll have an extensive walking tour that explains the fascinating history of the Incas. If time permits, travelers may wish to explore farther to the Inca Bridge, walk back up the Inca Trail to the Sun Gate, or try the strenuous climb to the top of Huayna Picchu for an awe-inspiring condor's eye view of Machu Picchu. This two-hour round trip is up steep, exposed steps and not for the faint of heart. (Because of permit restrictions, please let us know when booking if you want to climb Huayna Picchu or Machu Picchu Mountain). After lunch, there will be free time to explore. Some may prefer to just relax and take in the marvelous location. When the group is ready, the bus will take everyone back down to the town of Machu Picchu.

Night: Hotel Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo
Meals: BLD


Machu Picchu © Ava Michelangelo/CT Audubon

Day 11
Today we'll have a free day in Machu Picchu Pueblo. This interesting town boasts hot spring pools, an extensive artisan market, an interesting museum, orchid gardens, massage services, and a range of restaurants and bars. It's a great place to hang out and watch the international tourists go by. There's also an optional 6-mile hike to Mandor Waterfall. This was the site of Hiram Bingham's base camp and boasts an orchid garden and sightings of exotic cloud forest birds. In the afternoon, we'll catch a train to Cusco and on to the hotel for a Celebration Dinner.

Night: Antigua Casona San Blas
Meals: BLD

Day 12
In the morning, the group will transfer to Cusco airport in time for our flights home.

Meals: B


Machu Picchu © Ava Michelangelo/CT Audubon

Day 13
We'll arrive back home in the early morning, full of great memories from one of the most famous archaeological sites on the planet!

General Information

Tour Cost: $8,898.
Members: $8,398.

The above cost is based upon a minimum number of eight paying participants traveling together. If there are fewer participants, there will be a small group supplement. Per person Tour Cost is based on two people sharing a room.

Single Room Supplement: $1,200.

All rates are calculated at the time of publication and are subject to change due to conditions out of our control (i.e. hotel rates). All passengers will be notified if changes in pricing occur.

Tour Includes:

Accommodations are based on double occupancy, one or two beds. Meals are included as outlined in the itinerary section (B=Breakfast/L=Lunch/D=Dinner). Additional charges for meals may apply if needs are out of the standard offerings. Entrance fees to national parks and sightseeing as specified in the itinerary.

Not Included:

Taxes; costs of obtaining passports and visas; airfare; baggage fees; personal expenses such as room service, beverages, laundry, gratuities for the local guide and housekeeping; personal communications; airport taxes; tax increases or new taxes charged for services that were not taxed at the time the booking was made; excess mileage carried out at the request of the passenger; sightseeing or meals not specified in the itinerary; personal insurance coverage (strongly recommended); and transfers to and from your home airport.



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Machu Picchu © Ava Michelangelo/CT Audubon

Leader

Lucretia Bingham studied writing at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York. Upon graduation, she went to Los Angeles, where she made a living as a free-lance travel writer and photographer. Her credits include publication in *Vanity Fair*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Travel and Leisure*, *Islands*, and *Saveur*. One of her food pieces was published in an anthology of the best food writing in 2005. She was a frequent contributor, for many years, to both the Los Angeles Times Magazine and their travel section. At an early age she yearned to follow in her grandfather's footsteps. In 1911, Hiram Bingham brought Machu Picchu to the world's attention. Many years later, her dream was realized when *Conde Nast Traveler* sent her to Peru to literally follow the path he had taken when he found the vine enshrouded site. Since then, she has returned many times, once to christen the luxury Hiram Bingham train, and multiple times as a leader for The Connecticut Audubon Society EcoTravel.



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General Terms & Conditions

Reservations

Early reservations with deposit are essential to guarantee your booking. A **$2,000 deposit**, **per person**, applicable to final payment, is required to reserve space on this trip. Reservations made within 120 days of departure require full payment along with the formal Registration Forms. Final payment for programs is due 120 days prior to departure. Payments can be made by personal check, money order, certified check, or a cashier's check.

Rates and Fares

Prices are accurate as available at the time of publication. Prices do not include airfare unless otherwise stated. The Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) reserves the right to alter quoted prices to reflect changes in airline fares, land service, or currency exchange rates. In the event that the number of participants is below the minimum required for the quoted price, a small group surcharge may be added.

Cancellation and Insurance

At the time the EcoTravel Office receives written notice that you must cancel your trip, the following cancellation fees will apply: Prior to 120 days from departure, your payments will be refunded minus **$500 per person**. At 120 days and less, no refund is granted. NOTE: In addition to cancellation fees, airline tickets and deposits required to guarantee hotel rooms may be nonrefundable. The purchase of a general travel insurance plan covering baggage, accident/life, and trip cancellation is highly recommended. Give us a call and we can put you in touch with those providers. CAS reserve the right, if registration is insufficient or other reasons out of our control, to cancel, postpone, or offer the trip with a small group supplement. In the event that CAS cancels or postpones, those with reservations will be notified as soon as possible and a credit of payments will be held on file. The Connecticut Audubon Society is not responsible for the refund or credit of additional expenses incurred in preparation for a trip. Any "delay" or "postponing" of departure by tour participants is considered a cancellation and cancellation parameters will be apply relative to the 120-day window. There are no exceptions.

Responsibility

Payment of deposit represents and acceptance of the following terms and conditions by the purchaser: The Connecticut Audubon Society, its affiliates, and all cooperating airlines and agencies act only in the capacity of agents in all matters of transportation and tour operations, and their liability is limited to the terms of the airline tickets and land accommodation contracts. They are not responsible for any delays, inconveniences, accidents, expense, or mishap of any kind whatsoever resulting entirely or in part from the negligence of others or from causes beyond their control. They can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, riot, war, pandemic, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses must be borne by the passengers, as the tour rate provides for arrangements only as describe in the tour brochure. The right is reserved to change tour leaders, substitute hotels, of similar category, and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by unforeseen circumstances. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely. No refund can be made for unused hotel rooms, meals, and sightseeing tours unless arrangements are made at time of booking. The right is reserved to decline any person as a tour member for any reason which affects the operation of the tour or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of the other tour members. Any refund of the recoverable land tour services in the limit of The Connecticut Audubon Society and its affiliates' liability.

To make a Reservation:

Send the above stated deposit to hold your reservation. Nonmembers, please add $28 (65+), $45 (single), or $58 (family) for your annual membership and to take advantage of the member discount.

Send your name(s), address, phone number, email address, name of the trip, your deposit, and membership fee (if applicable) to:

The Connecticut Audubon Society EcoTravel
PO Box 903
Essex, CT 06426
(860) 767-0660
ecotravel@ctaudubon.org
www.ctaudubon.org/ecotravel