

## Machu Picchu Expedition Information Pack

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### Why Choose Earth's Edge:

Our mission is to support you in exploring our incredible world and experiencing life-changing adventures in the safest way possible. We are passionate about protecting the planet and improving the lives of those we meet along the way.

- We are a **100% Irish-owned small business**. Our founder, James McManus, is passionate about climbing mountains, and his extensive experience is an invaluable source of support for our office team in our day-to-day operations.
- We're the only company to have an **expedition doctor** on every trip, providing you with peace of mind knowing you're in safe hands from start to finish.
- Our **exceptional expedition leaders** are true experts in their region, passionate about sharing their first-hand knowledge about the local culture, history, and geography while ensuring we consistently deliver unforgettable experiences.
- We keep **group sizes small** to minimise our environmental impact and foster a strong group dynamic. Whether you're traveling solo or with friends or family, our small group sizes provide the perfect opportunity to bond over shared experiences and create lasting friendships.
- We run a **pre-departure training weekend** two months prior to each expedition. It includes a detailed expedition brief, two training hikes and expert advice from an experienced mountain guide. It's also a great opportunity to meet your fellow adventurers!
- We're here to **support you every step of the way**. Our friendly office team is available to answer any questions you have by phone, e-mail or video consultations. Each team member participates in an expedition every year, ensuring they can share up-to-date advice and insights drawn from their own first-hand experiences.
- Booking an Earth's Edge expedition entitles you to a discount from our **equipment partners** at [Great Outdoors](#) to ensure that you get the best gear for your expedition.
- **Responsible travel** is at the core of what we do at Earth's Edge. As a [Certified B Corp](#) company, we are committed to using our business as a force for good; to support our communities both locally and worldwide as well as creating more environmental awareness.

We have a number of environmental programmes and community projects, including;

- A [yearly scholarship](#) that gives porters the opportunity to become guides on Kilimanjaro.
- We plant 8 trees in Nepal for every person who travels with us in partnership with [Eden: People + Planet](#)
- Our clients in Nepal help to remove waste from Sagarmatha National Park through the [Carry Me Back Program](#).
- We collect [clothing and gear donations](#) for our amazing porters on Kilimanjaro.

To read more about our sustainability practises please visit our [responsible travel page](#).

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## Description & Detailed Itinerary:

Our **14-day itinerary** includes **9 days of trekking** through the **Peruvian Andes**. We want to give you the ultimate Inca experience, trekking to **Machu Picchu** and taking in its lesser known sister city **Choquequirao**.

Our adventure begins with a **stunning trek around Cusco**, taking in all the major sites while taking the time to adjust to the altitude. From Cusco we transfer to **Wajaqui Ecolodge** for the night before we drive deep into the Andes and begin our trek – our first port of call is Choquequirao. The site is **twice the size of Machu Picchu** and because of its remote location, receives only a fraction of the trekkers that visit Machu Picchu. In fact, Choquequirao receives the same number of visitors annually as Machu Picchu receives every day!

From Choquequirao, we trek along a **stunning, undulating trail** for several days to reach Machu Picchu; we **cross rivers**, trek up and over two **high passes** (4,150m & 4,668m) and follow meandering trails through **lush jungle bursting with exotic flora and fauna**. At several natural viewing points along the trek, we are treated with awe-inspiring views of the snow-capped peaks of Humantay (5,700m) and Salkantay (6,271m).

We frequently come across **traditional villages** along the trail, taking the opportunity to interact with the **wonderful native people** and experience life in the mountains. We take time to visit a **coffee farm**; picking the coffee cherries and learning about age-old Peruvian coffee growing traditions. We roast the coffee over an open fire, grind the beans, brew the freshest cup of Java you will ever experience and sit back to enjoy the electrifying caffeine jolt! We spend an evening at a **natural hot spring** soaking our tired legs under the stars.

On the day we visit the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu, we rise early and take the first bus to begin our **fully guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site**. After the two-hour hike around the site we take the steep trail up Machu Picchu Mountain. It takes a further two hours to reach the summit but the views of Machu Picchu and the surrounding landscape are worth all the effort! After climbing the mountain, you are free to explore Machu Picchu at your leisure until the last bus departs to Aguas Calientes.

This itinerary is perfect for anyone looking for a challenging trek and who wants to completely immerse themselves in **ancient Incan and modern Peruvian culture**. At the end of the trek, we have a free day which you can either spend relaxing in Cusco or you can opt for an incredible day trip to **Rainbow Mountain (Vinicunca)** which is a truly special experience.

## **Day 1: Arrive in Cusco.**

Arrive in Cusco (CUZ). Transfer to the hotel to relax or explore the city. The aim of this time in Cusco is to acclimate to the higher elevation. There will be a full expedition brief in the afternoon. Overnight hotel. Altitude 3,400m.

## **Day 2: Cusco to Wajaqui Ecolodge, 5 hrs trekking.**

After breakfast, we head out for a hike around Cusco. Your expedition leader explains all of the important historical sites including Plaza de Armas, San Cristobal Church and Plaza Regocijo. We also ascend to Cristo Blanco (3,700m) which is great for acclimatisation. We then transfer to Wajaqui Ecolodge (45mins) where we enjoy a traditional lunch from the area. After settling into your unique accommodation, explore the camp and take part in a traditional Ofrenda a la Pachamama (Mother Earth) Ceremony. Enjoy a delicious dinner around the campfire in the evening. Overnight Ecolodge. Altitude 3,330m.

## **Day 3: Wajaqui Ecolodge to Cachora to Playa Rosalina, 6 hrs.**

We depart Wajaqui Ecolodge in the early morning and drive (3hrs) to reach our trailhead at Cachora (2850m). We meet our muleteers here and enjoy stunning views of the snow-covered Padrayoc and Wayn Cachora Mountains. We start by climbing for 20 minutes to a small pass where we get our first distant views of Choquequirao. From the pass, we descend almost 1,500m into the stunning Apurimac Canyon. We stop for lunch in Chiquisca and then continue on to our campsite at Playa Rosalina on the banks of the roaring Apurimac River. Overnight camp. Altitude 1,640m.

## **Day 4: Playa Rosalina to Choquequirao, 10 hrs.**

Today is one of the toughest days on the trek with an overall elevation gain of 1,700m. As we cross the river we start the 1,500m climb up to Marampata (3,110m). It usually takes six hours to complete as we stop regularly for breaks. We stop for lunch and a good rest in Marampata which offers great views of Choquequirao and our route so far. From Marampata we follow an undulating trail cut into the mountainside to reach our campsite below Choquequirao. As we approach the campsite we marvel at the spectacular Inca terraces stretching way below the city. For anyone with any energy left after the morning's climb, there is an option to climb up to Choquequirao for the sunset. The sunset here is spectacular and if we are lucky we may even spot some condors. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,000m.

## **Day 5: Choquequirao to Pinchiunuyocc, 4 hrs.**

After breakfast, we climb for less than an hour to reach Choquequirao. We then spend the morning exploring the ruins taking in Hauqaypata (main plaza), Urin (upper square), the priests' house, Ushno (ceremonial platform) and the vast network of irrigation channels. Generally we have the site to ourselves, which makes for a much more spiritual experience when compared to Machu Picchu which is frequented by 5000 people per day. After a tasty lunch in Choquequirao, we get back on the trail again climbing for one hour to reach the Choquequirao Pass (3,300m) and then descend for two hours to our campsite in Pinchiunuyocc. Pinchiunuyocc is a stunning campsite as we set the tents on Inka terraces and enjoy the sunset with panoramic mountain views. Overnight camp. Altitude 2,400m.

## **Day 6: Pinchiunuyocc to Maizal, 7 hrs.**

Another big climb on today's trek, although we start with an hour-long downhill section to reach the Rio Blanco (1,900m). As we approach the river we enter into the cloud forest which is rich in biodiversity. We pass by native Polylepis trees, waterfalls and coca plantations. From the river, it takes six hours to climb up to the tiny village of Maizal where we enjoy imposing views of the Yanama and Yarahmayo Canyons. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,000m.

**Day 7: Maizal to Yanama, 9 hrs.**

Today's trail follows an ancient Inca path as we ascend for five hours to reach Victoria Pass (4,150m). The trail is steep in places and for most people it's the hardest day on the itinerary. Our route takes us past the Victoria Silver Mine which was used by the Inca and later in colonial times but is now abandoned. The pass offers stunning views of the snow-capped peaks of Humantay (5,700m) and Salkantay (6,271m). From the pass, we descend for two hours and then climb gradually to our campsite in Yanama village for the night. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,850m.

**Day 8: Yanama to Totora, 10 hrs.**

Another stunning day as we reach the highest point on our journey. After leaving the farmers' fields and lush vegetation in Yanama, we continue climbing for five to six hours to reach the Yanama Pass (4,668m). From here we enjoy stunning views of the Sacsarayoj and Padreyoc Mountains and we may spot some condor too if we are lucky. We stop for lunch below the pass and then descend all the way to Totora village. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,500m.

**Day 9: Totora to Santa Teresa, 7 hrs.**

Today we descend through a valley covered in trees with thick groves of bamboo. Flocks of colourful tropical birds and interesting wildlife roam the forest. We also pass several waterfalls and cross streams and wooden bridges along the way. We finish our trek in La Playa and go to a coffee farm for lunch and a coffee tour. Afterwards, we drive to our campsite in Santa Teresa. In the evening we have the option to visit natural hot springs where we can bathe in the therapeutic waters, a nice treat to relax tired and aching muscles! Overnight camp. Altitude 1,550m.

**Day 10: Santa Teresa to Hidroelectrica to Aguas Calientes, 4 hrs.**

We begin by driving to the Hydroelectric station and then follow the train tracks into Aguas Calientes. It's a beautiful walk through thick forest. After some time, we get our first views of Machu Picchu high above us on the saddle between Machu Picchu Mountain and Wayna Picchu. We arrive into Aguas Calientes in the early afternoon and check into our hotel. Overnight hotel. Altitude 2,700m.

**Day 11: Machu Picchu Mountain, 5 to 7 hrs trekking.**

We rise very early and take the first bus to Machu Picchu. We have a full guided tour of the ancient ruins which is an experience of a lifetime. After the two-hour hike, we take the steep trail up Machu Picchu Mountain. It takes a further two hours to reach the summit but the views of Machu Picchu and the surrounding landscape are worth all the effort! After climbing the mountain, you are free to explore Machu Picchu at your leisure up until the last bus back to Aguas Calientes at 5pm. Overnight hotel. Altitude 2,700m.

**Day 12: Aguas Calientes to Cusco.**

Take the beautiful train journey as far as Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley and then drive from there to Cusco. Enjoy some last-minute shopping and a celebratory dinner in the evening. Overnight hotel. Altitude 3,400m.

**Day 13: Free day in Cusco or Rainbow Mountain day tour.**

Enjoy a free day in Cusco to explore at your leisure or take a day trip to Rainbow Mountain. Overnight hotel.

**Day 14: Depart Cusco.**

Enjoy your last bit of relaxing or do some more exploring in Cusco before heading to the airport.

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## Expedition Costs:

**Total Cost : €3,499**

- A **deposit** of EUR/USD/GBP 399 is taken at the time of booking to secure your spot.
- A **part payment** of EUR/USD/GBP 1,000 is due six months prior to departure.
- The **final balance** can be paid in installments but is due three months prior to departure.

For up to date prices in GBP and USD, based on today's exchange rate, please visit our website.

## Flights:

Please consult us before booking your flights to ensure you arrive in time for the expedition briefing on the first day. It's essential you do not miss this meeting.

## Expedition Costs Include:

- Experienced expedition leader
- Experienced expedition doctor
- Training Weekend
- Earth's Edge team of guides and a full support team
- All accommodation based on twin sharing in Wajaqui Ecolodge, in hotels in Cusco, and Aguas Calientes, and camping elsewhere
- Use of state of the art tents and [Thermarests](#)
- All meals and drinking water (except in Cusco and Aguas Calientes where accommodation is based on B&B)
- A celebratory dinner at the end of the expedition
- All transport throughout the expedition
- Entry ticket to the Machu Picchu site with a fully guided tour of the ruins
- Entry ticket for Machu Picchu Mountain
- All group gear consisting of a fully stocked med kit including an oxygen tank
- An Earth's Edge buff for all participants

## Expedition Costs Exclude:

- International Flights
- Personal travel insurance
- Medical vaccinations
- Personal equipment
- Personal spending and tips
- Optional visit to the hot springs on day 6 – approx. \$2.50
- Optional day tour to Rainbow Mountain
- Expenses of a personal nature like laundry, phone calls, alcohol, excess baggage charges and any costs arising out of unforeseen circumstances such as bad weather, landslides, road conditions and any other circumstances beyond our control

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## Spending Money and Tips

We recommend that you put aside **EUR450** in spending money for this trip. We recommend that you exchange some EUR (or GBP/USD) into local currency 'Sol' in the airports or in Cusco. There are ATMs available in Cusco where you can withdraw cash using a credit/debit card.

Our recommended **tip amount is USD/EUR150** per person. Please give your tip to the Earth's Edge Expedition Leader and they will distribute the tip among all of our Earth's Edge team in Peru. The recommended spending amount above includes the tip for the Earth's Edge Team.

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## Rainbow Mountain Day Tour:

The day trip to the stunning Rainbow Mountain (Vinicunca) is a special experience. It is important to note it is quite a long day involving a very early morning start from Cusco. The drive from Cusco takes approximately three hours each way. The out and back trek to reach Rainbow Mountain takes five to six hours. The day tour costs **EUR/USD80** and includes breakfast, lunch and guiding. You will pay for this tour locally in EUR or USD. You don't need to inform us in advance if you wish to take the tour, you can decide on Day 13.

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## Special Offers:

- **Return Customer Offer** - If you have travelled with us before please visit our [return customer](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to.
- **Refer a Friend Offer** - If you have a friend who wants to travel with us please visit our [refer a friend](#) page for details on our referral programme.
- **Group Discounts** - If you are booking as part of a group please visit our [group discounts](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to.
- **Couples Offer** - If you are booking with a friend or partner please visit our [couples offer](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to.

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## Training Weekends:

Before every expedition, we organise a training weekend where you'll have the chance to meet your fellow adventurers! Led by experienced guides, these weekends include a comprehensive expedition briefing, two training hikes, and invaluable advice covering everything from equipment to weather conditions. Not only are these events educational, but they're also enjoyable, set against the breathtaking backdrop of Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. Food and accommodation for the weekends are not included.

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## Safety Standards:

At Earth's Edge, your safety is our top priority. Each expedition is led by an experienced leader supported by a qualified doctor with a keen interest in adventure travel and expedition medicine.

Our expeditions are further supported by our dedicated Earth's Edge team of guides, cooks, drivers, and muleteers/porters, all selected for their skills, experience, and excellent references.

Our teams are familiar with the locations of local medical facilities and hospitals in each destination. While our doctor carries a comprehensive medical kit, we ask all participants to bring a basic first aid kit as outlined in the equipment list. Always follow the guidance of your expedition leader to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

We recommend participants research local laws and customs before traveling to Peru. Up-to-date travel advice is available on the [DFA website](#).

On expeditions, the most common cause of illness is gastroenteritis (Delhi Belly), often caused by poor personal hygiene. The good news is that it is easily avoided by practicing the following:

- Always wash your hands and apply hand sanitizer after going to the toilet and before touching food.
- Always use drinking water to brush your teeth and avoid ingesting water while showering or washing your face.
- Maintain a healthy diet and consider taking multivitamins and probiotics for one month before and during the expedition to help your body adjust to changes in your diet and keep you healthy throughout the expedition.

To read more about our safety standards please visit our [safety page](#).

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## Earth's Edge Team in Peru:

### The Wajaqui Ecolodge

In 2023, we updated our Machu Picchu itinerary to include a night's stay in the beautiful Wajaqui Ecolodge just outside of Cusco, on day 3. This addition meant a lot to the Earth's Edge team, as the Ecolodge is owned and operated by [Edgar](#), our wonderful Peruvian expedition leader.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Earth's Edge was proud to financially assist with the inception of the Ecolodge when, with the help of our dedicated clients, we sent our team in Peru a loan of US\$5000. This money was intended to facilitate the establishment of a project or business, in order to help support them and their families while the tourism sector was disrupted by the pandemic.

This sustainable lodge was built with the help of Edgar's family and features furniture crafted from recycled materials, a stunning geranium garden, and a cosy bar. Located in a rustic setting surrounded by incredible views, it is also home to a small, on-site museum of local treasures. You can read more about the lodge on our blog [here](#).

### Tipping

At Earth's Edge it is important to us that all of our clients and staff are clear on how the tip is divided. We follow the instructions given to us by Edgar on how best to divide the tip.

Here is an example of how we divide the tip to give you an idea of what share of the tip each person gets on the trek. Our average group size is 13 climbers plus our doctor = 14 people. We recommend everyone tips **USD 150**. If everyone tips, that will give us a total tip amount of USD 2,100 (13 x USD 150 + USD 150 as we tip on behalf of our doctor).

With a group of that size, our Earth's Edge team in Peru will be made up as follows and receive roughly the following share of tips.

<b>Expedition Leader:</b> 1 person	USD 450 x 1	= USD 450
<b>Head Guide:</b> 1 person	USD 400 x 1	= USD 400



<b>Head Cook:</b> 1 person	USD 250 x 1	= USD 250
<b>Assistant Cook:</b> 2 people	USD 200 x 2	= USD 400
<b>Driver:</b> 1 person	USD 100 x 1	= USD 100
<b>Muleteers:</b> 5 people	USD 100 x 5	= USD 500
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>= USD 2,100</b>

Please note the above figures are a guideline based on an average of 13 trekkers. We ask our clients not to tip any of the Earth's Edge team directly as it's important that all of the team get their fair share of the tips.

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## Expedition FAQ:

Do you have a question that wasn't answered in this information pack? If so, please visit our [FAQ page](#) for a full list of frequently asked questions. If you can't find your answer there please [contact us](#).

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