

Hebridean Pathways

South America 2012

Inca Exploration Trek 2 - Peru

Additional 9-day schedule:



Further to the **Inca Trail** trip a possible **9-day** extension is outlined below (giving **21 days** in all). This takes in a visit to the **Pacific coast, Paracas Reserve, Ballestas Islands, Ica vineyards the Nazca Lines, Arequipa, Colca Canyon, and Lake Titicaca....!**

Travelling to Cusco via the above route takes in many of **Peru's finest sites** and gives plenty of time to acclimatise for the Inca Trail. However, this does involve a lot of overland travel (buses and private hire). If Nazca is omitted from the itinerary then Arequipa can be reached by a direct flight from Lima.

This would allow for a trek to be made in to the Colca Canyon or an ascent of El Misti volcano (5821m) to be attempted. **Please do not hesitate to discuss your interests with Darren in order to plan the schedule.**

<u>Day</u>	<u>Place/Activity</u>	<u>Hotel Base</u>
1	Arrive Lima	Miraflores, Lima
2	Lima local sights	Miraflores, Lima
3	Travel to Paracas (Pisco) afternoon visit to desert coast reserve	Paracas
4	Ballestas Islands - travel to Ica via pisco/vineyard tour	Oasis, Ica
5	Ica museum/vineyards - afternoon travel	Nazca
6	Fly over the Nazca Lines - overnight bus to	Arequipa
7	Arequipa city sights	Arequipa
8	Colca Canyon visit	Chivay
9	Colca canyon condors - Altiplano	Puno
10	Floating Islands visit	Puno
11	Travel to Cusco - sightseeing on way	Cusco
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Days 12-21 as per the Inca Trail itinerary from day 4 onwards.



Sites of Interest Information:

Paracas and Ballestas Islands

The Paracas Peninsula located 200 kilometres south of Lima on the Pacific coast is one of the greatest marine reserves of South America. A half day boat tour to the Ballestas Islands (located just off the peninsula) guarantees sightings of much marine and bird life including Humboldt penguins, pelicans, dolphins and sea lions. In addition, visitors will also see a huge figure etched on the slope of a hill known by the locals as El Candelabro. Paracas was also home to one of most important ancient civilisations in

Peru - The Paracas Culture. By exploring the Paracas National Park by land you will not only enjoy a gorgeous landscape with unique rock formations, but also will learn about the ancient people that lived there between the desert and the sea 2000 years ago.

Nazca Lines and Chauchilla cemetery

In the Nazca region, scattered over 500 square kilometres of an arid plateau between the Nazca River and Ingenio River, are huge representations of geometric patterns, animals, humans figures and thousands of perfectly straight lines that go on for kilometres. The images on the ground are so huge, that the only way to fully observe



them is from the sky - hence we will take a flight in a light aircraft. The real purpose of the Lines is unknown, nobody actually knows who made them or why? These strange figures are more than 2000 years old and are known as the **Nazca Lines**.

For many years **Chauchilla** cemetery was looted by treasure hunters who ransacked the place, taking away all the treasures the mummies kept in their tombs for centuries. Grave robbers just left behind the corpses which can be seen today all over the ground. In addition to skulls and bones you can see several tombs which are centuries old, as well as human hairs, ceramic fragments and others remains scattered on the desert surface. It is the only archaeological site in Peru in which ancient mummies are seen in their original graves along with ancient artefacts dating back to 1000 AD.

Arequipa

Arequipa is a delightful Colonial City situated at the foot of **El Misti** volcano, a snow-capped perfect cone of **5,822 metres**. Known as the White City, Arequipa is renowned for its fine Spanish buildings and wonderful natural landscape. At the heart of the City lies the magnificent **Santa Catalina Monastery**, the most remarkable sight in Arequipa, with numerous passageways and intricate architecture. At the Museum of Santuarios Andinos you can meet Juanita The Ice Girl, a well preserved mummy found high into the Andean glaciers. The central **Plaza de Armas** is one of the most beautiful in Peru, laid-out with palm trees and gardens, surrounded by arcaded buildings and the Cathedral.



In addition to its own attractions Arequipa is the starting point for trips to one of the worlds deepest river valleys - the **Colca Canyon**, as well as for climbing **El Misti** volcano. It is possible to visit the canyon on a 2-day trip or for the more adventurous a multi-day trek can be undertaken which allows time to explore the canyons hidden secrets. El Misti ca be ascended in 2 long days by those who are well acclimatised but more normally in 3 days.

Lake Titicaca and Puno

Lake Titicaca is the **highest navigable lake in the world at 3856 metres above sea level** and it is bigger than Switzerland. Its shores and islands, such as Amantani and Taquile, are home to the Aymaras and Quechuas. These native folk are amongst Peru's oldest peoples, predating the Incas by a thousand years and who still live in traditional villages where Spanish is a second language and where ancient myths and beliefs still hold true. From **Puno** it is possible to take a boat to the famous **Uros Floating Islands** - whole villages built on rafts made of reeds.



Heading back north from Puno, a days coach journey taking in more Inca sites will see us reach Cuzco - **ready for the Inca Trail and Machu Picchu**.

A complete costing of the trip is not possible until the full itinerary is set. It is possible to allow for some days to be left open until in Peru so that decisions can be flexible as to where and what sites are visited.

It is estimated that the above itinerary would cost approximately £895 per person on top of the Inca Trail price.

Dates:

Sept-Oct 2012

Bookings

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