

FROM MACHU PICCHU TO RIO DE JANEIRO TOUR



From the Lost City to the Cidade Maravilhosa, Plus Bolivia & Paraguay

18 DAYS / 17 NIGHTS

Embark on an 18-day journey through the Land of the Incas, where the remnants of their great civilization continue to capture the imagination. From Peru to Rio, start in the City of Kings, Lima, where you'll learn about the history of the Spanish conquistadors. Continue to the heart of Peru, visiting Cuzco, and of course, the UNESCO Heritage site, Machu Picchu. Then travel south, cross over Lake Titicaca into Bolivia, and visit the two largest cities, La Paz and Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Take a flight to Paraguay's capital city, Asunción, and have a Guarani experience. To end this trip, visit two Brazilian highlights: Iguassu Falls and the *Cidade Maravilhosa*, Rio de Janeiro.

FROM
\$ 4265
per person

THIS TOUR INCLUDES:

- 17 nights accommodation
- All breakfasts
- All tours, transfers, and entrance fees
- First-class train or bus transportation
- English-speaking guides

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lima
- Cuzco
- Machu Picchu
- Titicaca Lake
- La Paz
- Santa Cruz de la Sierra
- Asunción
- Iguassu Falls
- Rio de Janeiro

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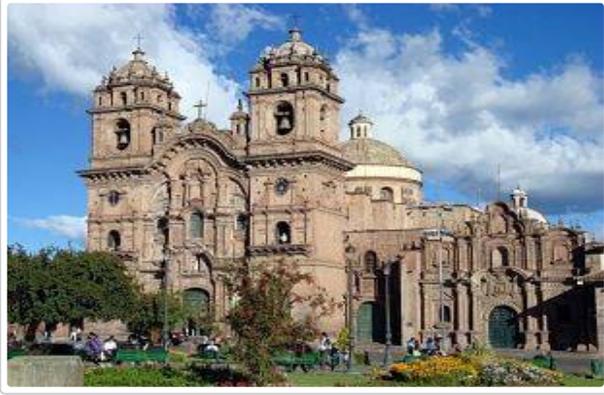
Day 1-2

ARRIVE IN LIMA & EXPLORE THE CAPITAL

Arrive in Lima. Check into our hotel and enjoy the city. Known as the City of Kings, Peru's capital city Lima was founded by Francisco Pizarro in 1535. The Plaza de Armas is the heart of old Lima, and it is here you find the Cathedral, Government Palace and Archbishop's Palace. The Cathedral dates back to the 1700s and houses the remains of the conquistador Pizarro.

To get a feel for colonial Lima, take a cab to the Plaza de Armas and watch the changing of the Palace Guard in the afternoon. Walk the streets surrounding the Jirón de la Unión for great examples of Spanish-colonial architecture and to get a taste for life in a large South American city. An optional city tour visits many of the city's highlights. There are many fine museums in and around the city, including the Museo Rafael Larco Herrera, which houses an equally impressive collection of pottery, mummies and textiles from the Paracas and Nazca cultures.

The more affluent coastal districts of Miraflores, Barranco and San Isidro offer good nightlife and cafés all within walking distance. Limeños (Lima's residents) are friendly, and the city is filled with excellent restaurants; seafood lovers in particular should be sure to try a ceviche, for which Lima is well-known.



Day 3

ARRIVE IN CUZCO & CITY TOUR

A short flight takes us to Cuzco, the continent's oldest continuously inhabited city, and the hub of the South American travel network. Cuzco's numerous colonial churches are one of the city's most common sights. The Cathedral was started in 1559 and took 100 years to build; it is also one of the city's greatest repositories of colonial art. Immediately in front of the entrance is a vault containing the remains of the famous Inca historian, Garcilaso de la Vega. Also worth visiting are the churches of La Compañía, La Merced and San Francisco. While most ruins are just outside of the city, the main ruin within is that of the Coricancha, once the Inca Empire's richest temple. Today the ruin forms the base of the colonial church of Santo Domingo. During Inca times this temple was literally covered with gold, but within months of the arrival of the first conquistadors this incredible wealth had all been melted down. It is left to the individual imagination to envision the magnificence of the original structure. There are several good museums in Cuzco, including the Archaeological Museum, which also houses a small art museum, the Regional History Museum and the Religious Art Museum.



Day 4

MACHU PICCHU RUINS TOUR

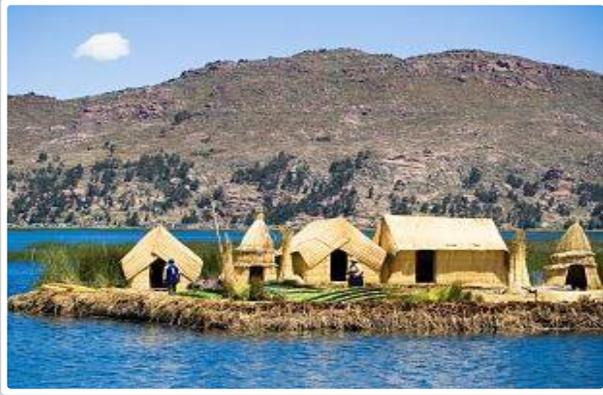
Set on a ridge above the roaring Urumbamba river, this ancient Inca citadel is one of the most evocative sights in South America. The small fortress city sits majestically in a saddle between two mountains peaks in the subtropical Andean foothills, surrounded by dense vegetation and often shrouded in mist. The extraordinary stonework is a testament to the incredible skills of Inca stonemasons than 600 years ago, vast gray granite blocks fitted together so exactly that a knife blade cannot be slipped between their joints. Invisible from below, and entirely self-contained, Machu Picchu was not found by the Spanish Conquistadors who were wreaking havoc throughout the continent in the 16th century. The ruins were forgotten, and it was an American archeologist, Hiram Bingham, who stumbled upon them in 1911. Short hikes from the site give some sense of its extraordinary position. A perilous ascent up Wayna Picchu, the small peak beyond the city, offers dizzying views. Machu Picchu is four hours by train from Cuzco. The spectacular rail journey will winds its way through the fertile Sacred Valley, the breadbasket of the Inca civilization where corn, fruit, an vegetables grow in abundance, with sheer mountain walls on either side, taking us to Aguas Calientes, a small, ramshackle town that is a base for travelers exploring the site.



Day 5

TRAIN FROM CUZCO TO PUNO

Enjoy spectacular views of the countryside on this full day of travel from Cuzco to Puno, through the high Altiplano region. Located at 3830 m above sea level, Puno is the highest altitude of any place we sleep on the tour. As a result the weather can be extreme with very cold nights and a strong sun during the day. Puno is also known for its wealth of traditional dances: there are up to 100 different varieties, usually performed in the street processions celebrating Catholic feast days. A popular optional activity in Puno is a visit to the spectacular chullpas (funerary towers) of Sillustani, a pre-Inca archaeological site. Titicaca is also the largest lake in the world above 2000m, and the views from both Amantani and Taquile Islands are stunning.



Days 6-7

LAKE TITICACA & LA PAZ

The day begins with an impressive journey along the shores of Titicaca, to La Paz, Bolivia. Founded by Alonso de Mendoza in 1548, La Ciudad de Nuestra Señora de La Paz (the City of Our Lady of Peace) is the highest capital in the world. Although Sucre is the official capital, La Paz is the Bolivian centre of commerce, finance and industry, and the de facto capital. This is a busy modern city, with its centre at the base of a canyon 5 km (3 miles) wide and sprawling impromptu housing all the way up the surrounding hillsides. The city is at nearly 4000 m (13,120 ft) above sea level, so visitors should be prepared for cool evenings and mornings.

Explore the city's many fine museums or its historic ecclesiastical structures, such as the Iglesia de San Francisco, whose architectural details reflect the indigenous and mestizo heritage of modern Bolivia. The city is also renowned for its many markets, including the Mercado de Hechicería (Witches' Market), where Paceños and visitors may purchase potions and incantations made from all sorts of herbs, seeds, and secret ingredients to remedy any number of illnesses (real or imagined) and protect from evil spirits. With streets lined with market stalls and vendors, the pace on the street and the vibrant atmosphere is an incredible experience. You'll also find a wealth of shops selling all sorts of handicrafts, mainly alpaca wool products, silver jewellery, woven textiles and leather goods. Optional activities in La Paz include museums or a visit to the world's highest ski resort, Chacaltaya (5600 m/18,368 ft). To the south of the city is the Valley of the Moon, with crater-like formations made of sand.



Days 8-9

SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA

A local flight takes us to Santa Cruz, located close to the Cordillera Oriental foothills. Santa Cruz (or Santa Cruz de la Sierra) is the most populous city and heart of the second most populous metropolitan area in Bolivia, and is the capital of the department of Santa Cruz. It is considered the most economically prosperous city in the country. In contrast to La Paz and the other major Bolivian cities located high in the Andes, Santa Cruz lies at an altitude of 416 meters, and its climate is distinctly tropical. In Santa Cruz you can book some great excursions, like a trekking in Park Amboro, Noel Kempff, or a cultural excursions to the Jesuit Missions etc.



Day 10

GOING TO ASUNCIÓN

Today fly to the Paraguayan city of Asunción Asunción and transfer to your hotel, where you have time to refresh after the long trip. In the afternoon we will start our journey with the city tour in Asunción. We will visits sites from the beginning in 1537, the foundation of Asunción, The Independence 1811, rules of President Lopez and today. We will visit the house where the Independence got proclaimed "Casa de la independencia," the cathedral, the train station, the oldest in whole South America and the national pantheon. You also have the chance to try one of the typical foods, the empanadas in one of the most famous restaurants in Asunción: Lido. At the end of our tour we will stop at the market Silvio Petirosi which is a typical market for Latin America.



Day 11

ASUNCIÓN - GOLDEN ROUNDTRIP - ASUNCIÓN

Today we will explore the surrounding areas of Asunción. Beginning in Yaguaron where we will visit the oldest church of Paraguay, built by Franciscan monks in the 18th century. Then we will drive to Paraguari with its colonial buildings via Piribebuy to get to Caacupe which is known as the Lourdes of South America. On the way back to Asunción we will stop in San Bernadino, the first German colony, in Aregua that is known for its ceramic art crafts and finishing with Luque the capital of silver jewelry. In the evening we will be back in Asunción where you have time to try one of the numerous meat restaurants.



Day 12

FULL DAY TRIP: THE LIFE OF THE INDIGENOUS

In the morning you leave Asunción and head towards San Lorenzo. Here you visit the Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum of Guido Boggiani. The ethnographic collection consists of over 3,300 pieces of Paraguayan Native's life: utensils, tools, pottery, braids, laces, fabrics, feathers, clothing, musical instruments, various types of weapons and equipment. It shows also a photographic series "The land without evil" of Zamuko of Buffe JP (1986 and 1993) and a collection of photos made by Guido Boggiani (1898-1905), a series of maps, postcards and unpublished audiovisual.

After that the journey goes the Indian tribe Maká (Makas, mac'as or unclean). They live today in an Indian reservation. Main income of Makas who originally fed on with hunting, fishing and collecting honey, it is today the sale of souvenirs. After that we will cross the Remanso bridge, that crosses the Paraguay River and connects the western and eastern Paraguay. A few kilometers away is located Villa Hayes, capital of the department of Presidente Hayes (one of the three departments of the Paraguayan Chaco). Here you visit the Museum of History, which shows uniforms, weapons, photographs and paraphernalia from the time of the Chaco War. There is also an exhibition of ancient coins and stuffed animals from the Chaco region. Then you will get to know another indigenous community in Cerrito, Chaco - "Toba Qom". The Toba Qom Native community is located about 45 kilometers north of Asuncion, behind Villa Hayes. There are more than 1,000 inhabitants. This Indian group, originally from Bolivia, lives now between the rivers Mosquito and Rio Negro. Early 21th Ct sisters from the movement of Father Domenico Masi opened here a training center with a dining room for children, which are today still run by them. Meanwhile, the Tobas have a school and a clinic. Their main occupation is temporary rural labor (lumberjack, cotton pickers, etc). Also they cultivate vegetables, such as pumpkin, cassava and sweet potato. Other employment is fabric of ceramics craft, guaiac or textile fibers (Caraguata).

After the visit you will enjoy lunch on the bank of the Paraguay River. The menu contains the various dishes of the river fish. Then we drive back to Asuncion.



Day 13

ARRIVE IN FOZ DO IGUASSU

Early transfer to the city of Foz do Iguassu. Located very close to the Iguassu Falls, this city is nestled in sub-tropical forests on the southern border of Brazil, where Argentina and Paraguay meet.



Days 14-15

EXPLORE THE IGUASSU WATERFALLS

At Iguassu there are 275 individual falls in all, spread over a 3-km (almost 2 mile) area. Some are over 80m (2642 ft) in height, making these cataracts both wider than Victoria Falls and higher than Niagara! UNESCO declared the region an International Heritage Area in 1986. We will visit the Brazilian side of the falls and have a free afternoon to be able to rest after our long journey in or to visit the Bird Park home to species such as the Hyacinth macaw and tucans. The following day we cross the border to Argentina to visit the Argentine side of the falls. With an extensive series of catwalks and optional boat rides to the base of the falls we will easily have enough to fill a full day here.



Days 16-18

RIO DE JANEIRO TOUR

Our next destination is Rio de Janeiro. "God made the world in six days, the seventh he devoted to Rio," so say the Cariocas, residents of this beautiful city. Referred to as a "Cidade Maravilhosa" (Marvellous City), Rio de Janeiro boasts brilliant white beaches, deep blue waters of the Atlantic, the luminescent green of Guanabara Bay, and bare blue slopes of the Sugar Loaf mountain. Standing over it all, atop Corcovado, is the huge statue of Christ the Redeemer, the best place from which to appreciate the city. Enjoy a full city tour, including trips to the summits of Corcovado and Sugar Loaf Mountains, as well as to the famous beaches of Ipanema and Copcabana.

Also spend some free time enjoying the carioca lifestyle, and at the end of your trip, depart from the Rio de Janeiro International Airport for your flight home.

