



*Machu Picchu - Salkantay Route*

## TRIP ITINERARY

Mountains are the temples of Andean culture, the locus of life, the source of water, food, and spirit. The arduous but rewarding Salkantay Trek carries you via pristine mountain country, over a 15,000-foot pass, and down undisturbed valleys to the foot of Machu Picchu. Set amid the deeply-incised Vilcambamba range, this high-altitude lodge-to-lodge hike is a premier entry into the footloose, uncrowded Peru of old, with breathtaking views of the Inca empire's heartland. After a total 35 miles of solitary trekking, you arrive, weary and elated, in the Machu Picchu valley.





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### DAY 1

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A group briefing and dinner is a chance to get to know your guides and fellow guests, and address equipment and other questions.

### DAY 2

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Cuzco was “the navel of the world,” the Incas said. Walking a variety of urban archaeology sites and visiting the most important temples and landmarks in and around the city will serve as both historic orientation and acclimatization to altitude.

### DAY 3

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**Elevation Range:** 11,021ft-12,690ft

**Hiking Time** 4 hours

Early start by road to Mollepata and the beginning of your trek, a 3-hour acclimatization hike into Soraypampa valley, with picturesque views of the startlingly-steep 20,500-ft Salkantay mountain, highest in this range. After a section of Camino Real, or Royal Road, you arrive in late afternoon at the Salkantay Lodge. Rated easy-to-moderate, this hike takes 4 hours.



## DAY 4

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**Elevation (ft)** 12,690-13,845

**Hiking Time** 4 hours

A high-altitude training day, with an ascent straight from the lodge to Humantay Lake, reached by a half-day hike that continues your acclimatization and fitness conditioning. The reward for this moderate trek is a stunning turquoise lake and the sight of your first tropical glacier. Return to the lodge for lunch, and rest up for the mighty pass tomorrow. Second night in Salkantay Lodge.

## DAY 5

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**Elevation (ft)** 13,845 to 15,213ft to 12,812ft

**Hiking Time** 8 hours

An early start for a big day. Ascending through unusual plateaus dotted with boulders left behind by an extinguished river, you switchback up to the Salkantay Pass, at 15,213 feet the highest point of the week. (Watch for condors.) Building on your acclimatization hikes, this is a challenging 8-hour excursion, with a hot field lunch after the pass, and finishes through bucolic rolling hills and wetlands at the Wayra Lodge, located at a comparatively comfortable elevation

## DAY 6

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**Elevation (ft)** 12,812ft to 9,414ft

**Hiking Time** 4 hours

Following the Salkantay river, continue your descent from high pampas into a verdant green cloud forest where three rivers meet. At 6 miles, this hike finishes at the Colpa Lodge, on a dramatic promontory over the river.

## DAY 7

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**Elevation (ft)** 9,414ft to 7,003ft

**Hiking Time** 5-6 hours

The Santa Teresa River valley ushers you from cold glacier streams down to fruit orchards and Amazonian warmth, and in the afternoon a short vehicle transfer extends your trek onto the Llactapata trail and, after a total of 6 hours of hiking, the Lucma lodge (7,003 ft.) for an overnight. Today is challenging for the distance involved.

## DAY 8

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**Elevation (ft)** 7,003ft to 8,974ft to 6,627ft

**Hiking Time** 4-6 hours

During a 2-3 hour climb up a path mostly comprised of original Inca steps, you will get a sense of what hiking through the rainforest would be like. A lush treeline creates green canopies overhead and the constant sound of rushing water suggests that the river is still nearby. Your first milestone today will be the top of the peak, the last one before you reach the Aobamaba River valley that connects you to Machu Picchu. When you arrive at the ruins of Llactapata below the Llactapata Pass you will be delighted to see a southeast view of the “back” of the Machu Picchu ruins, a sight few travelers ever get a chance to admire. At this point you will also take a short break to explore Llactapata, and then have lunch a bit farther down the trail in a meadow with panoramic views. Rainforest and coffee plantations finish out the trek and you will take an unusual 1-hr train ride into the “back side” of Machu Picchu, and a stay at the the Inkaterra Pueblo hotel, in an oasis of green and rushing streams



## DAY 9

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**Elevation (ft)** 6,627ft to 7,972ft

At dawn, you begin your journey to Machu Picchu with a short and rollicking uphill bus ride. Then, it happens: You walk into the life-changing experience of seeing this lost city for the first time. Awe at the expanse of ruins in this mystical, improbable setting, as an expert guide walks you through principal sites and place the whole in context, but also leave time for solo examination. As you enter the “Sanctuary” (as locals refer to it), the morning sun rises over the iconic Sun Gate and washes the structures and terraces with resplendent light. Prepare to be awed by the imposing and skillful architecture of the Watchtower, the Temple of the Sun, and the royal Inca residences, among many others. Take a moment to quietly sit and listen to the wind...or to meditate and absorb the mystical energy that envelops you. Your imagination will soar as you contemplate the history of Machu Picchu and its mysterious origins. Some may even choose a hike to Huayna Picchu (if tickets are available), the iconic towering mountain

often seen in photographs, for dramatic views that stretch from the Urubamba River valley to the edge of the Amazon Jungle. Either way, you will be touched by a feeling of peace and rejuvenation which will linger even as you journey back to civilization. Overnight at Inkaterra Pueblo Hotel again.

## DAY 10

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Departure by train & vehicle for Cusco airport for flight to Lima and connection home.



