

TREKKING EQUIPMENT & PACKING MANUAL

Machu Picchu



Machu Picchu Equipment Packing List

Please note that our packing list continues to evolve as new and better gear comes onto the market and we encourage you to contact us after your trek to add or refine any bits that you think will benefit future trekkers.

We start with the most important question, what to pack given the seasonal weather variations on the trail.

Weather Variations

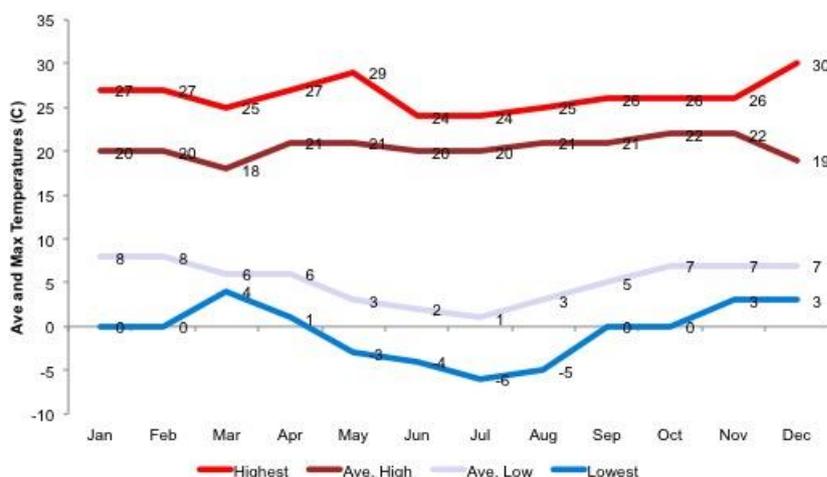
The weather along the Lares Trail and in Machu Picchu splits into two dominant seasons. The dry, winter season runs from April through to September, and the wet, summer season from October through to March.

The Lares Trail and Machu Picchu is busiest between late May and early September, so to avoid the crowds you may want to consider a trek on the outside months of late March into April, or late September into October, or even early November. Trekking in December, January and February is not recommended as trails get very wet. In fact, the Lares Trail is closed for restoration during February each year. It is still possible to visit Machu Picchu by train during these months, but be prepared for rain at the Citadel.

Temperatures stay relatively consistent throughout the year, with daily highs in the low 20s, and daily lows in the mid-single digits. At night, particularly in the winter season, temperatures can drop a few degrees below zero. The charts below give a good sense of what to expect weather-wise by month, and dictates your packing list.

In general, though, we recommend planning for some rain all year round, moderate temperatures during the day and cold to sub-zero temperatures at night.

Monthly average temperature highs and lows (Centigrade)



Clothing

Trekking Days

The best way to think about your clothing for the trek days are with the idea of layering in mind.

The ability to layer your clothing up or down from morning when it may be cold, to the mid-afternoon when temperatures reach their peak and then drop back down at night is key.

Layering also comes in handy as you ascend high passes that are exposed to winds or descend into shaded valleys. Effective layering only works if each layer allows moisture to pass through and escape to the external environment. In fact, the best layered clothing, like wool, promotes moisture transfer through its wicking properties. Cotton and denim absorb moisture and should therefore be avoided.

Below we set out the types of clothing you should bring with you and provide specific recommendations on what characteristics to look for in each.

Under Wear and Base Layers



You should bring 2-3 pairs of sports underwear, e.g. Icebreaker, or any other sporting brand. For ladies bring two pairs of sports bras.

Over your underwear you should wear a lightweight base layer (or next-to-skin layer). You won't wear this everyday day, just in case its cold in the mornings.



We recommend Smartwool, but any merino base layer will work.

Typically, you only need a top (i.e. torso) base layer, but it is worthwhile bringing one bottom (i.e. legs) layer just in case it gets very cold in the evenings.

Trekking Shirts

In terms of shirts we recommend 3 x short sleeve shirts and 1 x long sleeve shirt. Ideal fabric is a breathable, lightweight and quick-drying polyester, merino or nylon. Make sure that your shirts are not cotton.

Great trekking shirts are made by Icebreaker, Craghoppers, Columbia and Patagonia (see their Capilene range).

Hiking Trousers and Shorts. Bring 1-2 x pairs of hiking trousers – 1 is fine for 3/4 day treks, an additional pair is ideal for treks greater than 4-days. Hiking trousers from Craghoppers or Fjällräven are great. You may prefer to take convertible trousers, for example these by Craghoppers are brilliant.

Also bring a few pairs of trekking shorts. Columbia make good and affordable hiking shorts for men and women.

Fleece Jacket and Wind Breaker



For the colder stretches on the trail you should bring one mid-weight fleece jacket or parka top/jacket. Fleeces that use Polartec materials are great. Typically, Polartec fleeces come in 100s, 200s or 300s. The 100s are a little light and 300's too heavy. Two-hundreds provide great warmth and comfort, and are perfect for the Lares Trail.

Here are some good Polartec-200 Fleece Jackets, brands include: North Face, Helly Hansen and Patagonia.



In addition to your fleece parka or jacket you should also have a water-resistant and wind-proof jacket shell layer. Again, you want this to be relatively light (not a winter jacket), but still warm and sturdy. It needs to withstand any rain that you will encounter (although as you will see below we recommend taking a cheap poncho/rain gear in addition to your shell jacket).

We recommend the Patagonia Torrentshell Jacket, the North Face Resolve Jacket or the Marmot Precip Jacket.

Rain Gear / Poncho



Finally, you can never truly predict the weather on the Lares Trail. As an extra precaution, you should bring lightweight rain gear, or preferably a poncho that sits over your body and rucksack as seen adjacent.

Headgear

Sun Hat



You should bring a lightweight, easy-to-store sun hat to protect your head and face from getting sun burnt and reduce the probability of heat stroke. We prefer sun hats that have an adjustable neck cover, like the one shown adjacent. Do not bring a large bulky hat, like a straw hat, as these are difficult to store.

Neck / Head Band / Bandannas



If your hat doesn't have a neck cover you might want to bring a neck or head band which can help protect against sun burn whilst doubling as a scarf or head and ear warmer during the cold nights.

Seamless Buff neck gaiters or Delicol outdoor bandannas are cheap and can be used as a neckband, head cover, scarf, bandanna or wristband.

Fleece Beanie or Head Band: As we have already mentioned, the nights get cold on the trail. We suggest bringing a winter fleece beanie or head band.

Sunglasses:



Good sunglasses are a must. The leader in mountain glasses is Julbo. All lenses provide 100% protection from UVA, B and C and their category 4 lenses block 90% of visible light. Nonetheless, a basic pair of Julbos' like their Montebiancos' for men and Monterosas' for women provide versatility, are awesome value, and can be used equally well in non-mountain environments.

Headlamp / Torch



You should also bring a headlamp or torch which will be used in and around camp, and as a back-up if you are a little slow on the trail and finish your trek around dusk. Headlamps are preferable as they allow you to keep your hands free.

The leader in head torches is Petzl. We recommend getting the affordable, but good Petzl Tikka

Hands and Walking

There is one mandatory item that you should bring for your hands – lightweight, weatherproof gloves- and we also strongly recommend that you use walking poles but these are optional. We've noted below some key characteristics of both and provide some affordable recommendations.

Gloves



On the Lares Trail you are not going to experience blistering cold environments that require seriously insulated, heavy gloves or mitts, but you will likely encounter cold nips on the higher passes and in the mornings and evenings. A pair of lightweight, breathable and weatherproof gloves that are built for high-output aerobic activities like trekking, yet provide some warmth in cool environments are ideal.

Gloves are intrinsically not waterproof, as much as retailers will try to tell you they are. Given enough wet weather, your gloves will get drenched inside regardless of the water-resistant membrane. We suggest not wearing your gloves when it rains heavily, and saving them for when it is dry but cold in the mornings or evenings.

Affordable, yet good lightweight, warm gloves, that provide some weatherproof functionality are made by Outdoor Research, Black Diamond and Arc'teryx.

Walking Poles



We strongly recommend that you use walking or trekking poles on the Lares Trail – these of course are optional but are very helpful indeed.

You will be trekking along an undulating landscape for up to 5-6 hours a day, for 3-4 days. Your leg joints, particularly your knees, will take a battering. With the aid of good trekking poles, you will reduce the impact on your joints by up to 25% (a 1999 research study published in the Journal of Sports Medicine showed even better results than 25%). Poles also give you better balance.

Your trekking poles should be lightweight (250-350 grams per pole), adjustable (ideally with a lever-locking, not twist-locking mechanism), aluminium or carbon-fibre (not steel which is heavy and susceptible to snapping), and with a good, water-resistant grip (cork is most durable and performs well in wet conditions, rubber and foam are fine but not ideal for wet conditions).

The Black Diamond Alpine Carbon Cork is up there as one of the best poles, albeit a little pricey. Further down the market but still pretty good is the Black Diamond Ultra Distance or Leki Corklite. A cheap and cheerful trekking pole of decent quality is the Black Diamond Trail Back.

Footwear



Hiking Boots

Hiking boots are one of the most important pieces of gear in your trek. Your feet are what get you up and down the wall! It is paramount that you bring a good pair of boots that are well-worn in (i.e. the inner sole should have started to mould to the shape of your foot). Do not arrive with brand new boots that you haven't worn yet – you will get blisters, sore feet and even loose toe-nails!

There are two key factors to look for in a boot – fit and quality.

To test good fit on a boot, place your foot inside the boot with a mid-weight trekking sock on. Push your foot all the way forward. Take your index finger and insert it between your heel and the back of the boot. A perfect fit is if your finger sits snugly in this gap. If it is too tight to get your finger in then the boot is too small, and vice versa.

In terms of quality you should look for these key characteristics.

- Medium to high tops to support your ankle. The higher the top the heavier the boot. Ideally, we recommend sturdy medium high tops made from leather or a leather-condura material
- The sole should be made from rubber and have mid-to-deep lugs for good traction. The deeper the lugs the heavier the boot
- Mid-weight boots are best for Machu Picchu. Heavy boots provide great cushioning and are very durable but can be a little heavy to trek in
- The inner membrane should be waterproof. Gore-Tex is the best material for this
- The lacing-system should incorporate speed hooks or D-strings which provide additional ankle support

The Italian brand, Asolo, make incredible hiking boots. Have a look at their Asolo Fugitive hiking boot. Other good hiking boot brands include Salomon (see their Quest range), Berghaus (see their Explorer range), the Timberland Chocurua or the Hi-Tec Altitude.

Trekking Sandals



After a long day trekking the first thing you are going to want to do is take off your hiking boots and air your feet. We recommend bringing a basic pair of lightweight trekking sandals that you can slip into, whilst still wearing your socks for warmth. Alternatively, you can bring a pair of lightweight trainers.

Here are some good hiking sandals (Keen make a good trekking sandal).

Trekking Socks



You should bring 4 x pairs of trekking socks. Look for a light-to-mid weight trekking sock made of high wicking material. The best trekking socks are made from wool, preferably merino, as they promote breathability and are very good at wicking moisture away from the foot. Avoid cotton as they absorb and retain moisture making your foot susceptible to blistering. If you are allergic to wool you can go for a synthetic acrylic or acrylic-blend sock.

Great trekking sock brands that meet all the criteria above include Smartwool, Bridgedale, Point 6 and Wigwam. These socks all have flat seams (bulky seams lead to greater friction and ultimately blistering) and provide great cushioning to the foot.

Gaiters (Optional)



Gaiters sit over your trekking boot and lower leg and prevent mud, water, pebbles, dust and grit from getting into your boots. They come in use on rugged trails or in wet and unpleasant conditions. Most trails to Machu Picchu are relatively well worn but if you are trekking on the outside rainy months (March/April and October/November) you may want to consider bringing gaiters.



Rucksacks & Daypacks

The type of bag that you should bring really depends on how your support team is composed.

On the Lares Trail your porter will be carry your gear as standard in their service.

When you arrive in Cusco you should separate your non-trekking gear into a small storage bag that you can leave for safe keeping in your hotel for collection when you return from Machu Picchu.

We recommend taking no more than 15kg of gear on your Lares trail trek (this includes your sleeping bag and sleeping mat). Give your porters the gear that you don't need during each days' hike, like your sleeping bag, sleeping mat, trekking sandals, spare clothes, toiletries etc, as they typically rush ahead of you to set up camp and hence you will not have access to this gear until you arrive at camp each evening.

You will be wearing approximately 3-5kgs of gear each day (i.e. your trekking boots, daily trekking clothes, hat, trekking poles etc.).

This leaves a maximum 3kg of gear that you need to carry yourself (i.e. rain gear, gloves, your camera, valuables, fleece jumper etc.). Make sure you factor in the weight of water and snacks which can amount to another 2-3kg. Most people can keep their daypack lighter than 10kg.

Rucksacks / Daypack

Good rucksacks are designed to transfer load weight to your hips. The shoulder straps should carry no more than 30% of the weight. Here are the key features to look for in your rucksack:

- **Size:** The ideal size rucksack for the Lares Trail is a 30-35L lightweight pack. These can easily carry a maximum load of 10kg.
- **Waterproof:** Rucksacks are generally not waterproof, but good ones should be weather resistant. Look for design materials like pack cloth for the bag and Condura for high friction areas (i.e. inside of the straps). A water-resistant urethane coating is also beneficial
- **Design:** For perfect fit the harness and suspension system should be multi-size and adjustable. The shoulder straps should be well padded and not restrict movement, and there should also be a hip belt that's well padded. The best manufactures, like Osprey and North Face, design specific bags for women that have reshaped hip belts that are wider and more moulded; and narrower, but broader shoulder straps

FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT

bhf.org.uk

www.fullpotential.co.uk

© British Heart Foundation 2014, registered charity in England and Wales (225971) and in Scotland (SC039426)



For an excellent 30-35L bag we recommend the Osprey Talon 33 for men and the Osprey Tempest 30 for women. Alternatively the North Face Casimir 32 for men or the North Face Casimir 27 for women is another great pack.

Don't forget to purchase a rain cover for your rucksack. See Osprey Rain Cover and North Face Rain Cover.

The one complication that you might run into is transporting all your gear from your home country to Peru. Thirty to thirty-five litre packs like those mentioned above are relatively small. We suggest bringing all your gear including your rucksack in an 80L duffle bag. This can then be left in Cusco, storing your non-trekking gear, and your rucksack can be used solely on the trail.

Top tip: wear your hiking boots when travelling to Peru to reduce baggage weight.

Water Bottles / Hydration Bladder



Due to the effects of altitude, you need to stay well hydrated on the Lares Trail. You should aim to drink 2-3 litres of water a day. Water is typically supplied by your trekking crew at the beginning of each day. You should check with the operator that your crew boil, filter and treat the water with water purification tablets before providing it to you. In order to carry 2 or more litres of water on you each day you can either:

- Use two 1 litre bottles
- Use one 1.5 litre bottle (and drink half a litre before you head off in the morning)
- Use a hydration bladder (these can hold between 2-5 litres)

In terms of water bottles we recommend either the 1L or 1.5L Camelbak Water Bottle



Alternatively, if you are using a rucksack like the Osprey or North Face mentioned above, then a hydration bladder is very effective. You can go for the Osprey water bladder or our preferred water hydration bladder is made by Platypus.

Get a bladder that holds between 2-3 litres (anything more is too heavy!)

It is a good idea to add an isotonic powder, like Science in Sport or Gatorade, to your water for additional energy.

Sleeping Bags and Accessories

There is one mandatory sleeping accessory – a sleeping bag – and four optional pieces of sleeping gear that form part of your trail packing list.

Sleeping Bags

A good quality and warm sleeping bag is a must on the Lares Trail. Here are the key characteristics to look for`;



It is possible to rent a sleeping bag in Cusco but we recommend bringing your own as rented sleeping bags are often not great quality, and sometimes have questionable hygiene standards. If you do rent one then bring a sleeping bag liner with you for additional insulation and cleanliness and check for the key characteristics noted below.



Down vs. Synthetic

Sleeping bags come in two types – goose or duck down, and synthetic. Down sleeping bags are generally lighter, warmer and better quality. They are however, more expensive.

To decide between the two types, think carefully about how often you will be using the sleeping bag for future adventures or treks. Many people who trek the Lares Trail graduate to higher more challenging classic world treks like Mount Kilimanjaro, Everest Base Camp trek and the Annapurna Circuit. A lightweight, warm down sleeping bag will serve you very well on most, if not all classic high altitude or winter treks, for many years into the future. On the other hand, if the trail is just a one off with little likelihood that you will be going to high altitude or on winter trekking trips in the future, then a good synthetic will suffice.

Warmth

Regardless of season, it can get pretty cold at night on the Lares Trail (as seen on the temperature chart above). The coldest months coincide with the dry popular trekking season of May through September. During this time, sub-zero temperatures are common at night.

We recommend a four season bag for all year round with a rating of -10 C (14F). During the dry shoulder months of March-April and October-November you can get away with a three season bag (-4 C / 25F). December, January and February are very wet and not great for trekking.

Weight

As your porter will be carrying your sleeping bag, the lighter weight the better. There is however a trade-off between warmth and weight. Try get a bag that is no more than 2.5kg – that's half your porter weight limit!

Shape

Mummy-shaped sleeping bags are the best as they are designed to fit the contours of your body and hence provide great insulation. Sleeping bags that have an insulated hood and draw-chord are great. Another useful feature is a two-way zipping system that allows for easy unzipping at both ends.

FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT

bhf.org.uk

www.fullpotential.co.uk

© British Heart Foundation 2014, registered charity in England and Wales (225971) and in Scotland (SC039426)



Recommendations:

Cheap and cheerful synthetic bags include:

- Coleman North Rim 0-Degree (synthetic, -10C/14F, a little heavy)
- Marmot Trestles 15 (synthetic, -9C/15F, lightweight)
- Mountain Hardwear Lamina 15 (synthetic, top of the range, -9C/15F, light)

Amazing performance down bag:

- Mountain Hardwear Phantom 15 (men only, down, -9/15F, super-light)

Insulated Sleeping Mat (Optional)

A roll mat is typically provided by tour operators on Machu Picchu treks, but if you want to ensure that little extra sleeping comfort and insulation then you might want to bring a lightweight sleeping mat. You can get a self-inflating version. We recommend thermarest mats.

Sleeping Bag Liner (Optional)

If you decide to go for a three season sleeping bag or rent a sleeping bag in Cusco, it's worth bringing a sleeping bag liner for additional insulation should temperatures get really cold at night. Go for one that is mummy-shaped so that it fits your sleeping bag contours.

Inflatable Pillow (Optional)

A simple inflatable pillow can come in handy if you are one of those people that needs a soft surface to rest your head. Alternatively, just stuff the hood of your sleeping bag with some spare clothing.

Ear Plugs (optional)

It can get a little loud at the various camps. If you are a light sleeper basic ear plugs will prove to be very effective in giving you an uninterrupted nights rest.



Other Key Items to Pack:

Passport – You need your passport to enter the Lares Trail and Machu Picchu. We recommend bringing a few copies of the identity page as well.

Insurance – You should have trekking and travel insurance for the Lares Trail. Remember to write down your policy number and ideally carry a copy of your policy on you. If something does go wrong during the trek, you will want to contact your insurance company immediately.

Trekking Towel (optional) – A medium lightweight trekking towel to dry your hair, face and hands after a rainy days trekking. There are often options to have a shower during the trek, so a towel comes in use. If you decide to take a shower you might want to bring flip flops, thongs or lightweight sandals for hygiene reasons and a swimsuit (see below)

Swimsuit (optional) – There are hot springs near Aguas Calientes, just below Machu Picchu, where you can swim.

Small Umbrella (optional) – A small, foldable umbrella can actually prove pretty useful as a stop gap between putting on full rain gear when light drizzles appear (these are common during the rainy season of October-March)

Sweat Resistant Sun cream – Don't just get any sunscreen. You are trekking to high altitude where the sun intensity is high, so you will need a high SPF 30 or higher. You will also be exerting yourself so a sunscreen that is sweat resistant is important. Speak to any athlete and they will confirm that the best sweat resistant sun cream is P20. Make sure to bring sun protection lip cream as well.



Insect Repellent – A basic insect repellent is important. Make sure to get a reliable brand that has a high Deet content – greater than 90% (Repel make a great product). Cusco and Machu Picchu are considered low risk malaria zones (see map adjacent) but you can never be too careful, and the flies in Aguas Calientes are large.

FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT

bhf.org.uk

www.fullpotential.co.uk

© British Heart Foundation 2014, registered charity in England and Wales (225971) and in Scotland (SC039426)



Wet Wipes – Great for cleaning your hands and face, and wiping down your body after a long days trekking. We also recommend bringing a small antiseptic hand-gel for dousing your hands before meals

Dry Plastic Bags – Bring a few large, medium and small plastic bags that you can use to source separate your wet and dry gear. Use zip-lock bags for your small gear like your wallet, money, camera, passport etc

Pee Bottle (for the ladies) – We only hear good things about this – check out: Freshette.

Blister Plasters – Trekking up to 4-5 hours a day can result in painful and debilitating blisters. Treat blisters early and take immediate measures to reduce friction. When applying a plaster, make sure you remove excess moisture from the blistered area and use a good blister plaster like those from Leukotape P. or Compeed. It's a wives tail that duct tape works well. In fact, duct tape is not breathable and hence the skin saturates under the tape and the blister worsens

General Meds – Take Paracetamol for headaches (a common early symptom of altitude sickness) and Imodium. Your guide should be carrying a basic first aid kit, but you may want to carry some lightweight basics.

Snacks – Take 2-3 x energy bars for each day on the trail, so 10-15 in total. Don't take milk based snacks as these melt. Nuts are also a good snacking food for the trail, just don't get salty ones as these lead to dehydration.

Toiletries – One roll of toilet paper per trekker is a must (remove the cardboard roll to save space) and all your other toiletry basics (toothbrush, toothpaste, small travel soap).

Cash – Bring cash in US dollars (\$5 per day per porter and \$20 per day per guide – average tips for 4-day trek = \$100 per trekker) for tips and Soles (in coins and small notes) for small purchases, access to toilets at Machu Picchu etc.

Book / Kindle – Bring some Machu Picchu/Peru Reading material for context. Hugh Thomson's The White Rock provides great background information to Machu Picchu overlaid by a fascinating story about the search for the 'Lost City'. The Footprints Cuzco & Inca Heartland guidebook is also fantastic.

Cameras – The scenery along the Lares Trail and at Machu Picchu is extraordinary. Bring a decent camera to capture the experience. A good digital SLR cameras or to capture awesome videos we recommend the GoPro. Remember to make sure your camera equipment is fully charged as there are no charging points along the trail, or bring a spare battery and SD Card for safety. You may want to invest in a solar backpack charger.

FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT

bhf.org.uk

www.fullpotential.co.uk

© British Heart Foundation 2014, registered charity in England and Wales (225971) and in Scotland (SC039426)