

VIVENTUROUS PERU

*Meaningful, Active Adventures into
The Cultural Heart of Peru*



Begins April 25, 2014

A 9-day expedition in Lima, the Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu, Cusco and around

Trip Overview

For nine days immerse yourself in the vibrant living culture of Peru while making a positive impact strengthening education, sustaining endangered indigenous traditions and supporting community-based travel. Meet organic farmers, master weavers, school headmasters, chefs and other local friends who invite us into their lives and their homes, giving us an unparalleled access into the vibrant, cultural heart of Peru.

Of course no trip to Peru would be complete without spending time meandering through the cobble streets of Cusco, exploring the splendid Sacred Valley and of course an in-depth pilgrimage to the breathtaking Inca sanctuary of Machu Picchu. Last but not least, we schedule in unstructured time both in Lima and Cusco so that you can strike out on your own adventures.

Each Viventurous Peru departure also coincides with a colorful local festival. In this trip, experience one of Peru's remarkable religious processions, *Cruy Velacuy*, where crosses from across the region are adorned with ribbons & flowers and carried from their sanctuaries to Cusco, where they are blessed. Musicians & dancers accompany the crosses, enlivening the celebration.

Signature Experiences

- **Edible Education.** Team-up with teachers & students at an elementary school south of Lima for a morning of collaborative play tending garden boxes or crafting an art project together.
- **Sustaining Textile Traditions.** Learn how the 2,000 year-old Peruvian textile arts play a key role in Andean life, rituals and festivals, Join our efforts -- hand-in-hand with those of Peru's most successful weavers' cooperative -- to rescue this endangered tradition.
- **Surreal Salt.** Walk hundreds of crystalline salt pans at Maras and witness salt being collected by hand under the potent sun in the same way it has been done for hundreds of years.
- **Ollantaytambo Unveiled.** Trod the huge stone Inca-designed fortifications in this idyllic Sacred Valley market town. Visit with ceramic artists making efforts to revitalize the ancient art of ceramics for which Ollantaytambo was once renowned.
- **Chicha & Sapito.** Step into a *chichería* and invite some locals to a friendly game of Sapito, involving heavy metal coins, a wooden box with slots and a shiny metal toad!
- **Hidden Trails of Accha Alta.** Experience a virtually unknown, yet splendid trail on a 3-hour, mostly downhill walk passing alpaca, shepherds, Andean meadows and creeks, ancient burial sites and a dramatic rock canyon. Share a picnic lunch en route.
- **Magical Machu Picchu.** Explore the mysterious Inca citadel at the measured pace it deserves, for two days and one night at one of South America's most breathtaking lodges.
- **Profound Procession.** Participate in one of Peru's remarkable religious displays. *Cruy Velacuy*, where crosses from across the region are adorned with ribbons and flowers and carried from their sanctuaries to Cusco, where they are blessed.
- **Unstructured Exploration.** Strike out on your own adventures in Lima and Cusco with ample unstructured time built into our schedule.

Thumbnail Itinerary



Friday, April 25: **Arrive Lima**

Most flights arrive Lima in the late evening. You're met at the airport by our English-speaking driver and taken to your hotel in the Miraflores neighborhood to settle in.

Lodging for two nights in Lima is at *Tierra Viva* (or similar) a fresh, bright and service-oriented hotel, recently opened in Miraflores. For a preview, visit: <http://tierravivahoteles.com>

Saturday, April 26: **Edible Education (or Art) + Free Afternoon Adventure in Lima**

Our Lima-based trip leader introduces us to the wonderful students of Cucuya, south of Lima. We, along with a handful of other dedicated supporters, contribute nutritious food for student lunches, provide for a weekly art teacher and supplies and alongside students & parents, have built raised boxes for a vegetable garden. This morning we team-up with teachers & students to tend garden boxes or craft a fun art project together. (Meals: B, L)

Unstructured Afternoon Exploration: activities can be suggested and facilitated, such as visiting the beautifully appointed Larco Museum, taking in a guided visit of Lima's historic old town or browsing the crafts boutiques, cafés and art galleries of bohemian Barranco.

Sunday, April 27: **Sustaining Textile Traditions**

Transfer for a morning flight to Cusco. Delve into one of Cusco's boisterous, fragrant open markets to see and taste some of Peru's exotic fruits and produce. After a coca leaf tea and a light lunch to help acclimatize to the altitude, drive to Chinchero to meet our friend Nilda Callanaupa, director of the CTTC. Nilda is a master weaver from Chinchero and a *National Geographic* grantee. She has worked tirelessly for two decades to rescue the endangered 2,000 year old art of Peruvian weaving and in that time, has been an invited speaker at over a dozen top museums & universities world-wide. Watch Chinchero's masterful weavers at work as Nilda explains the processes, techniques and individual skills that transform these pieces into museum quality art.

Explore Chinchero's Inca ruins and colonial church with its spectacular views across the Andes. Transfer 45 minutes to Huaran, nestled in the heart of the Sacred Valley. (Meals: B, L)

Lodging for three nights in the Sacred Valley is at the charming, cozy *Green House* (or similar) with its own peaceful gardens. For a preview, please visit: <http://thegreenhouseperu.com>

Monday, April 28: **Crop Circles, Surreal Salt & Ollantaytambo**

Visit Moray, home to a series of cascading agricultural terraces, each forming its own unique microclimate. Later, walk alongside hundreds of crystalline salt pans at Maras and witness salt being collected by hand under the potent sun, much in the same way it has been done for hundreds of years.

After a re-invigorating lunch, explore the idyllic market town of Ollantaytambo. Marvel at the enormous stone Inca-designed fortifications and explore them in-depth. If time permits, visit with ceramic artists at the clay studio *Seminario*, which is making efforts to revitalize the ancient art of ceramics for which Ollantaytambo was once renowned. (Meals: B, L)



Before returning to Huaran, step briefly into a local *chichería*. These Andean pubs are extremely rustic and serve *chicha*, a fermented drink made from corn, along with small plates. However, we're not here to eat, but rather to enjoy a fun game of *sapito* -- a game involving heavy metal coins, a wooden box with slots and a shiny metal toad!

Tuesday, April 29: Master Weavers, Pre-Inca Grain Silos & Hidden Trails of Accha Alta

Drive to a trailhead roughly 90 minutes from our lodge. Stop in to meet the master weavers of Accha Alta before visiting a series of pre-Inca storage silos on a dramatic mountain ridge above the town. Experience a virtually unknown, yet splendid trail on a 3-hour, mostly downhill walk passing alpaca, shepherds, Andean meadows and creeks, ancient burial sites and a dramatic rock canyon. Share a picnic lunch en route. (Meals: B, L)

Wednesday, April 30: Hike to Mandor Falls

After an early breakfast and transfer to the Ollantaytambo station, board a panoramic train for the 90-minute ride to *Aguas Calientes*. Once there, head out for an easy 3-hour round trip hike (weather permitting) to the peaceful Mandor Falls. Along the way to these rushing, powerful 12-meter falls you'll see bromeliads, orchids, birdlife and butterflies. A boxed, gourmet picnic lunch is prepared for you to enjoy while relaxing at the falls. Feel free to bring a bathing suit for a refreshing dip while there. (Meals: B, L, D)

Lodging for one night is at the stylish, contemporary *El Mapi Hotel by Inkaterra* (or similar). For a preview visit: <http://www.inkaterra.com/byinkaterra/el-mapi-hotel>

Thursday, May 1: Magic Machu Picchu

Rise early to catch the bus up the zigzagging road to Machu Picchu in order to be amongst the first to arrive at the ruins around sunrise. Our Andean specialist guide explains the history of this magical complex, unveiling the nature of its most important structures. After a few hours guided, enjoy a few more hours on your own to explore secret corners of the site or just meditate and feel the energy of this special place. Board the late afternoon train in Aguas Calientes for the approximately three-hour trip to Cusco, arriving this evening. (Meals: B, L)

Lodging for two nights in Cusco will be in the clean, spacious and peaceful *Tierra Viva Sapphi* (or similar). For a preview, visit: <http://tierravivahoteles.com>

Friday, May 2: Cusco Unveiled & Cruz Velacuy

Cusco is, simply put, one of the most beautiful Spanish colonial cities of the Americas. Today is dedicated to an in-depth exploration of this charming city on foot.

It is also a very special day to experience Cusco in its full splendor as you witness one of the most colorful religious manifestations in Peru, *Cruz Velacuy* where crosses from across the region are adorned with ribbons & flowers and carried from their sanctuaries to Cusco, where they are blessed. Musicians & dancers accompany the crosses, enlivening the celebration.



Continue your urban explorations with historical visits including: Santo Domingo, built directly on the Inca stone base of the Koricancha temple (the Temple of the Sun), the Plaza de Armas, the Cathedral, the artists' neighborhood of San Blas and the monumental ruins of Saqsayhuaman, with stunning views over Cusco. (Meals: B, L, D)

Gather this evening for a celebration dinner to toast our Peru adventure together!

Saturday, May 3:

Enjoy an unstructured morning of exploration in Cusco. Activities can be suggested and facilitated such as a ½ day kayak excursion near Cusco, visiting some of Cusco's excellent pre-Columbian museums or shopping for regional arts & crafts. (Meals: B)

Transfer to Lima this afternoon in time for your connecting flights or onward adventures.

Making a Positive Impact

At Culture Xplorers, we insist on being not only responsible travelers, but on making a positive impact on the communities with which we come into contact. We work hand-in-hand with local leaders in the destination we visit to spend time as well as money in their communities, to ask questions and share views and to support the living traditions that make these destinations unique.

To that end, we created the **Culture Xplorers (CX) Weavers Awards**, an annual awards celebration honoring the indigenous weavers of the Sacred Valley. Now in its 10th year, over 600 weavers from nine participating communities compete for pride and prizes. Each year, more than 30 winners are honored with medals, certificates of achievement and share a prize pool, which has reached well over \$6,000 annually.

Culture Xplorers also works to strengthen education in Peru in communities such as Yanaoca, where donations from a number of sources, including Culture Xplorers travelers, have facilitated the construction a school kitchen and a greenhouse producing organic vegetables for the kids. Thanks to this broad-based collaboration, 60+ students at Chosecani elementary school now receive nutritional, hot meals while attending class.

As a catalyst to these and other deep-rooted partnerships in each of our destinations, the non-profit **Culture Xplorers Foundation** was created in 2008 with the goal of fostering the sustainability of local culture in indigenous communities worldwide. For more details on our ongoing, positive impact partnership, please visit the following page of our web site:

www.cultureexplorers.com/positive-impact/cx-foundation

YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A VIVENTUROUS PROGRAM HELPS FOSTER THE SUSTAINABILITY OF LOCAL CULTURE IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN PERU

Cost & Details



5 to 12 Travelers: Cost for 9 Day Journey = \$2,592/pp (single room add \$545)

2 to 4 Travelers: Cost for 9 Day Journey = \$2,992/pp (single room add \$545)

Internal flights within Peru = \$385*/pp *Cost subject to change until purchased

Included:

- Our outstanding bi-lingual, locally based Peru trip leader will be with you in Lima and the Sacred Valley, and for eight or more travelers, in Machu Picchu and Cusco as well.
- Our specialist Andean guide will be with you in the Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu and Cusco
- In addition, organic farmers, Andean chefs, indigenous weavers, a master ceramicist, a school headmaster & other local guests join you at times throughout this adventure
- Viventurous *Signature Experiences* listed on the first page of this itinerary
- Lodging in small, charming hotels each brimming with local character, including: a stylish urban property, a peaceful country oasis, a restored colonial home and an upscale eco-lodge
- Meals: breakfast and lunch daily and (2) dinners during the 9-day core journey
- Private ground transportation throughout the trip
- All entry fees to included museums, trail permits, national parks, monuments, etc.
- Emergency oxygen supply on-hand throughout our time in the Andes
- Purified water provided aboard our vehicle– each participant receives their own aluminum eco-bottle to re-fill each day, thus minimizing the need for disposable plastic bottles
- Private airport pick-up and drop-off coordinated with group arrival & departure
- Comprehensive pre-departure materials, including: articles of interest, a recommended reading list, packing, weather & other tips to help you navigate smoothly in Peru

Items not included and estimates:

- International airfare to Lima, Peru. Budget \$1,000 (for coach)
- Domestic airfare within Peru (Lima / Cusco / Lima). Budget \$385. Flight will be booked by Viventura and added to traveler invoice. Cost confirmed at time of booking.
- Approximately 7 meals on our core 9-day trip.
- Single room upgrade - if you are traveling alone &/or opt for a single room, add \$545 for 8 nights. *Note: to avoid this upgrade, ask us to assign you a roommate. If none is available, the single room upgrade must be charged.*
- Tip to Culture Xplorers trip leader (\$5 to \$7/pp/day) and specialist guides (\$4 to \$6/pp/day)
- Traveler's medical and emergency evacuation insurance (recommended)

Details:

- Max. travelers: 12 (2 travelers minimum)
- Length of trip: 9 days, plus international travel time
- Activity level: Active. Participants must be able to walk comfortably and unassisted for up to 1 hour at a time and 3 total hours per day at altitudes of 9,000 to 12,000 feet