



passports

educational group travel

Yuletide in Peru

International Teacher Convention

departing on December 26, 2011

5 days

It only takes 50 bonus points to reserve your spot!

The celebration of Christmas in Peru is one of the most exciting times to visit this beautiful country. People from all over the world fly in to join the Peruvians in their merrymaking during this exciting week, which extends from Christmas to New Years. In fact, these joyous celebrations - the parties, dances, and processions continue throughout Peru until January 6 when they celebrate the Epiphany.

Christmas celebrations in Peru are a combination of traditions brought over from Spain and the rich traditions of the Native American experience. There are parties and fiestas everywhere and homes are overflowing with hospitality. Homes and churches are decorated with Christmas colors, bows, and wreaths and the open air Christmas markets throughout the country are bustling with vendors and customers shopping for bargains in the summer sunshine.

Those of us from the Northern Hemisphere probably associate Christmas with pine trees, mistletoe and cold weather. However, December is the first month of summer in Peru with the first day of summer arriving just before Christmas, on December 21. So, while students in the northern hemisphere are on their Christmas or winter break, in Peru they are actually on summer break.



Basic Inclusions

Services of a specially-trained **passports** courier throughout • Accommodations in centrally-located four-star hotels • Rooming on a double basis

Overnights

Urubamba Valley 1 • Cuzco 2 • Aboard flight 1

Meals

Three breakfasts • Two dinners

Transit Summary

Round-trip transportation on scheduled airline • Flight to Cuzco on Days 1-2 • Airport arrival transfer on Days 1-2 • Airport departure transfer on Days 5-6 • Flight to Lima on Days 5-6

Tour Highlights

Arrival Urubamba Sacred Valley via

Lima and Cuzco

Flight Lima-Cuzco

Lecture: *The Rise and Fall of the Inca Empire* by Jean Jacques Decoster, Ph.D

Coach excursion to Ollantaytambo

Visit to Ollantaytambo Fortress

Welcome reception with

Andean tapas

Full-day city sightseeing in Cuzco

Services of a specially-trained full-day local guide in Cuzco

Visits to the Incan sites of Qorinkancha, Qenko and Sacsayhuaman

Depart Cuzco via Lima

Flight Cuzco-Lima

Half-day city sightseeing in Lima

Entrance to the Larco Herrera Museum

Farewell Dinner

Yuletide in Peru

• We are now required to obtain all travelers' passport numbers, country of origin, date of issue and date of expiration before any airline or hotel reservations in Peru can be made on your behalf.

DAYS 1-2: ARRIVAL LIMA, CUZCO, URUBAMBA SACRED VALLEY, LECTURE, EXCURSION TO OLLANTAYTAMBO FORTRESS, WELCOME RECEPTION

Your destination is the "Land of the Incas." It's an easy airplane flight south (no jet lag) to the capital city of Peru, Lima.

Board a flight to the 11,444-foot-high city of Cuzco, which was once the capital of the Incan Empire.

Board your coach for the breathtaking drive to the Urubamba Sacred Valley, which was the very heart of the Incan Empire.

The valley is fed by numerous rivers and streams which descend through adjoining valleys and gorges, and contains many impressive archaeological remains and villages. This very peaceful valley enjoys a pleasant climate perfectly suited for farming, of which the Incas took full advantage. Ancient ruins, gentle mountain slopes and scattered farming towns define the valley creating a veritable sightseeing paradise. A trip to Peru's Sacred Valley is truly a rewarding experience that leaves a firm impression on the soul. Besides the stunning scenery that the Andes Mountains provide, the valley boasts raging rivers, friendly locals, and the omnipresent mysticism that an abundance of Inca ruins seem to create.

Lecture • Enjoy a lecture entitled *The Rise and Fall of the Inca Empire* by Jean Jacques Decoster, Ph.D, who is one of the world's leading experts on the Cultural Anthropology, Ethnology and Ethnohistory of the Andes. His participation in development issues over the years has always involved aspects of indigenous cultures: the relationship between native groups and their environment; socio-economic conditions of indigenous groups; and bilingual

education in rural indigenous communities. In Cusco, he is Professor of Inca History and Colonial History at the Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad del Cusco.

Excursion to Ollantaytambo • Visit Ollantaytambo, whose snowcapped mountain surroundings make for a most picturesque setting. Having the chance to see the Ollantaytambo ruins is a perfect compliment to visiting Machu Picchu itself. Because of its strategic location in the Sacred Valley, Ollantaytambo became a prime center within the Inca Empire. Among the Ollantaytambo ruins that are the most visually spectacular are the rising terrace walls of the Ollantaytambo Fortress, which served as an imposing means of defense - something that would come in handy upon the arrival of the Spanish Conquistadors.

Welcome Reception • Tonight, enjoy a welcome reception to meet **passports** staff and fellow organizers. Sample Andean tapas which often include marinated mushrooms, chicken empanadas, grilled shrimp and a variety

of styles of ceviche, a typically Peruvian dish made from fresh raw fish marinated in citrus juices such as lemon or lime and spiced with chili peppers.

*Meals included: Welcome Reception
Overnight: Urubamba Valley*

DAY 3: TRAVEL TO CUZCO, OPTIONAL MACHU PICCHU, CUZCO

Board your coach and return to Cuzco.

Excursion to Machu Picchu Optional • Sit back and enjoy one of the world's most spectacular train journeys (from high, cold early morning plains down to lush jungle vegetation) to the citadel of Machu Picchu. Sit on the left-hand side for the best views. Machu Picchu is a pre-Columbian 15th-century Inca site located 8,000 ft. above sea level. Most archaeologists believe that Machu Picchu was built as an estate for one of the Incan emperors. Often referred to as "The Lost City of the Incas", it is perhaps the most familiar icon of the Inca World. Since the site was never known to the Spanish during their conquest, it has been



DAY 3: Machu Picchu



DAYS 5-6: Plaza de Armas, Lima

DAYS 5-6: FLIGHT TO LIMA, CITY SIGHTSEEING, FAREWELL DINNER, DEPARTURE

Since your international return flight home from Peru does not leave until very late in the evening, your last day in Peru will be spent in Lima.

After bidding farewell to Cuzco, arrive mid-morning in Lima in time for an early lunch and some shopping at one of the only shopping centers in the world built along side an ocean cliff which offers simply stunning views of the Pacific. The Larcomar has indoor and outdoor shopping and dining areas as well as a cinema, bowling lanes, a food court, and a museum.

A sightseeing tour introduces some of the city's main attractions. You'll see the Cathedral, *Plaza Mayor*, and the Government, Archbishop and *Torre Tagle* Palaces. Then drive through Lima's modern residential areas which include *San Isidro* with its olive grove, *Huaca Huallamarca*, *Miraflores* with its central park and *Parque del Amor*. **Farewell**

Dinner • Tonight you'll be treated to a Farewell Dinner at the world famous *Casa Aliaga* restaurant, which occupies a private home in Lima's fashionable Miraflores district. **Depart Lima** •

After dinner, fly home during the night, sleeping well no doubt after a festive dinner, and arriving back home on Saturday morning.

*Meals included: Breakfast, Farewell Dinner
Overnight: Aboard flight*

especially well preserved and is relatively intact. Machu Picchu was voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in a worldwide Internet poll.

A buffet lunch at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge is included. The lunch buffet offers a wide variety of International and Peruvian dishes, a selection of salads, main courses and desserts.

Board a train bound for Cuzco.

*Meals included: Breakfast
Overnight: Cuzco*

DAY 4: CUZCO CITY SIGHTSEEING

Enjoy extensive sightseeing in Cuzco which is the oldest continuously populated city on the South American continent. This morning's focus is on ruins - some of the many remnants from those glory days of empire, none more impressive or important than the Qorinkancha ruins, which today form the base of the colonial church and convent of Santa Domingo. One of the richest and most important temples of the Inca empire (the temple walls were lined with some 700 solid gold sheets), all that remains of Qorinkancha today is the extraordinary stonework.

Other ruins explored will include Qenko and Sacsayhuaman. Because of its location high above Cuzco and its immense terrace walls, Sacsayhuaman is frequently referred to as a fortress and, when recaptured by the Spanish Conquistadors, played a decisive role in the eventual Spanish conquest of the region.

Later in the afternoon, continue your sightseeing in Cuzco. Landmarks include *Plaza del Regocijo*, *Plaza de Armas*, the Old Town with its very narrow streets, and the cathedral which is one of the most beautiful in the Western Hemisphere with its mixture of Spanish Renaissance architecture and native stone masonry.

Local Guide • A full-day local guide, well-educated and specially-trained on the history and culture of Cuzco, will accompany you today.

Free time in Cuzco • Tonight you will be free to explore Cuzco by night. There are over 130 world-class restaurants in Cuzco serving cuisine from every corner of the globe. What are you in the mood for tonight?

*Meals included: Breakfast
Overnight: Cuzco*