

Cachicata Inca Quarry Trail



ACTIVITY

Trek

ACCOMMODATION

Camping

CHALLENGE FACTORS

Altitude

CHALLENGE FACTORS

Terrain

DURATION:

10 days

GRADE



Machu Picchu is one of the most iconic sights in South America, and the culmination of our magnificent trek through the Peruvian Andes. This trek is a challenging and beautiful alternative to the Inca Trail. Unlike its more famous sister trail, it does not require a permit – and it offers the solitude of a lesser-trekking route.

Our trek follows remote ancient Inca paths once used for hauling vast quarried blocks of granite. We pass fascinating, little-visited ruins and tombs as we trek through valleys, from forest and meadow up to more exposed heights, culminating in Kuychicassa Pass (4450m). We then descend to the old stone quarry of Cachicata, where giant, partly-worked blocks of stone still lie abandoned. The trail is steep at times, and the altitude adds to the challenge. We finish at the village of Aguas Calientes, at the foot of Machu Picchu. Exploring this magical site is an unforgettable reward for our efforts.

With time in Cusco and the Sacred Valley, this adventurous trip is a wonderful combination of cultural discovery and tranquil, challenging trekking in spectacular surroundings.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London

Our route to Cusco usually involves a connection at some stage, depending on flight schedule. Night in flight.

Day 2: Arrive Cusco

Morning arrival in Cusco (3400m); transfer to our downtown hotel. After a trip briefing, the afternoon is free to

explore this historic city. The oldest continuously-inhabited city on the continent, Cusco was home to the Inca Empire for two centuries before the conquistadores arrived. While there's lots to see, your main objective today is to let your body acclimatise to the altitude, so take it easy with a slow, gentle wander. You don't have to go far to appreciate some of the city's many old churches and temples, or admire the perfectly-crafted stonework that the Incas are so renowned for. Watching the world go by from one of the numerous cafés on the Plaza de Armas is also a highly-recommended way to adjust to the altitude! Night hotel (3400m).

Day 3: Tambo Machay – Cusco

A short drive takes us to the start-point for our first day's trek: Tambo Machay, an ancient ruin high in the hills above Cusco. We pass some of the fascinating Inca sites in the surrounding countryside as we enjoy a relaxed downhill walk to Sacsayhuaman, the huge, impressive Inca fortress on the outskirts of Cusco. Known for its enormous multi-angled stone blocks that fit together perfectly without use of mortar – stone mined from the quarry we'll be trekking to in a few days – Sacsayhuaman is a trip highlight in itself. As well as beautiful scenery and fascinating ruins that whet our appetites for more, today's trekking offers excellent acclimatisation to the altitude. Night hotel (3400m).

Trek approx 5 hours

Day 4: Cusco – Q'orimarca

After a second night at altitude we should all be feeling ready for action! An early start sees us heading out along the Sacred Valley via the small ruin of Choquequilla, where Incas worshipped the moon. At the trail-head we meet our pack-horses and start our gradual ascent through the lush green hillsides. Our trail takes us to Qory Song'o (Golden Heart) hill, which we climb for far-reaching views over the surrounding valleys. There are sacred pre-Inca tombs in this area, where mummified bodies were laid to rest. Protected and preserved by the small community nearby, trekkers are usually able to view these tombs, though they are not open to tourists generally. Continuing along our predominantly-uphill route, we enjoy a well-earned rest near Perolnuyoc Cascade, a beautiful waterfall, before contouring grassy hillsides through meadows with wonderful views of the surrounding mountains. Our camp lies in a beautiful spot, and we should have time to explore nearby Q'orimarca, an archaeological site which was once an Incan checkpoint. Night camp (3700m).

Drive approx 2.5 hours; trek approx 5-7 hours

Day 5: Q'orimarca – Choquetacarpo

Today is our big day – and our most rewarding! Our trail ascends gradually through grass-covered mountain slopes scattered with huge granite boulders, leading us to the top of our first big pass, Puccaqasa (4370m). Most people will feel the effects of being at altitude on this fairly relentless ascent, and we keep the pace slow and steady. From the pass we enjoy incredible views as the green ridges and valleys unfold before us. We descend a little to our lunch-stop, then it's uphill again, to a lung-bursting 4450m – Kuychicassa Pass, our highest point. Kuychicassa is 250m higher than Dead Woman's Pass on the Inca Trail; trekking here is a huge achievement! We then descend to Intipunku, a sacred site with spectacular views of the mountains. Its name means Sun Gate, and the Incan stone doorway here perfectly frames the snow-capped peak of Mount Veronica. Camp lies only a short distance away, and if the skies are cloud-free tonight, the star-gazing is incredible! Night camp (3600m).

Trek approx 7-9 hours

Day 6: Choquetacarpo – Aguas Calientes

With the high mountain passes conquered, our trail is now predominantly downhill, back to more sheltered hillsides and pastures. We stop at the rock quarry of Cachicata (or Kachiqata), where much of the stone for Ollantaytambo's buildings, down below us, was quarried. Tools and huge blocks of part-crafted stone were abandoned; the prevailing theory is that the Incas were intercepted here by the Spanish. We continue down into Ollantaytambo, accompanied by wonderful views over the Sacred Valley, and should have time to explore the cobbled streets of this photogenic town. A short train journey then takes us to Aguas Calientes. Named for its soothing hot springs, this bustling village lies below Machu Picchu. Night hotel.

Trek approx. 4-6 hours

Day 7: Aguas Calientes – Machu Picchu – Cusco

An early start sees us on a bus driving up the zig-zagging hair-pin bends to Machu Picchu, aiming to arrive before the crowds that will be travelling from Cusco. Invisible from below, this magical site is perched high in the Andes, surrounded by cloud forest. Despite seeing few other tourists after several days of quiet trails, Machu Picchu doesn't feel crowded, and it surpasses expectations! We enjoy a guided tour around the upper terraces, before exploring the ruined houses and temples of this extraordinary place. After time to soak up the magnificent views and atmosphere, we head back down to Aguas Calientes. Later, we take the train back to Ollantaytambo, then return to Cusco by bus. Night hotel.

Train/bus travel approx. 3 hours

(Dinner not included)

Day 8: Free day Cusco

After a good night's sleep and a relaxing lie-in, we have the remainder of the day free. Explore the many sights of Cusco, browse the markets for last-minute souvenirs, or find another café! Later this evening, we all meet again for dinner to celebrate our achievements. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 9: Depart Cusco

Depending on our flight schedule, we usually have some free time before transferring to the airport. Our flight usually involves a connection to our onward flight home.

(Lunch not included)

Day 10: Arrive London

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Cusco
- All known airline taxes
- Transport and transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation on twinshare basis - hotels and camping
- Group camping equipment (including sleeping mats)
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- English speaking local guide/s
- Local support, porters/horses, cooks and back-up equipment
- Entrance to Machu Picchu and other sites visited as part of the itinerary
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Sleeping bag
- Personal spending money, souvenirs, drinks and tips for the local guides/support crew
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | RED

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **RED** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

[Trip grading explained](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Altitude

Altitude adds to the challenge, and affects people differently. Most travellers experience no more than headaches and shortness of breath (typical symptoms of being at altitude, and not usually a concern.)

Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) or 'altitude sickness' occurs when you ascend to high altitude quickly. The best way to avoid it is to allow time for the body to adjust - our itineraries are designed with this in mind - and to walk at a slow pace (which our leaders will set). We also recommend avoiding alcohol and smoking. Problems usually begin at heights of around 3500m - 4500m. More severe symptoms are usually quickly remedied by descending to a lower altitude and taking more time to acclimatise.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

We camp in two-man tents; these are usually expedition-style (ie sleeping room only). Camps are usually simple, in remote locations with great views! We have communal dining areas (usually with tables and chairs/stools) and toilet tents, and the local crew look after us very well. We stay in hotels (of a 2-3* standard or equivalent) at the start and end of the trip; standards may vary between different hotels, but they are generally clean and comfortable with good facilities.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis, usually twin-share. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that both people complete the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option.

When it comes to tent sharing, we do not offer a single option unless there are exceptional circumstances, for logistical and safety reasons.

We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

GRADE | RED

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[Trip grading explained](#)

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

We trek through valleys, open meadows and over high mountain passes; paths range from stony or rocky trails to dirt or gravel paths, and can be narrow. After rain it can be slippery in places, and gravel/dirt sections can be quite loose, so trekking poles are recommended. Some uphill and downhill slopes are steep - these can feel relentless if you are feeling the affects of the altitude. The altitude (highest point 4450m) adds to the challenge.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the [NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro](#) website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a

minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

CHALLENGE EXTENSIONS



AMAZON RAINFOREST EXTENSION

The Amazon rainforest is legendary throughout the world as an ecosystem rich in vegetation, wildlife and indigenous culture, and one which is currently under constant threat from mankind.

The River Amazon's source is in Peru, and the river carries around 20% of the world's fresh water. The rainforest covers almost half of Peru and extends into 9 other South American countries. It contains approximately 50,000 species of higher plants – a staggering twenty percent of the world's total. The tree canopy is so dense that almost no sunlight penetrates to the forest floor and there is very little undergrowth. Animal and bird life is incredibly rich, including colourful macaws and toucans, several species of monkey and the rare tapir, jaguar and Andean spectacled bear. Giant

otters, caimans, capybara and piranha live in the many waterways.

This is your chance to experience the amazing diversity of flora and fauna set in part of the most famous and awe-inspiring rainforest in the world! We travel by plane and then river boat to our lodge on the banks of the Tambopata River, and explore the trails and waterways on foot and by boat. This isn't a luxury experience, but it's an unforgettable adventure in a unique and threatened world.

Contact the office for pricing and availability.



LAKE TITICACA EXTENSION

Lake Titicaca is the highest navigable lake in the world, lying on the high altiplano at 3856m above sea level, straddling the Peru-Bolivian border. It is home to the legendary Uros Islands – floating reed islands where the Uros people have lived for centuries. We visit Amantani Island, with its mountaintop temples to Pachamama and Pachatata (earth mother and father), and stay overnight with local families. We then move on to Taquile, famous for its intricate, brightly-coloured weaving. The lake views are fabulous, but the highlight of the trip is the glimpse into the everyday lives of the local people, from cultures pre-dating the Incas by a thousand years.

Contact the office for pricing and availability.



WHITE WATER RAFTING OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Anyone looking for a fun day of alternative adventure should try this great white-water rafting trip, which takes you down a beautiful section of the Urubamba. Rafting is a fun sport, suitable for all ages – no experience necessary!

The Urubamba River rises in the Andes and flows through the heartland of the former Inca Empire. The section we run is usually the Class III-IV Chuquicahuana section located above Cuzco, where a gentle start allows us to practise our technique before the river takes us through a beautiful canyon with views of the surrounding peaks and fun, adrenaline-pumping rapids. Rafting is a participatory team event, so your paddle is not just for decoration! Beware: you will get wet!

This day-trip replaces your free day in Cuzco at the end of your challenge; you will get back to the hotel mid-to-late afternoon.

Requires a minimum of 4 people to operate. Please contact us for more details.



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 14 Oct 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.