



# Day to Day Itinerary

## DAY 1 | Cusco to Salkantay Lodge

Overnight at Salkantay Lodge at 3,869 m/12,690 ft

*Note: On the evening before this day there will be a briefing with your guide in Cusco.*

After an early breakfast, we are picked up starting at 7:00 am at your Cusco hotel by a MLP guide and vehicle. *En route* we take a short break to visit the Inca ruins of Tarawasi near the town of Limatambo (approx. 1.5 hrs from Cusco). After leaving Limatambo, we pass through the mountain village of Mollepata where we stop for a short coffee break before ascending a winding mountain road to a place called Marcoccasa (30 minutes from Mollepata by vehicle).

Here, we begin our trek to Soraypampa, on an old route called the “Camino Real” (Royal Path). This is a good opportunity for everyone to acclimate, while enjoying a beautiful six hour trek. Salkantay Lodge takes its name from the majestic peak at the head of the valley - Mt. Salkantay, the second most sacred peak in Inca mythology and, at 6,270 m (20,600 ft), the highest in the region. After a warm welcome by our friendly staff, we are shown to our rooms and have time to freshen-up, before tea and cookies. The trip leader will hold a briefing by the fireplace, followed by aperitifs and dinner.

**Trekking Time:** Approximately 6 hours (including picnic lunch en route)

**Hiking Level:** Moderate

**Option:** Guests who do not wish to trek may be transported to the lodge by vehicle



Photo, top: Mt. Salkantay. |

Photo, bottom: The welcoming staff at Salkantay Lodge.



## DAY 2 | A Hike to Humantay Lake

Overnight at Salkantay Lodge at 3,869 m/12,690 ft

Today we take an acclimatization hike on the slopes above the lodge to Lake Humantay, fed by the hanging glaciers of Mt. Humantay. The hike is optional, but the views are amazing, and those brave enough can even go for a dip. We return to the lodge for lunch with your afternoon at leisure, after which you may choose to trade the glacial swim for a relaxing soak in our outdoor jacuzzi. We spend the night at the Salkantay Lodge with gourmet food and warm, comfortable beds. In the evening, the guide briefs us on gear and the itinerary for the following day. All meals are served at the Lodge.

**Trekking Time:** Approximately 4 hours

**Hiking Level:** Moderate to Challenging

**Option:** Horseback Riding (*see additional information on page 10*)



## DAY 3 | Crossing the Salkantay Pass

Overnight at Wayra Lodge at 3,906 m/12,812 ft

This is the big day! After an early start, we hike up the Rio Blanco valley, circling Humantay Peak across from Salkantay Peak. The highest point on the trek is the Salkantay Pass at 4,638 m (15,213 ft). At the pass we stop to take in views of snow-capped peaks of the Vilcabamba Range in every direction, the glaciated south face of Salkantay towering above us. We will keep our eyes out for Andean condors, often visible in this area. From the pass we descend towards Wayra Lodge (“Wayra”: wind; from the name of the location “Wayracmachay”: ‘the cave where the wind lives’) our destination for the evening. A hot lunch is served *en route*; dinner and overnight at the Lodge.

**Trekking Time:** 6–8 hours (including lunch)

**Hiking Level:** Challenging, crossing a 4,638m (15,213 ft) mountain pass

**Option:** Horseback Riding (*see additional information on page 10*)

*Photo, top: Glacial lake below Mt. Humantay. |*

*Photo, bottom: Salkantay Pass, highest point of the trek.*

## DAY 4 | Descending into the Cloud Forest

Overnight at Colpa Lodge at 2,870 m/9,414 ft

On this day we enjoy a leisurely breakfast at Wayra Lodge. Then we continue our descent along the left bank of the Salkantay River, through increasingly verdant scenery. We can feel the warm air rising from the jungle, accompanied by colorful butterflies and striking orchids. Upon arrival at Colpa Lodge we are greeted with a Pachamanca, a traditional festive Peruvian meal cooked by layering meat and vegetables with hot stones. Everything is then covered with hot stones, plantain leaves, high Andean grass and local herbs and the contents are baked in this underground oven. Colpa Lodge is located on an open plateau at the confluence of three rivers. The outdoor jacuzzi has panoramic views of lush green mountains. We spend the afternoon relaxing or exploring the nearby orchid trail. Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

**Trekking Time:** 3–4 hours

**Hiking Level:** Easy to Moderate



## DAY 5 | Following the Santa Teresa River Valley

Overnight at Lucma Lodge at 2,135 m/7,003 ft

Today we hike along the Santa Teresa river valley, through more populated rural areas. We pass through banana, granadilla, and avocado orchards and coffee plantations (said to be one of the best organic coffees in the world). A hot picnic lunch is served by the river. After lunch, we hike another hour before a private vehicle meets us for a short drive to the beginning of the “Llactapata Inca Trail” (aprox. 30 minutes). From the head of the newly restored Inca trail we easily make our way to Lucma Lodge, set in an avocado orchard. On the way we visit an organic coffee plantation where we join the owner on a short tour of the farm and learn how coffee is grown, harvested, dried and processed. Dinner and overnight at the lodge.

**Trekking Time:** 5–6 hours (including lunch)

**Hiking Level:** Moderate to Challenging (because of distance, not terrain)



*Photo, top: Colpa Lodge after the morning hike. |*

*Photo, bottom: Plentiful orchids and butterflies.*



## **DAY 6 | First Views of Machu Picchu from Llactapata Pass** Overnight in Aguas Calientes at 1,900 m/6,232 ft

After a hearty breakfast, we tackle the last day of our trek. We head uphill for 2-3 hours towards Llactapata Pass (2,736 m/8,974ft), where we come upon a distant but spectacular view of Machu Picchu Sanctuary from the southeast, a view few travelers ever get a chance to admire. We take a short break to explore the Llactapata Ruins, which have recently been restored. Lunch is served at a scenic viewpoint, looking out to Machu Picchu. After which we begin our final descent to the Aobamba River through lush bamboo forests, orchards and coffee plantations. We then board a train for a scenic ride (approx. 1 hour) to Aguas Calientes, the town of Machu Picchu. Upon arrival, we check into an award-winning hotel for a celebration dinner with our guide and one last briefing!

**Trekking Time:** 4–6 hours

**Hiking Level:** Moderate to Challenging



## **DAY 7 | Visit Machu Picchu Sanctuary** Return to Cusco at 3,360 m/11,021 ft

After a very early buffet breakfast at the hotel, we make our way to the bus station for the ride up to Machu Picchu Sanctuary (30 min). Our trip leader will give an introductory 2 hour guided tour of the ruins, after which we have the option of climbing the steep staircase of Huayna Picchu, a steep and vertically quite challenging hike that takes about 2 hours which affords great views of Machu Picchu. Afterwards, we meet up with our guide again and return by bus to Aguas Calientes for a late lunch and to catch our train. The ride from Aguas Calientes to Ollantaytambo takes about 1½ hours, and then a private vehicle will drive us back to Cusco (an additional 1½ hour). Upon arrival in Cusco (approximately 7 or 8 p.m.), we are dropped off at your hotel.

*Photo, top: First view of Machu Picchu Sanctuary from the trail. |*

*Photo, bottom: Citadel of Machu Picchu, with Huayna Picchu peak.*