



Machu Picchu – Extra Facts

- Toilets - These range from very basic ('communing with nature' on the trek itself) to toilet and washing facilities at the camp sites each night. There are often en-suite toilet and washing facilities at the hotels and lodges in Cusco.
- Certain sections have crumbling and uneven terrain, and some sheer drops at either side. Your leader will help you get through these sections if you have a fear of heights!
- Smoke alarms are not a legal requirement in Peru, and you may find your lodge does not have them in place, emergency fire procedures will be explained to you.

Altitude Sickness

It is important to remember that severe altitude sickness and its variants are very rare on Machu Picchu treks. You will not be trekking to extreme altitude and all routes have good altitude profiles that allow for adequate descents after going over high passes. There are however, a number of golden rules to remember;

If you feel unwell at altitude, assume it is altitude sickness. If you have symptoms of altitude sickness do not ascend further. In some cases, this can mean going a little higher to go lower (i.e. going over a pass). Get over the pass quickly and descend. If symptoms get worse after waiting at a certain altitude, descend immediately

In addition to these rules, we recommend following these basic principles:

Acclimatise for a minimum of 2 days in Cusco – where you relax and drink lots of fluids. Ensure you remain well-hydrated on the trail – drink 2-3 litres of water a day. Go slowly, enjoy the scenery and don't over-exert yourself. We suggest you avoid smoking, drinking alcohol and taking any other stimulants on the trek.

FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT

bhf.org.uk

www.fullpotential.co.uk



Emergencies

The event is not a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking abilities. This is allowed for. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. In the event of an emergency all guides and leaders are maintaining contact, and the backup vehicle will not be far away. If somebody is unable to walk at all, then the guides will arrange evacuation to the vehicle. Some areas are very remote, with no car access, and emergency evacuation may take up to 4 hours. However, there are several escape routes and the nearest medical facilities will be by stretcher and then vehicle.

Before You Leave

The more you know about your holiday destination of Peru, before you leave, the more you will be able to appreciate and understand it once you're there.

Reading: Mark Adam's super fun, yet brilliantly researched book, Turn Right at Machu Picchu, which provides fascinating insights on the 'Lost City' and its incredible allure in popular culture. If you want a truly detailed guidebook on the city itself The Machu Picchu Guidebook: A Self-Guided Tour by Ruth Wright and Alfredo Zegarra.

Please try and learn some of the local language – even if it's just “hello”, “good-bye” and “thank you”.

Peru doesn't have many waste collection services, particularly in rural area, so try to leave as much excess packaging (e.g. film boxes, plastic bags etc) at home and when you're buying toiletries and other stocks, stick to biodegradable products.

Consider the clothes you're packing. Peru has modest dress codes. By dressing inappropriately, you may be putting up a barrier between yourself and the people you want to interact with. Loose clothing that covers limbs not only protects you from the sun and insects, but also will ensure you're more readily accepted by the local people. Likewise, leave expensive jewellery at home – not only can it attract thieves, it's a tactless reminder of the differing standards of wealth.

FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT

bhf.org.uk

www.fullpotential.co.uk



Local People and Customs

Meeting and interacting meaningfully with the local people and experiencing foreign cultures are often the most memorable highlights of a holiday. Your Machu Picchu Trek will provide many opportunities for both, however just as at home, respect, consideration and an open mind are needed for these interactions to be mutually enjoyable.

Put yourself in their shoes. It's easy to judge another culture by our own standards and assumptions, but it's worth keeping in mind:

- You are a guest in their community – please respect your hosts and behave as you'd expect a guest to behave in your home.
- Keep an open mind and don't be too quick to judge: we do things differently back home – not better, just differently.
- Please be respectful of local customs. Read up before you go and ask your tour leader, or a local, if you're unsure. Observe, listen and take your cue from the local people.
- Nudity, scanty or inappropriate dress often causes offense, particularly in Muslim regions. Modest dress will help minimize the risk of sexual harassment (locals won't readily assume you're "available") and you'll be treated with a lot more respect.
- Formalities such as greetings can be quite different to what you're used to. It's often best to wait for the local person to make the first move – be it a handshake or a nose rub!
- Please respect private property and sites where access may be limited, by asking permission. Please also abide by the laws of the country and community you're visiting.

FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT

bhf.org.uk

www.fullpotential.co.uk



Begging

It's often painfully hard to resist the pleadings of beggars, from children selling you sweets or adults with terrible disabilities. In most cases, we strongly recommend you do not give money or other "gifts" to beggars. In some cases, babies & children are rented out to adults, or are forced out by their parents, and are even deliberately maimed or drugged to increase their earning capacity as beggars.

If you bring stationery or other things from home for the local children, give them to the school teacher for distribution, rather than directly to the kids.

Photography

Please always ask before taking someone's photo, and respect his or her wishes. Usually just lifting your camera with a questioning look will suffice as a request, although asking in the person's own language is even better. A smile goes a long way!

We suggest that you don't pay for taking photos of people – it becomes another form of begging, with similar consequences. Usually, if you take a little time to talk to your subject, they will agree to be photographed – you end up with a far more relaxed subject, and you each have a more enjoyable and memorable experience.

If you promise to send someone a photo, please try to follow through. Guides can sometimes help out, delivering the prints the next time they're passing through. A digital camera can be a great asset, enabling you to immediately show your subjects their photos.

Bargaining

Bargaining is a fundamental part of the shopping experience in Peru, but what many westerners don't realize is that it's not about securing the lowest possible price. It's about fair trade and reaching a tactical agreement that suits both parties.

The social interaction is as much a part of the process as the financial outcome. Have fun with it and keep things in perspective, but don't be mean-spirited. This website has a fun 10 step guide to haggling in Peru: www.tripsavvy.com/art-of-haggling-in-peru-1619964



Religious & Historic Sites

Please respect the physical and cultural integrity of religious and historic sites. Ensure you are appropriately dressed and aware of particular actions that may cause offence. When you are exploring Machu Picchu, be mindful of where you're putting your feet. Don't succumb to the temptation to souvenir a piece of stone or pottery or other artefact.

Food

Peru has a distinctive and exciting cuisine – sampled local delicacies and shared meals with the local people are invariably the stuff of rich memories. We encourage you to support local restaurants, often family-run, by trying out their food. If you're eating on the street or in markets, stick to hot food cooked in front of you, and eat from establishments where there is a high turnover, where freshness is more likely to be assured. Avoid raw foods or any that may have been washed in un-purified water or drinks containing un-purified ice. If in doubt, ask your guide – he or she can also provide restaurant recommendations.

It is also important to note that if you have any food allergies or happen to be a vegetarian or vegan, ensure that you have made this information available prior to departure, and your needs will be taken care of for you. We'd also suggest you bring with you any specific items and snacks that you know you would like to have with you for the treks and afterwards as well.

FIGHT FOR EVERY HEARTBEAT

bhf.org.uk

www.fullpotential.co.uk