

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 adventure travel. 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 a **dedicated expedition doctor** on every high-altitude trek, providing you with peace of mind knowing you're in safe hands from start to finish.
- Our **exceptional guides and leaders** are fully trained in wilderness first aid, and true experts in their region. They are passionate about sharing their first-hand knowledge of 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.
- 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.
- We are striving to increase the number of [female staff](#) across our expeditions.

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

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Description & Detailed Itinerary

Our **14-day itinerary** includes **9 days of trekking** through the spectacular **Peruvian Andes**. This is the ultimate Inca experience, trekking to **Machu Picchu** while also exploring its lesser known sister city **Choquequirao**.

Our adventure begins in **Cusco** with an **acclimatisation trek**, exploring the city's key historical sites while allowing the time to adjust to the altitude. From Cusco we transfer to the unique **Wajaqui Ecolodge** for a night before driving deep into the Andes to begin our trek.

Our first port of call is **Choquequirao**, an Inca citadel **twice the size of Machu Picchu**. Due to its remote location, it receives only a fraction of the visitors, and we often have this extraordinary site almost entirely to ourselves - a stark contrast to the crowds at Machu Picchu.

From Choquequirao, we follow an **undulating trail** across **high mountain passes** (4,150m and 4,668m), descend into **deep river canyons**, and move through **cloud forest and jungle** alive with **exotic flora and fauna**. Along the way, panoramic viewpoints reveal the snow-capped peaks of Humantay (5,700m) and Salkantay (6,271m).

We pass through **traditional Andean villages**, interacting with local communities and experiencing life in the mountains firsthand. A visit to a coffee **farm** offers the chance to learn traditional coffee growing methods, and brew one of the freshest cups of coffee you'll ever taste. We also spend an evening soaking our tired legs in **natural hot springs** beneath the night sky.

Our visit to Machu Picchu is the culmination of the expedition. After a **guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site**, we climb **Machu Picchu Mountain** for sweeping views of the citadel and the surrounding valleys.

This itinerary is perfect for those seeking a **challenging, immersive trek** that blends high mountain adventure with rich cultural experience. We finish with a free day in Cusco to relax or join an optional **day trip to Rainbow Mountain** and the Red Valley for a truly spectacular finale.

Day 1: Arrive in Cusco

Arrive in Cusco (CUZ) and transfer to the hotel where we can relax or explore the historic city centre. The goal over the next two days is gradual acclimatisation to the altitude. In the afternoon we hold a full expedition briefing to run through the adventure ahead. Overnight hotel. Altitude 3,400m.

Day 2: Cusco to Wajaqui Ecolodge, 5 hrs trekking

We begin with an acclimatisation hike around Cusco. Our expedition leader introduces the city's key historical sites including Plaza de Armas, San Cristobal Church and Plaza Regocijo. We continue up to Cristo Blanco (3,700m), an excellent acclimatisation point with sweeping views over the city. We then transfer to Wajaqui Ecolodge where we enjoy a traditional local lunch. After settling into our unique accommodation, we have time to explore the camp before taking part in a traditional Ofrenda a la Pachamama (Mother Earth) Ceremony. 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 (3 hrs) to reach the trailhead at Cachora (2,850m). Here we meet our muleteers and enjoy stunning views of the snow-covered Padrayoc and Wayn Cachora Mountains. We start by climbing for 20 minutes to a small pass and our first distant views of Choquequirao. From here, we descend nearly 1,500m into the dramatic Apurimac Canyon. After lunch in Chiquisca, we continue 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 (3,000m), 10 hrs trekking.

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 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.

Day 5: Choquequirao to Pinchiunuyoc, 4 hrs

After breakfast, we climb for less than an hour to reach Choquequirao. We spend the morning exploring this vast and rarely visited Inca citadel, including Hauqaypata (main plaza), Urin (upper square), the priests' house, the Ushno (ceremonial platform) and its intricate irrigation

channels. Due to its remote location, we often have the site to ourselves, which makes for a very special experience. After a tasty lunch in Choquequirao, we get back on the trail, climbing for an hour to reach the Choquequirao Pass (3,300m) before descending for two hours to our campsite in Pinchiunuyoc. This is a stunning campsite as we pitch our tents on ancient Inca terraces and enjoy sunset views across the mountains. Overnight camp. Altitude 2,400m.

Day 6: Pinchiunuyoc 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 cloud forest rich in biodiversity, passing native Polylepis trees, waterfalls and coca plantations. From the river, a sustained six hour climb brings us to the small village of Maizal where we are rewarded with impressive views of the Yanama and Yarahmayo Canyons. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,000m.

Day 7: Maizal to Yanama, 9 hrs

Following an ancient Inca trail, we ascend for five hours to reach Victoria Pass (4,150m), which offers stunning views of the snow-capped peaks of Humantay (5,700m) and Salkantay (6,271m). The trail is steep in places and for many this is the most physically demanding day of the expedition. Along the way we pass the abandoned Victoria Silver Mine, once used during Inca and colonial times. From the pass, we descend for two hours before a gradual climb brings us to our campsite in Yanama village. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,850m.

Day 8: Yanama to Totora, 10 hrs

Another spectacular but demanding day as we reach the highest point on our journey. Leaving behind Yanama's lush vegetation and farmland, we climb steadily for five to six hours to reach Yanama Pass (4,668m). At the top, there is a sense of achievement as we enjoy magnificent views of the Sacsarayoj and Padreyoc Mountains. With some luck we may even spot condors circling overhead. 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

We descend into a lush valley thick with bamboo groves as colourful birds flit through the forest canopy. We finish our trek in La Playa where we visit a coffee farm for a traditional lunch and a coffee tour. We get to experience picking our own ripe coffee cherries, learn how to roast the beans over an open fire, grind them by hand, and brew one of the freshest cups of coffee you'll ever taste. Afterwards, we transfer by road 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 welcome recovery for tired legs! Overnight camp. Altitude 1,550m.

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

After driving to the Hydroelectric station, we set off on foot along the railway line toward Aguas Calientes. It's a beautiful walk that winds through thick forest alive with tropical birds and lush vegetation. After some time, we catch our first distant views of Machu Picchu perched

high above us on the saddle between Machu Picchu Mountain and Wayna Picchu - a special moment as the final objective of our journey finally comes into sight. We arrive in Aguas Calientes in the early afternoon and check into our hotel, with plenty of time to relax or explore this lively town. Overnight hotel. Altitude 2,700m.

Day 11: Machu Picchu Mountain, 5 hrs trekking.

We rise well before dawn and take the first bus to Machu Picchu. A fully guided two-hour tour brings the history of this extraordinary site to life as we explore temples, terraces and ceremonial spaces within the ancient citadel. After the tour, we tackle the steep trail up Machu Picchu Mountain. The climb to the summit takes a further two hours, but the panoramic views over the ruins and the surrounding Andean peaks make every step worthwhile. We return by bus to Aguas Calientes for lunch, with the afternoon free to relax. Overnight hotel. Altitude 2,700m.

Day 12: Aguas Calientes to Cusco.

We take the scenic train journey as far as Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley before transferring by road back to Cusco. The afternoon is free for exploring or some last-minute shopping, followed by 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 own pace, or opt for a day trip to Rainbow Mountain and the Red Valley - a spectacular and colourful finale to your time in Peru. Overnight hotel. Altitude 3,400m.

Day 14: Depart Cusco.

Enjoy a relaxed final morning in Cusco before heading to the airport for your onward journey.

Expedition Costs

You can find our detailed expedition pricing [on our website](#).

- A **deposit** of EUR/USD/GBP 199 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 instalments, but is due 90 days prior to departure.

Flights

We'll share recommended flight timings that line up with our complimentary group transfers approximately 10 months pre-departure.

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

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Expedition Inclusions & Exclusions

What's Included:

- Pre-departure training weekend in Wicklow
- An Earth's Edge softshell jacket and a buff for you to keep
- A highly experienced local mountain guide
- Dedicated expedition doctor
- Full support team including guides, cooks and mules
- 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 planned group transportation throughout the expedition, including airport transfers
- Entry ticket to the Machu Picchu site with a fully guided tour of the ruins
- Entry ticket for Machu Picchu Mountain
- All group gear, including a fully stocked med kit, tents and cooking equipment

What's Excluded:

- Flights
- Training weekend accommodation and food
- Personal travel insurance
- Medical vaccinations
- Personal equipment
- Tips
- Expenses of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, alcohol, and excess baggage charges
- Any costs arising out of unforeseen circumstances which affect the itinerary such as bad weather, road conditions, and any other circumstances beyond our control

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Spending Money and Tipping

Spending Money

We recommend that you put aside **EUR450** in spending money for this trip. This includes the **recommended tip amount of EUR150 per person.**

We recommend that you exchange some money for the local currency, Sol, either at the airport or in Cusco, for purchasing small items like snacks, wifi and showers on the trail. There are ATMs available in Cusco where you can withdraw cash using a credit/debit card.

Tipping

At Earth's Edge it is important to us that the tipping process is transparent and that all team members are tipped fairly. Any gratuity is entirely at your discretion and based on your experience, level of satisfaction, and personal circumstances. If you are happy to tip, our suggestion is EUR150 per person, which you can give to your guide at the end of the trek.

Below 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. If everyone tips, that will give us a total tip amount of EUR 2,100 (13 x EUR 150 + EUR 150 as we tip on behalf of our doctor).

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

Expedition Leader: 1 person	EUR 450 x 1	= EUR 450
Head Guide: 1 person	EUR 400 x 1	= EUR 400
Head Cook: 1 person	EUR 250 x 1	= EUR 250
Assistant Cook: 2 people	EUR 200 x 2	= EUR 400
Muleteer: 5 people	EUR 100 x 5	= EUR 500
Driver: 1 person	EUR 100 x 1	= EUR 100
	TOTAL	= EUR 2,100

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 team directly, as it's important that everyone gets their fair share of the tips.

Rainbow Mountain & Red Valley Day Trip

The day trip to the stunning Rainbow Mountain (Vinicunca) and Red Valley is a special experience. 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.

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 and Red Valley takes five to six hours.

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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\$5,000. 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](#).

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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. Please note that 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 local mountain guide, supported by a qualified doctor with a keen interest in adventure travel and expedition medicine. Our expeditions are further supported by a dedicated team of guides, cooks, and muleteers, 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 guide and doctor to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

We recommend participants research local laws and customs before travelling 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 practising the following:

- Always **wash your hands** and apply **hand sanitiser** 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.
- **Drinking water** is provided by Earth's Edge on each day of the trek. This water is filtered. You may also wish to bring your own water treatment tables. If you wish to change the flavour of the water it is recommended to use electrolyte tablets/sachets or add a concentrated flavour drink.

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

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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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Book Your Free Trip Consultation

You can now schedule a free trip consultation with a member of the Earth's Edge team! We're happy to talk you through the itinerary, preparation and training, equipment, and anything else you'd like to know. Book your [consultation here](#).

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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