

## DELUXE PERU EXAMPLE ITINERARY:

### 18 Night tailor-make itinerary idea

~ 2 nights Lima ~ 2 nights Paracas ~ 1 night Lima ~ 2 nights Arequipa ~ 1 night Colca Canyon ~ 1 night Arequipa ~ 2 nights Puno ~ 2 nights Cusco ~ 1 night Machu Picchu ~ 1 night Sacred valley ~ 2 nights Cusco ~ 1 night Lima

Hotels can be changed to suit differing budgets & we can of course extend your stay in a particular area, include the Amazon or reduce the number of areas included to suit your preferences.

#### Day 1 LIMA

On arrival into **Lima** International Airport our ground agents will meet you and you will have a private transfer to **the Country Club de Lima Hotel** for 2 nights BB. Lima is not at all what you would expect. With a population of over 9million it is huge, a 1/3 of Peru's total population lives here. Lima dates back to its foundation by the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535. Lima grew rapidly to become one of the richest cities in the world, remaining Spain's most important centre in South America for almost 300 years. There are many impressive colonial buildings in the historical centre around the Plaza del Armas and San Martin. Lima is home to many important and excellent archaeological museums and a wonderful Gold Museum well worth visiting. The central commercial areas are very modern. Especially visit the Miraflores commercial area (Larco Mar) which is an open-air 3-storey shopping/ restaurant area by the sea. Prices in Lima are generally quoted in US dollars. Taxi's are very cheap so you do not have to stay in the most central hotels. The San Isidro area has the most exclusive hotels, including the Country Club. There is an excellent fish restaurant called the Costa Verde and they offer on certain days a huge buffet with 450 dishes.

- **Country Club de Lima Hotel** is located in the exclusive San Isidro area of Lima. It is a very stylish 5\* hotel has 75 very comfortable spacious suites. The main feature for me was the huge bath. The deepest bath I have ever seen, made even more enjoyable by the complimentary bubble bath supplied. Also they have scales in the bathroom so you can tell how much weight you lost visiting Machu Picchu etc.!!!

#### Day 2 LIMA

Private half day city tour of Lima

#### Day 3 NASCA LINES / PARACAS

After breakfast your private guide and driver will collect you to take you for the 3 hour drive along the Pan-American Highway to Ica to take the flight over the **Nasca Lines**. The flight takes approx. 45 minutes in total. Afterwards you will continue to the **Paracas Hotel** for 2 nights BB.

The **Nasca Lines** were only discovered in 1939 when Paul Kosok from the USA took to the air to make an irrigation study of the area. He took aerial photos and when developed he first saw the bird. Cut into the stony desert are large numbers of lines, not only parallels and geometrical figures, but also designs such as a dog, an enormous monkey, birds, a spider and a tree. This unexplained phenomenon is best seen from the air. The Pan American highway was built earlier in 1937 and unknowingly crossed through the Lizard. After the flight you get a certificate to say you flew over the Nasca Lines. It is something that cannot be missed, from the air you see endless desert and then these amazing, unexplained pictures in the sand.

- **The Paracas Hotel** is located on the coast with 105 rooms, suites & bungalows and is set in very relaxing surroundings with 3 swimming pools, 2 tennis courts, miniature golf, water skiing etc... The hotel also has its own private pier from which you take the boat trip to the Ballestas Islands. On a Sunday they offer a traditional buffet which is very popular.

#### Day 4 PARACAS

After breakfast you will depart from the hotels pier for the 3-4 hour trip to the **Ballestas Islands**. The Peninsula de Paracas and the nearby Islas Ballestas make up La Reserva Nacional de Paracas, the most important wildlife sanctuary on the Peruvian coast. This is an excellent area for seeing bird and marine life. Ballestas Islands are Peru's equivalent of the Galapagos Islands and you will definitely see lots of sea lions colonies, cormorants, Peruvian boobies, pelicans and if you are lucky penguins and flamingos. There are so many birds nesting on these islands that their nitrogen-rich droppings (guano) is collected for commercial use as a fertiliser. This practice dates back from at least the Incan times. Only people collecting the guano are allowed on the island, as it is a classified protected area. Take your camera and binoculars. As you leave the peninsular you will see on the left-hand side the Candellabra, which is a large figure etched into the coastal hillside, similar to the Nasca Lines figures. It is not known when, how or why this drawing was done, although there are the usual abundance of theories. Night at the Paracas Hotel BB.

#### Day 5 LIMA

After breakfast you will depart with your private guide and driver back to **Lima** for 1 night at the **Country Club de Lima Hotel** BB. Afternoon at leisure.

#### Day 6 AREQUIPA

You will be collected and driven to the airport to take a flight to **Arequipa**. On arrival you will be met by your private tour guide and be driven to the Libertador Hotel for a 2 night stay BB.

- **The Hotel Libertador, Arequipa** is a pink 5\* hotel with 88 deluxe rooms, located in the quiet area of "Selva Alegre", the cities largest park. It was built in 1940 in a very colonial style and is only a 5-minute taxi ride from the centre of Arequipa. It was a great relaxing pool area with llamas, ostrich's etc in the wildlife area.

**Arequipa** is in the mountainous desert and set at an altitude of 2325m above sea level. It is a beautiful city surrounded by spectacular mountains, including the famous snow capped El Misti Volcano. Other volcanoes in this area are Chachani and Pichu Pichu. It is believed that the Incas would sacrifice a virgin to the volcanoes to stop any earthquakes or eruptions. In fact an Inca princess was recently

found and had been well preserved by the snow and ice. It is still tradition for local farmers / shepherds to sacrifice their best Llama. The city is nicknamed “the white city” due to the volcanic rock used to construct many of the buildings.

One of the most interesting places to visit is the **Monastery of Santa Catalina**, which was actually a convent.. I have never been able to find out clearly why it was named a monastery!! It was originally built in 1580 and founded by a widow, Maria de Guzman who only accepted the daughter of wealthy Spanish families. Traditionally the 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter of the wealthy Spanish families was sent to a convent. At the Santa Catalina the family had to make a monthly payment and when the girl was ready to become a fully-fledged nun they had to pay a large dowry. Life was very strict, the girls were kept in their own room for hours on end with food and water passed to them through the window. When they had visitors they sat behind a double wooden grill (making it impossible to actually see the visitor) and were accompanied by an elderly nun. During the earthquake of 1600 destroyed most of the convent the rich families built individual houses for their daughters, the size of the house depended on how rich the family was. Sometimes 2-3 nuns would share a house. There are a total of 30 houses, many of which you will see. The nuns now have a new convent next-door, but they still visit the chapel every day.

#### Day 7 AREQUIPA

Day @ leisure to relax & enjoy the city.

#### Day 8 COLCA CANYON

Early morning pick-up, with your guide, to travel to the **Colca Canyon** and 1 night at a local lodge. From Arequipa you can visit the amazing Colca Canyon. At its deepest the Colca Canyon is more than 3,400 metres deep (the Grand Canyon is 1,800 metres at its deepest). You definitely need to stay overnight to see the most impressive sights. After leaving Arequipa you will drive to the Reserva Nacional Salinas y Aquada Blanca which covers a total area of 367,000 hectares and is at an average elevation of 3850 metres. Here you will see small groups of Vicuna, these animals are similar to llamas and alpaca but their fleeces are very fine and strong which makes it very expensive and sought after. All animals in the National Park are protected and it is illegal for the animals to be hunted. After approx 3 hours you will stop for some coca tea, don't forget the lemon and sugar!! The family pet llama will keep you company!. The scenery is amazing, especially the Inca terraces that are still used today by the farmers. You will stay at one of the local lodges.

#### Day 9 COLCA CANYON / AREQUIPA

After an early breakfast you will leave Chivay to drive to the **Cruz del Condor**, the Cross of the Condor. En route you can visit Yanque, which was the capital of Colca Valley before Chivay. In Yanque there is a church worth seeing which was built in the 1700s. Traditionally dressed people will be there for you to see. Different regions have varying types of dress and more importantly hats; In this region of Peru the women wear hats which will let you know if they are married or single.. 1 flower on the side means she is single, a flower on both sides says she is married, women with 2 flowers and some black braiding are widows. At the Cross of the Condor there is a great view of the river 1200 metres below with Mount Misti on the other side of the canyon. The condors will swoop gracefully up from underneath the cliff. It is an amazing thing to see as these birds are huge, I was lucky enough to see 11 of them.

During your trip to Colca Canyon you will be up to an altitude of 4800 metres.. take it easy!! You will then depart the Colca Canyon to **drive back to Arequipa** and 1 more night at the **Libertador Hotel**. BB

### Day 10 PUNO for LAKE TITICACA

You will have a private transfer to the airport to take domestic flight to **Juliaca**, which is the nearest airport to **Puno**. **En route you will visit Sillustani**, which is located by the beautiful Lake Umayo. The Colla people originally inhabited this area. The most notable information we have about them is that they had unusual burial customs for their nobility. Their dead were buried in funeral towers called Chullpas. The most impressive of these are found at Sillustani. The nobility would be mummified in the foetal position (so they were in the correct position to be re-born) and all their precious possession were in there with them (for the next life). The towers could be quite tall but the doorway is very small and always faces East, they do not have door so the spirit could leave easily. It is believed that when the Incas arrived to this area they also copied this idea and built some chullpas of their own.

You can easily tell the difference in the stone work. This is such an idyllic setting it is worth just sitting down and relaxing enjoying the tranquillity From Puno you will visit the famous **Lake Titicaca**, which has been deemed the highest navigable lake in the world and it also borders Bolivia.

You will have 2 nights at the **Libertador Hotel**

- **Hotel Libertador Isla Esteves** is located on its own island with all 123 rooms and 12 suites all having fantastic views of the lake. The sunrise and sunset is definitely worth seeing and the hotel does have a couple of look-out points. Other facilities include a sauna, steamroom, hairdressers, mini gym, snooker table and jacuzzi. The bar has an outside terrace and inside there is a lovely glass enclosed wood fire. Perfect to sit by in the evening having a pre-dinner drink. The hotel also has it's own dock where your boat will collect you to take you to the Uros Islands and Taquile Island.

### Day 11 LAKE TITICACA

Depart after an early breakfast from the hotel dock to go by boat to the **Uros Islands and Taquile Island**. **Uros Islands** are the famous floating reed islands that traditional people still live on. The islands are constructed with many layers of the totora reeds. The reeds do eventually rot away from the bottom and are replaced at the top, so the ground is very soft and springy. The island is then fixed in place with long canes through the base into the lakebed. The biggest of the islands has a school for the children of the islands. When a couple gets married a new island is constructed for them. As you pass through the islands on the boat you will see some tiny ones approx. 3feet by 3 feet where the pigs live.. It is a weird sight seeing a pig on its own piece of reed island.

**Taquile Island** is a wonderfully traditional island. It is a proper island, not of the floating variety. Once you arrive into the harbour there are 350 steps to climb up to get to the village. It is hard going but if you just take it easy and slowly you will be fine. It certainly doesn't help when the children run up the steps on their way back to school after their break. The islanders are primarily vegetarian, as most traditional Quecha people, and the pigs etc are used to barter for other goods in Puno. Another "dress" tradition here is that the single men wear red hats (similar in style to floppy nightcaps) whilst the married ones wear red and white ones. One of the most intriguing traditions practised on this island is that a couple have to live together for 1 year before they are allowed to get married. Even if they should have a child in this period they do not have to go through with the marriage if they are not happy..

The trip to Taquile island will take approx. 3 hours in each direction by boat and you should be back at the hotel by late afternoon, enough time to visit the alpaca factory shop if you wish to purchase any jumpers etc.. Puno is the cheapest place to buy alpaca garments.

## Day 12 CUSCO

Your guide will collect you from the hotel and taken to the train station to take the train service to Cusco. Note: The train does take 9 hours & only operates on Mondays, Wednesdays & Saturdays. Alternative methods of transportation would be to take the 7 hour coach or at certain times of the year a 45 minute domestic flight.

On arrival in Cusco you will be met by the ground agents and taken to the **Libertador Hotel**, where you will stay for 2 nights. Cusco was the capital of the Inca Empire as it was the geographical centre of the Inca Empire. When Pachacutec (the Inca warrior king who instigated the building of the famous monuments) rebuilt the city of Cusco, he laid it out in the shape of a puma. The outline can still be seen in the layout of the city centre. Sacsayhuaman was the puma's head, while the tail stretched most of the way to where the Pachacutec monument now stands. Inca Cusco was not really a city. It was an elite settlement with special ceremonial and administrative functions. There was no bustle of commerce here and no poor district. It was a holy city, the centre of the known world. This city has a fascinating mix of Inca and colonial Spanish architecture; colonial churches, monasteries, extensive pre-Columbian ruins interspersed with countless hotels, bars and restaurants with a great night-time atmosphere. Almost all central streets have remains of Inca walls, arches and doorways. Cusco stands at an altitude of 3,310m, I recommend you allow yourselves 2-3 hours relaxation time on arrival to become acclimatised. **If you have arrived on the domestic flight you can have an afternoon private city / area tour. Otherwise this will be the following day.**

You will visit the **Cathedral, Santo Domingo & Qoricancha, Sacsayhuaman, Q'enqo, Tambomachay & PucaPucara. Santo Domingo & Qoricancha..** The church of **Santo Domingo** is most famous as the site of Coricancha Cusco's major Inca temple. The church has been hit by 2 earthquakes and you will see that the Inca walls sustained minimal damage, compared to the Colonial buildings. This temple was the Inca Empire's richest temple and its name is translated as "Court of Gold" and was quite literally covered in gold. With the arrival of the Conquistadors this amazing wealth was melted down. Within the temple there are temples for the Sun, Moon, Stars, Rainbow and thunderstorms. The Temple of the Sun is very important as it represents the centre of the Inca Empire. Inta Rimin, the Sun Festival is a very famous festival in Peru which is held in Cusco. Cusco Cathedral. This cathedral dates back to 1559 and it took 100 years to build and is Cusco's main church. There is lots to see here, including the vault containing the remains of the famous Inca historian Garvilaso de la Vega. There are hundreds of paintings including the huge painting of the Last Supper by Marcos Zapata. This painting shows that the supper consisted of the Peruvian traditional roasted guinea pig and also shows Judas having darker skin than the others. It was thought that darker skinned people were bad!! One of the most interesting things I saw in the cathedral was the black Jesus statue. He was originally white but over the years has been darkened by all the candles burnt at the altar. The current Bishop of the Cathedral has made himself very unpopular with local people by replacing all the candles with grotesque fake electric candles. Once a year at Easter the statue is paraded through Cusco to ward off Earthquakes. **Sacsayhuaman's** origins are uncertain. It has been suggested that it took 20,000 men to construct this supposed fortress over a period of 50 years. The zig zag configuration of the outer walls are said to represent the teeth of the puma. The head of which is represented by Sacsayhuaman. The limestone blocks in the 3 tiers of the outer walls, which form the perimeter of this awe-inspiring ruin, are the vastest of any Inca site. The largest stone stands 8.5m high and weighs an amazing 361 tons, yet even these enormous stones are fitted with extraordinary Inca perfection.

**Q'enqo** meaning zig zag was a waca, a shrine. It consists of a large limestone rock completely covered with carvings, including the zigzagging channels that give the site its name. These are thought to

have been used for the ritual sacrifice of the chicha or perhaps blood. Inside its caves you will find large niches and what looks like an altar.

**Tambomachay** is popularly called the “Bano del Inca” – the Incas’s Bath. It is an excellent example of a site for ritual bathing and perhaps a water cult. Here, where a spring emerges from the hillside, the Incas built a series of 3 waterfalls, painstakingly channelling them through fine stone courses. Puca Pucara means Red Fort but it was mis-named. It was not a fort but more likely a tambo, a kind of post-house where travellers were lodged and goods, animals, etc were housed temporarily.

- **The Hotel Libertador** is an excellent 5\* hotel in the historical heart of Cusco and has a total of 258 large rooms. The original Inca foundations were the home of the chosen virgins of the Inca, later it was house of the Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro and finally restored in 1976 to become the present Cusco Libertador Hotel.

### Day 13 CUSCO

Full day at leisure in Cusco or have the city tour if not taken the previous day.

### Day 14 MACHU PICCHU

Your guide will collect you very early for you to catch the train to Aguas Calientas followed by the bus up to **Machu Picchu**. Leave the majority of your luggage with the hotel and take an overnight bag with you. You will leave this with the driver when you take the train. This is the most amazing place and must be visited. The train leaves Cusco at 6am and will take 3hours and 20 minutes to get to Aguas Calientas. The first part of the journey has the train taking the “switchback” system to ascend up a hillside too steep to permit normal railway curves. You will be served a packed breakfast box and be given some coca tea, Andean music is played to create a great atmosphere. The journey is certainly not boring, you will see some marvellous scenery. The train arrives in Aguas Calientas where you then get a bus up to the “Lost City” of Machu Picchu. The bus takes approx 30 minutes or you can walk which would take approx. 1 hour.

American historian Hiram Bingham accidentally discovered Machu Picchu in 1911. He was actually searching for the lost city of Vilcabamba when he stumbled across this city which was hidden in the thick vegetation of the jungle. Despite the relentless stampede of tourists to the ruins, this amazing site still retains an air of grandeur and mystery. This is a very mysterious place.. it is not known why it was built in the first place although it is most likely a very sacred place where only the hierarchy of the Inca Empire were admitted. Nor is it known why this city was abandoned, again there are many opinions ranging from some disease killing the inhabitants to them escaping the Spanish (who never actually got this far).

- You will then have a night @ the superbly located **Sanctuary Lodge**, which is the only hotel located by the side of the ruins. Guests will have the opportunity to experience the sunset & sunrise over Machu Picchu.

### DAY 15 MACHU PICCHU / SACRED VALLEY

You have the morning to re-visit the ruins & have lunch @ the Sanctuary Lodge before heading back down to Aguas Calientas to take the train. Before you board the bus to go back down to Aguas Calientas you will see some young boys in traditional dress. When your bus leaves the boys run down the mountainside trying to beat the bus down, you will see and hear them in various places down the mountain as they wave you good-bye.

The train from Aguas Calientes will depart at 3.30 after lunch and only takes 25 minutes to get to Ollantaytambo. Your private transfer driver will have your overnight bag with him and be waiting at the station to collect you to drive you to the **Sol y Luna Hotel** BB.

- **Sol y Luna Hotel** is ideally located in Huicho, 2 km from the town of Urubamba on the way to Ollantaytambo and has 28 beautiful bungalows, each with it's own private terrace. The restaurant features a variety of Peruvian specialties along with international dishes. The hotel also has a ,lovely swimming pool where you can relax and take in the beautiful surroundings.

#### Day 16 SACRED VALLEY / CUSCO

You have a **full day with your guide and driver to drive back to Cusco through the Sacred valley and visiting PISAQ market**. The market is only open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. The biggest day is a Sunday but either of the other days have just as much to offer and would be less busy. Also it is a good idea if you can visit Machu Picchu on a Sunday as most tour groups will be at PISAQ market and therefore less busy.. PISAQ market is a local market which attracts traditionally dressed locals from miles around. 2 nights back at the **Libertador Hotel Cusco**

#### Day 17 CUSCO

Day @ leisure to explore this beautiful city

#### Day 18 LIMA

Private transfer to the airport to take a domestic flight back to Lima. On arrival back into Lima airport you will be met and transferred to the **Country Club de Lima** hotel for your final night in Peru. BB.

#### Day 19

Private transfer back to Lima's International Airport to check-in for your flight back to the UK.