

Peru Designed for the Special Interest Traveler

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Peru presents a whole new world of potential sales in special interest travel: for museum members, academic institutions, conservation clubs, and yes, groups of friends who like sharing exceptional experiences.

Culture buffs will thrill to the majesty of ancient sites, the arts of ancient weaving and colonial painting, and the vibrant traditions of regional festivals. The great outdoors welcomes the ardent birdwatcher and the orchid fancier, while adventure calls to those who want to raft on the Urubamba River, hike along the Inca Trail, bike in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, and trek along Andean trails around Huaraz or Chachapoyas.

Archaeology

Peru is, simply put, a country of superlatives, but the superstar attractions are undoubtedly the former Incan capital of Cusco and the awesome "lost city" of Machu Picchu, tucked away in the folds of the Andes Mountains. The Incas might have been relative latecomers to Peru, but their early civilizations thrived along the arid Pacific coast, where they etched mysterious lines and gigantic figures across the Nasca plains.

For clients who want to start their archaeological exploration of the country at enigmatic Machu Picchu, recommend a 3-day stay at the **Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel**, where clients will have the opportunity to catch an early morning bus ride to this site to watch the sunrise. Also included in the stay is a visit to the *Casa del Te* (Tea House), where guests can participate in processing tea grown right on the hotel grounds. There's also an Orchid Walk as well as a walk through the cloud forest for silent contemplation. Visit inkaterra.com for rates and more information on the company's other properties located throughout Peru.

Some of the oldest treasures are found along the Pacific in the lesser traveled north, as history buffs can discover on **Myths and Mountains' 8-day Archaeological Jewels of Northern Peru**. In this corner of the country, clients can feast their eyes on remnants of great cultures such as the Moche, Sican, Chimú and Inca. Following an overnight in Lima, tour members fly to Trujillo and explore the nearby ruins of Chan Chan, the largest adobe city in the world, as well as the huge Moche pyramids, the Huaca del Sol and the Huaca de la Luna. The next stop is Chiclayo to visit the nearby Museum of the Royal Tombs of Sipan and the mysterious pyramids of Tucume.

Tour members then travel overland to Cajamarca, whose thermal waters of the Inca Baths were a favorite of Atahualpa, the last true Incan ruler. Among the other attractions in and around the city are the cathedral and cliffside pre-Incan cemeteries, marked with petroglyphs and carvings. The tour ends in Lima with a private city tour including a stop at the Gold Museum.

Departures for this tour are scheduled for May 5, July 21 and Sept. 15, and the cost pp dbl is \$2,695 with a minimum of four, \$2,895 with two. The price includes inter-country air, top accommodations, many meals, excursions with private guides, transfers and comprehensive insurance coverage. For more information, call **(800) 670-6984** or visit mythsandmountains.com.

Of note: Myths and Mountains is a corporate sponsor of **READ Global (readglobal.com)**, an organization that builds self-sustaining community centers with village libraries at the heart of its activities. The company contributes \$50 to this organization from its profits on behalf of each of its travelers.

Birdwatching

Peru is a Shangri-La destination for bird-lovers. And why not? With more bird species than all of North America and Europe combined; with some 2,000 species of endemic and migratory birds identified throughout the country, avian aficionados can expect a dazzling trip.

Field Guides is one U.S. tour operator with an extensive birdwatching portfolio to Peru, featuring for 2007 areas such as the Manu Biosphere Reserve, Tambopata, Machu Picchu and the eastern slopes of the Andes, as well as a 24-day tour of Northern Peru.

The company's 16-day *Mountains of Manu* trip treks into spell-binding southeastern Peru, generally acknowledged as the most species-rich birding region on earth, and the Manu Biosphere Reserve is believed to have the highest concentration of birdlife on the planet. The area boasts more than 1,000 species, including the cock-of-the-rock, quetzal, toucanets, tanagers, and seven species of macaws.

The tour moves through ecosystems as varied as the golden grassland of the puna zone, then down the



...Inside and Out



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eastern Andean slope through the cloud forest and to the lowland rainforest. Final bird lists tallying 500 species on any given tour are not unusual.

Starting off from Cusco, *Mountains of Manu* departs on July 28, and the land cost is \$4,475 pp dbl, including accommodations at two lodges, all meals and expert guides. A 3-day extension is available to Machu Picchu, based at the deluxe Pueblo Hotel at the base of the ruins. The operator offers another all-inclusive tour, the *Manu Wildlife Center* at the Manu Biosphere Reserve and based at one comfortable lodge with private bath and hot showers. This 13-day trip is priced at \$3,675 pp dbl, and also includes chartered air in and out of Cusco. The departure date is June 15. For more information, call **(800) 728-4953** or visit fieldguides.com.

Cuisine

Anyone who has been to Peru can vouch for its superlative cuisine. Sophisticated restaurants reflect the diversity of a nation that has blended its native traditions with the cuisines of Europe, the Middle East, China and Japan. The result: unique flavors that make Peruvian cuisine one of the tastiest and varied in the world, blending traditional ingredients and recipes with haute cuisine techniques.

While we might expect a special interest tour focusing on the archaeological or rainforest superlatives of Peru, it is rare to find a program whose centerpiece is cuisine. **Magical Cusco Tours** offers just that in its 6-night *The Taste of Peru* program.

The tour starts in Lima, where group members learn the basics of Peruvian cooking with chefs at Le Cordon Bleu Peru school and restaurant. They also spend a day with Luis Armando La Rosa, the first chef to introduce Nova Andina (nouvelle Andean cuisine) cooking. A dining highlight will include a 10-course "Menu de Degustacion," prepared especially by Gaston at the renowned Astrid and Gaston restaurant. The Lima program also features a tour of the historic city center and the Museum of Anthropology.

Three nights are spent in Cusco, where Chef Jorge Luis Ossio will host a dinner with highland specialties at his MAP Cafe, preceded by a private tour of the Pre-Columbian Art Museum. Tour members will also have a guided tour of the city; travel by rail to Machu Picchu; and spend a day in the Sacred Valley with visits to Inca fortresses and country markets. There's another culinary highlight: a vegetarian lunch highlighting potatoes (of which Peru has hundreds of varieties) at the **Hacienda Huayocari**, plus a tour of the owner's art collection.

On returning to Lima, highlights will be a Peruvian *lonche*, a teatime tradition legacy from 19th century English influence, and a *comida criolla* at the classic Lima restaurant, El Rincon Que No Conoces, whose Chef Teresa is considered one of the best criolla cooks in the country.

The land-only cost is \$2,769 pp dbl and includes accommodations at three-star hotels, most meals (only two dinners are not included), cooking classes and demonstrations, escorted sightseeing, and roundtrip flights Lima/Cusco. The hotels may be upgraded according to client wishes, and customized arrangements for groups are a company specialty. For more information, call **(866) 411-4622**, or call the company president, Wendy Alperstein, directly at **(703) 216-6909**. Visit magicalcuzcotours.com.

Wings Over Peru

What could be more interesting than a chance to see Peru on a private jet journey? **Latour** is introducing a super-deluxe *Wings Over Peru* program, whose special interest angle is visiting the far corners of the country aboard charter aircraft, accommodating from seven to 50 passengers (depending on the participation on each of three departures scheduled for May 21, Aug. 7 and Oct. 15). The aircraft used are the Westwind Astra 1125 and the Piper Cheyenne III (both for seven passengers); Beechcraft 1900C (for 16 passengers); and the Fokker F50 (for 50 passengers).

Days one and two are spent in Lima, where clients get a director-guided visit of the Larco Museum and have lunch at **Hacienda Mamacona** with owners Enrique and Milagros Rizo Patron. They'll also be treated to Peruvian Paso horse riding and marinera dancing exhibitions. Accommodations are at the **Miraflores Park Hotel**.

On day three, clients fly to Trujillo for a full-day exploration of the Moche culture, including Chan Chan and the Pyramid of the Moon. They then continue by air to Chiclayo to visit the Royal Tombs of Sipan Museum before returning to Lima for the night.

On day four, clients fly off to Arequipa for a city tour of the "White City" and a visit to the Convent of Santa Catalina (a UNESCO World Heritage site), plus lunch at Casa del Moral, Arequipa's best preserved colonial mansion. In the afternoon, clients continue by air to Cusco and the Sacred Valley of the Incas for a 2-night stay at the **Sol y Luna Hotel**. Come evening, they'll enjoy folk and theater arts, and the next day is filled with activities, including choices of horse riding, mountain biking, hiking, a visit to the Pisac market, whitewater rafting, lunch at a private hacienda, and a visit to the Maras Salt Mine.

On day six, travelers are offered five different ways to get to the Lost City of the Incas, ranging from taking the train to the ruins to hiking the Qhapaq Nan along the Inca Royal Road. Everyone meets for lunch at the **Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge**, before boarding the *Hiram Bingham* train to Cusco for a two-night stay at the **Monasterio Hotel**.

Day seven is spent on tours of Cusco, including a cooking lesson and lunch at the Pre-Columbian Art Museum and a visit to the San Blas crafts district where sculptor Octavio Mendivil hosts a visit of his workshop.

On day eight, it's a private air flight to Nasca, with a special flight over the mysterious giant figures etched on the desert floor. There's also lunch with Pisco brandies at the **Cantayo Hacienda Hotel** before returning for the final night in Lima. Pre-tours are offered to Huaraz for a 3-night stay, to Manu National Park, and to Puno on Lake Titicaca. The cost of the 8-night *Wings Over Peru* program is \$7,795 pp dbl, including deluxe everything. For more information, call **(800) 825-0825** or visit latour.com.



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