

## Blackrock & Friends Peru Inca Quarry Trek



Duration: 8 days

Machu Picchu is one of the most iconic sights in South America, and the culmination of our magnificent trek through the Peruvian Andes. Join us as we trek through valleys and over high passes, scattered with fascinating and little-visited Inca ruins.

Trekking on remote paths, our route takes us through forest and meadows and up to the more exposed higher passes, culminating in Kuychicassa (4450m), before descending to the old stone quarry of Kachiqata, where the Incas were intercepted by the Spanish conquistadors. Our way 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, and have plenty of time to explore this magical site – an unforgettable reward for your efforts.

This is a challenging and beautiful Andean alternative to the Inca Trail, and perfect for those who have missed out on permits, or prefer the solitude of a lesser-trekking route.

### DETAILED ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Arrive Cuzco

After arriving in to Cusco (3400m) this morning, there will be one group transfer from the airport to our downtown hotel (based on the majority of the group's flight arrival times; those arriving after this time will need to make their own transfer arrangements). After a trip briefing, the afternoon is free to explore the sites of this historic city, or simply adjust to the altitude by watching the world go by in one of the numerous cafés on the Plaza de Armas. Night hotel.

#### Day 2: Tambo Machay – Cuzco

Our first day's trek takes us from Tambo Machay, an ancient ruin high in the hills above Cuzco. We pass some of the amazing Inca sites in the surrounding country-side as we walk downhill to Sacsayhuaman, the huge and impressive Inca ruin on the outskirts of Cuzco. As well as beautiful scenery and fascinating ruins, today's trekking offers excellent acclimatisation to the altitude. Night hotel.

**Trek approx 5 hours**

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### Day 3: Cuzco – Rafq'a – Q'orimarca

After a second night at altitude we should all be feeling ready for action! We leave Cuzco behind us, heading out along the Sacred Valley via Ollantaytambo to our trail-head at Rafq'a. En route we stop at a small ruin where Incas worshipped the moon. At the trail-head we meet our pack-horses and start our gradual ascent through the lush green hillsides, emerging at a beautiful waterfall. Here we can soak up the views before contouring grassy hillsides through scenic meadows with wonderful views of the surrounding mountains. Our camp lies in a beautiful spot, and we should have time to explore the nearby ruin of Q'orimarca, which was once an Incan checkpoint. Night camp (3700m).

**Drive approx 3.5 hours; trek approx 5-7 hours**

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### Day 4: 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, before dropping down a little to our lunch-stop. Then we ascend again, to a lung-bursting 4450m – Kuychicassa Pass, our highest point. Here we are 250m higher than Dead Woman's Pass on the Inca Trail. We descend to Intipunku, a sacred site with spectacular views of snow-capped Mount Veronica rising to 5000m, and over the valley below. We continue downhill to camp. Night camp (3750m)

**Trek approx 7-9 hours**

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### Day 5: Choquetacarpo – Aguas Calientes

With the high mountain passes conquered, it's predominantly downhill, back into pasture and more sheltered hillsides. We stop at the rock quarry of Kachiqata, which was never finished; the Incas were intercepted here by the Spanish. We continue down into the Sacred Valley, accompanied by wonderful views, and come back to Ollantaytambo. We walk through this photogenic town with its cobbled streets before a short train journey 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**

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### Day 6: Aguas Calientes – Machu Picchu – Cuzco

An early bus ride takes us along the winding hair-pin bends to Machu Picchu, aiming to arrive before the crowds

starting from Cuzco. We enjoy a guided tour around this extraordinary site, with an option to walk up to the famous Sun Gate for the famous view back down over the site, meeting up in Aguas Calientes. In the afternoon we take the train back to Ollantaytambo and return to Cuzco by bus. Night hotel.

**Train/bus travel approx 3 hours**

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### Day 7: Free day Cuzco

After a good night's sleep and a relaxing lie-in we have the remainder of the day free to explore Cuzco or do any last-minute shopping. Those looking for an adrenaline fix may wish to pre-book on to a White Water Rafting Activity (see website for details). Alternatively, there may be an opportunity to visit one of the local community projects we support, before meeting up again to celebrate our achievement at dinner this evening. Night hotel.

*(Lunch not included)*

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### Day 8: Depart Cuzco

Our itinerary ends today, so you are free to make your own return travel arrangements home.

*(Lunch not included)*

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Please note: Flights are **not** included in the tour cost

## GRADE | TOUGH (3)



Trip grades range from Challenging (1) to Extreme (5).

TOUGH trips can involve tough terrain, with some very rigorous days; weather, altitude and/or basic living conditions will add to the challenge. They demand good stamina, fitness and a determined attitude.

See [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.

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### 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.

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### 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.

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### 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 communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

### 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 [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

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### 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.

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## 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.

## Cultural Differences

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for! We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow participants and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

## BUY YOUR KITBAG

**Only £45 (inc p&p)** - designed to deal with the rigours of your challenge.

Easier for accessing gear than a rucksack (especially when camping) this is probably the most cost-effective way to take your luggage on a Discover Adventure challenge!



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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 29 Mar 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.