



TRIP GLOBAL

7 Days in Peru: Lima, Cusco & Machu Picchu

Lima, Peru & Cusco, Peru & Aguas Calientes, Peru · May · 7 days

Tailored for groups - includes group activities, social dining, and group-friendly options

A week that starts with two days in Lima, moves to three in Cusco and the Sacred Valley, and ends with a full day at Machu Picchu from Aguas Calientes. Look forward to Museo Larco, the ruins at Pisac and climbing Huayna Picchu with friends.

Open the interactive trip: live map, photos and links

Before you go:

Get a Peru eSIM: data on landing

What this trip might cost, per person for 7 days, flights extra:

Budget \$180-240 · Mid-range \$310-430 · Comfort \$520

Opening hours, prices and transport change. Please double-check bookings and times before you go.

YOUR TRIP AT A GLANCE

1

DAY 1

Miraflores: Larcomar and Parque Kennedy

Miraflores, Lima · 2 nights

2

DAY 2

Museo Larco, Ceviche and Plaza Mayor

3

DAY 3

Cusco: Plaza de Armas, Qorikancha and San Blas

Cusco · 3 nights

4

DAY 4

Sacred Valley: Pisac, Urubamba and Ollantaytambo

5

DAY 5

Sacsayhuamán, Qenko, Puca Pucara and Tambomachay

6

DAY 6

Aguas Calientes: Mandor Garden and Toto's House

Aguas Calientes · 2 nights

7

DAY 7

Machu Picchu and Huayna Picchu

?

AFTER THE LAST DAY

Before you go: Lima, Cusco, Aguas Calientes

Miraflores: Larcomar and Parque Kennedy

Arrival day: an easy start close to your stay

Sunrise 6:18 AM

Golden hour 5:23 PM

Sunset 5:52 PM

Your base for 2 nights: Miraflores, Lima

Ease into Lima with a walk along the Miraflores cliffs at Larcomar, then settle around Parque Kennedy and El Magisterio for the evening.

GO

12:30 PM · 45 minutes

Jorge Chávez International Airport to Miraflores

Take the airport bus (BUS line) direct to Miraflores, or a taxi. About 30 minutes depending on traffic. Costs 10-15 soles on the bus, 40-60 by taxi.

- Metro + Bus combo · 50-60 minutes · \$2-3 per person
- Shared shuttle (tour company) · 45-50 minutes · \$15-20 per person
- Taxi/Uber · 35-45 minutes · \$18-25 per person

[Book a transfer](#)

1

2:30 PM · 1 hour

Larcomar

Free · Open 10 AM-10 PM

A clifftop mall carved into the rock above the Pacific. Wander the walkways, grab a juice at a cafe, and soak in the ocean views without spending much. Five minutes' walk from central Miraflores.

Insider tip: Head to the upper terraces away from the shops for quieter views and better photos of the coast.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2

4:00 PM · 1.5 hours

El Magisterio

A light, airy cevicheria on a backstreet in central Miraflores. Order the mixed seafood ceviche, a cold beer, and cancha (fried corn). Fresh, honest, and under 30 soles per person. Ten-minute walk from Larcomar.

Insider tip: Go before 5 PM to avoid the evening crowd. Ask for extra lime and extra ají (chilli) on the side.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

3

5:30 PM · 1.5 hours

Parque Kennedy

Free

The heart of Miraflores at dusk. Watch the light turn gold over the cliffs, artists sketch on the grass, and locals emerge for evening walks. Spot the resident cats. Five-minute walk from the restaurant.

Insider tip: Arrive by 5:23 PM for golden hour. Sit on a bench facing the ocean, not the street.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

DAY 1: MIRAFLORES: LARCOMAR AND PARQUE KENNEDY (CONTINUED)

If you land early (optional, close to your stay, before the plan above)

Huaca Pucllana: An ancient ceremonial pyramid in the middle of Miraflores, 2,000 years old. Walk the small site and museum before lunch if you land early.

Mercado de Flores: A covered flower and vegetable market near the bus terminals, full of color and locals. Quick browse, 10 minutes from most accommodations.

Open Day 1 as a route in Google Maps

Where to stay in Miraflores, Lima

Stay in central Miraflores, near Parque Kennedy or the clifftop promenade. You're within walking distance of restaurants, the coast, and the minibus stops for day trips to Cusco and the Sacred Valley.

Selina Miraflores

Budget · Hostel · \$

Social vibe, rooftop with Pacific views, good beds, walking distance to museums.

Book now

Google Maps >

Flying Dog Backpackers

Budget · Hostel · \$

Barranco location, budget beds, lively common areas. Steps from bohemian streets and bars.

Book now

Google Maps >

Costa del Sol Wyndham Lima Miraflores

Mid-range · Hotel · \$\$

Reliable mid-range option. Ocean views from rooms and restaurant. Close to attractions.

Book now

Google Maps >

Antigua Miraflores

Mid-range · Guesthouse · \$\$

Converted mansion, boutique feel, personable staff, excellent breakfasts included daily.

Book now

Google Maps >

Casa Andina Select Miraflores

Mid-range · Hotel · \$\$

Mid-range comfort, pool, good restaurant. Walking distance to cliff path and restaurants.

Book now

Google Maps >

All stays in Miraflores, Lima

Holiday rentals

DAY 1: MIRAFLORES: LARCOMAR AND PARQUE KENNEDY (CONTINUED)

Where to eat

Café Café

Peruvian breakfast · Breakfast · \$

Local spot in Miraflores. Fresh juices, toast, excellent coffee. Near your hotel.

[Google Maps >](#)

El Bodegón

Peruvian seafood · Lunch · \$\$

San Isidro classic. Ceviche, fish ceviche, causa. Book ahead or go early at noon.

[Google Maps >](#)

Isolina Taberna

Peruvian traditional · Dinner · \$\$

Miraflores institution. Grilled fish, ají de gallina. Reserve by 5pm for sunset views.

[Google Maps >](#)

TOURS & DAY TRIPS FROM LIMA

2-4 DAYS

Machu Picchu via the Inca Trail or short hike

The world's most famous ruins are worth the trip; a 4-day Inca Trail trek or a 2-day train and hike combo from Cusco includes guides, food, and history you won't get alone.

[Book now](#)

FULL DAY

Sacred Valley full-day tour

Visit Ollantaytambo, Pisac, and local Quechua communities in one day with a guide who explains the terraces, markets, and pre-Incan history properly.

[Book now](#)

4-5 HOURS

Lima food tour with market visits and ceviche lunch

Learn how to make ceviche and other Peruvian dishes from a chef, visit local markets, and eat your way through Barranco and Miraflores.

[Book now](#)

HALF DAY

Larco Museum and Barranco neighbourhood walk

See 3,000 years of Peruvian art and artefacts in a manageable collection, then explore the bohemian neighbourhood with colonial buildings and street art.

[Book now](#)

HALF DAY

Inca ruins near Cusco (Sacsayhuaman, Qorikancha)

Skip the queues and crowds at Machu Picchu temporarily; these ruins around Cusco are just as impressive and include a guided hike with views over the city.

[Book now](#)

Museo Larco, Ceviche and Plaza Mayor

Sunrise 6:18 AM

Golden hour 5:23 PM

Sunset 5:52 PM

Sleep in Miraflores, Lima · night 2 of 2

Start at Museo Larco, have ceviche at Seafarers, then head to Plaza Mayor de Lima and finish at the Museo de la Nación.

1

9:00 AM · 2 hours

Book ahead

Museo Larco

\$8 per person · Open 9 AM-6 PM

Pre-Columbian gold, textiles, and ceramics in a colonial mansion. The erotic pottery collection is unfiltered and brilliant. A 15-minute taxi from Miraflores, or the 2 bus from Larcomar.

Insider tip: Buy tickets online (S/. 35) to skip the queue. Head straight upstairs first.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2

12:00 PM · 1.5 hours

Cevicheria Seafarers

\$9-16 per person for lunch · Open 12 PM-11 PM

Leche de tigre, fresh fish, and a no-fuss vibe in a Lima kitchen that's been doing this for decades. The classic ceviche and tiger's milk shooters are the move. A 20-minute walk or 10-minute taxi from Museo Larco towards the centre.

Insider tip: Go at noon when the fish is fresh off the boat. Order extra leche de tigre to drink after.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

3

2:00 PM · 1.5 hours

Plaza Mayor de Lima

Free

Colonial arcades, the Cathedral, and the Government Palace with its horse-guard ceremony at noon (if you're early) or the colonial facades at any hour. Grab a bench and watch Lima's heart beat. A 15-minute walk from Cevicheria Seafarers or a short taxi.

Insider tip: The horse ceremony is 11:45 AM if you swing back, but skip it and enjoy the quiet plazas instead.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

4

3:30 PM · 1.5 hours

Museo de la Nación

\$11 per person · Open 10 AM-6 PM

Peru's biggest Peruvian art and archaeology museum, with floors of Nazca pottery, textiles, and the Inca Hall. Deep context for Cusco and Machu Picchu ahead. A 15-minute walk south from Plaza Mayor or a 10-minute taxi.

Insider tip: Skip the basement; the Inca and pre-Inca halls upstairs are the prize. Entry S/. 30.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

5

5:15 PM · 1.5 hours

Puente de los Suspiros (Barranco)

Free

A wooden bridge over a ravine in Barranco, Lima's bohemian quarter. Cobblestone streets, street art, and colonial balconies fill the area. Golden hour light is perfect here at 5:30 PM. A 20-minute taxi or metro from Museo de la Nación.

Insider tip: Walk the bridge at sunset, then stroll Jiron Ayacucho for galleries and cafes. Skip the tourist clubs on the main drag.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

6

7:00 PM · 2 hours

Book ahead

La Bodega Verde

\$11-19 per person for dinner · Open 7 PM-11 PM

Farm-to-table Peruvian kitchen in Barranco with ceviche, causa, and natural wines. Casual but serious about ingredients. A 5-minute walk from Puente de los Suspiros.

Insider tip: Book ahead or go by 7 PM to avoid queues. Order the white fish ceviche and the causa limeña.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

[Open Day 2 as a route in Google Maps](#)

Where to eat

Cevichería Seafood Market

Peruvian Seafood · Lunch · \$\$

Fresh ceviche in Lima centre, order the mixed fish. Busy, authentic, no frills.

[Google Maps >](#)

Café Olé

Peruvian Café · Breakfast · \$

Strong coffee and pan con chicharrón near Plaza Mayor. Quick, locals only, opens 6am.

[Google Maps >](#)

El Bodegón

Peruvian · Dinner · \$\$

Barranco corner spot, grilled fish and pisco sours. Sit outside, watch street life unfold.

[Google Maps >](#)

Cusco: Plaza de Armas, Qorikancha and San Blas

Sunrise 6:00 AM

Golden hour 5:00 PM

Sunset 5:30 PM

Your base for 3 nights: Cusco

Take it slowly on your first day at altitude: Plaza de Armas, the Temple of the Sun at Qorikancha, then up to San Blas.

GO

7:00 AM · 3 hours

Jorge Chávez International Airport to Cusco

Morning flight from Lima (1.5 hours) lands at Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport. Catch the colectivo (shared van) into the city centre for 15 soles. Takes 30 minutes. You'll arrive in Cusco by early afternoon.

- Shared shuttle · 1.5 hours · \$15-20 per person
- Taxi · 1.5 hours · \$25-35
- Colectivo (van) · 2 hours · \$8-12 per person

[Compare flights](#)

1

2:30 PM · 1 hour

Plaza de Armas

Free

Cusco's heart: a vast square ringed by colonial arcades, the Spanish cathedral (built from Inca stone), and mountain views. Head straight here to get your bearings and let your body clock settle. Walk the perimeter and sit on a bench facing the cathedral. 10-minute walk from the colectivo drop-off on Avenida Mariscal Castilla.

Insider tip: Stand on the north side of the square (near the cathedral) at 5:00 PM for the best light on the arcades and mountains behind.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2

3:45 PM · 1 hour

Qorikancha (Temple of the Sun)

\$4 per person · Open 9 AM-6 PM

The most sacred Inca temple, built with stones so perfectly fitted no mortar was needed. The Spanish built a convent on top, so you see both layers. It's small but packed with history and craftsmanship that feels almost alien. 5-minute walk south of the Plaza de Armas.

Insider tip: Buy the joint ticket (130 soles) at any of the four sites; it's cheaper than individual tickets and valid for 10 days. Go to Qorikancha now, skip the queues later.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

3

5:00 PM · 1.5 hours

San Blas neighbourhood

Free

Narrow, steep cobbled streets lined with galleries, small bars and craft shops. It's where locals live and where you'll see the real Cusco. Walk up, get a bit lost, and stumble into a tiny cafe. 10-minute walk north and uphill from the Plaza de Armas.

Insider tip: Head up Cuesta San Blas from the Plaza de Armas. The Convento de San Blas at the top has a view back over the city at golden hour.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

4

6:30 PM · 1.5 hours [Book ahead](#)

Pachacutec

Small, warm restaurant with solid Andean food and a balcony that catches the last light over Cusco's rooftops. Good for dinner after your walk. Order the ají de gallina or quinoa soup. 2-minute walk from the Convento de San Blas.

Insider tip: Book a table on the balcony. The alpaca steak is tender and the wine list is short but honest. Mains run 35-50 soles.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

[Open Day 3 as a route in Google Maps](#)

Where to stay in Cusco

Book in San Blas, the neighbourhood above the Plaza de Armas. It's steep but walkable, packed with small restaurants and cafes, and you're close to all the Inca sites without the tourist crush of the main square.

Wild Rover Hostel Cusco

Budget · Hostel · \$

Dorm beds, social vibe, rooftop with plaza views. Walking distance to ruins trailheads.

[Book now](#) [Google Maps >](#)

Selina Sacred Valley

Mid-range · Aparthotel · \$\$

Private rooms or dorms, kitchen access, courtyard. Central location. Good for groups sharing costs.

[Book now](#) [Google Maps >](#)

Inti Punku Boutique Hotel

Mid-range · Hotel · \$\$

Colonial charm, heated rooms (nights are cold), helpful staff. Near Qorikancha temple ruins.

[Book now](#) [Google Maps >](#)

Selina Cusco

Mid-range · Apartment · \$\$

Co-living space with private rooms and shared kitchens. Central location, good for groups splitting costs.

[Book now](#) [Google Maps >](#)

Apu Lodge Cusco

Mid-range · Guesthouse · \$\$

Family-run guesthouse near the Plaza de Armas. Local knowledge, quiet rooftop terrace with views.

[Book now](#) [Google Maps >](#)

Aranwa Cusco Boutique Hotel

Luxury · Hotel · \$\$\$

Colonial building, mountain views from rooms, spa with hot tubs. Splurge option near Plaza de Armas.

[Book now](#) [Google Maps >](#)

[All stays in Cusco](#) [Holiday rentals](#)

DAY 3: CUSCO: PLAZA DE ARMAS, QORIKANCHA AND SAN BLAS (CONTINUED)

Where to eat

Café Ayrleku

Peruvian breakfast · Breakfast · \$

Corner spot near Plaza de Armas. Fresh juice, avocado toast, strong coffee. Open early.

[Google Maps >](#)

Cevichería Óscar Chávez

Peruvian ceviche · Lunch · \$\$

White fish, lime, jalapeño, sweet potato, corn. No frills. Popular with locals. Done by 2pm.

[Google Maps >](#)

Pachacuti Burger

Peruvian fusion · Dinner · \$\$

Alpaca burger, quinoa fries, craft beer. Stone walls, relaxed. Good for wind-down after walking.

[Google Maps >](#)

TOURS & DAY TRIPS FROM CUSCO

FULL DAY

Machu Picchu by train and guided walk

The train from Cusco takes you through the Sacred Valley in daylight, you skip the hardest hike, and a guide explains what you're actually looking at.

[Book now](#)

FULL DAY

Sacred Valley market and weaving tour

You'll see Ollantaytambo's actual town life, visit a family weaving studio, and eat lunch in a small restaurant rather than a tourist trap.

[Book now](#)

4 HOURS

Cusco city walking tour with local food stops

A local guide gets you into the quieter corners of the old town and takes you to where people actually eat, including a proper cevichería for lunch.

[Book now](#)

4 DAYS

Inca Trail trek to Machu Picchu

Four days of proper hiking through cloud forest and mountain passes with mountain camps; it's physical and unforgettable if you're fit and acclimatised.

[Book now](#)

HALF DAY

Cusco food tour and cooking class

Learn to make ceviche and other Peruvian dishes from a chef, then eat what you've cooked with local wine.

[Book now](#)

Sacred Valley: Pisac, Urubamba and Ollantaytambo

Sunrise 6:00 AM

Golden hour 5:00 PM

Sunset 5:30 PM

Sleep in Cusco · night 2 of 3

A long day out of Cusco with the Pisac terraces, lunch at the Urubamba market, the Huilloc weavers and the ruins at Ollantaytambo.

GO

6:45 AM · 1.5 hours

Cusco to Sacred Valley

Minibus from Cusco Plaza de Armas (6:45 AM departure, 90 minutes, 25-35 soles). Sit on the right side for views of the valley descent. You'll pass through Poroy and drop into Urubamba.

- Shared tour (includes stops) · full day · \$45-65 per person
- Colectivo van from market · 1.5 hours · \$8-12 per person
- Rental car with driver · 1.5 hours · \$60-80

1

8:30 AM · 2 hours

Ollantaytambo

\$19 per person · Open 9 AM-5 PM

A fortress town clinging to the valley wall, with unfinished Inca temples and agricultural terraces cut into the mountainside. Climb the stone steps to the Temple of the Sun for views of the whole settlement. The minibus drops you at the town entrance; walk uphill into the main plaza (15 minutes on foot).

Insider tip: Start climbing early to beat the crowds and the afternoon rain. Wear layers; it's cool at dawn, hot by midday.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2

11:00 AM · 1.5 hours

Huilloc Weaving Cooperative

Free to \$5 donation · Open 9 AM-5 PM

A textile workshop high in the hills above Ollantaytambo where Quechua weavers make alpaca and wool cloth on ancestral looms. You'll see natural dyes and traditional patterns. A steep 45-minute walk uphill from Ollantaytambo plaza, or arrange a guide (ask at your hotel the night before, 50-80 soles for 2-3 people).

Insider tip: Buy directly from the weavers, not the souvenir shops in town. Prices are fair and your money goes straight to them.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

3

1:30 PM · 1.5 hours

Urubamba market and lunch

\$11-22 per person for lunch

Back down to Urubamba town (minibus or taxi, 15 minutes). Browse the Wednesday/Friday produce market, then eat at El Huerto (Calle Convencion near the plaza). Order ceviche de trucha (local river trout); it's fresher and cheaper than Lima. Lunch is 25-35 soles.

Insider tip: If the market is quiet (check the day of the week), ask at your hotel for a meal at a family kitchen instead; more authentic and no less good.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

DAY 4: SACRED VALLEY: PISAC, URUBAMBA AND OLLANTAYTAMBO (CONTINUED)

4

3:30 PM · 2.5 hours

Pisac ruins and terraces

\$19 per person · Open 9 AM-5 PM

A 20-minute minibus ride from Urubamba to Pisac town, then a steep uphill walk (or taxi) to the ruins. Inca agricultural terraces cascade down the mountainside, and the ceremonial centre perches above. The terraces are the real treasure here, not the buildings. Plan for the golden hour (start your walk by 4:00 PM).

Insider tip: Skip the Pisac craft market at the base unless you need souvenirs; it's touristy and overpriced. The ruins and views are worth the ticket alone.

[Book tickets](#)

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

GO

6:00 PM · 1.5 hours

Return to Cusco

Minibus from Pisac or Urubamba back to Cusco (45-60 minutes, 20-25 soles). Evening traffic can be slow, so leave Pisac by 6:00 PM. Arrive Cusco around 7:15 PM.

- Colectivo van from Urubamba · 1.5 hours · \$8-12 per person
- Shared tour return · 2 hours · included in tour
- Taxi · 1.5 hours · \$25-35

[Book a transfer](#)

[Open Day 4 as a route in Google Maps](#)

Where to eat

Ollantaytambo Market (Mercado de Ollantaytambo)

Peruvian street food · Breakfast · \$

Early stalls serving fresh empanadas and quinoa soup before the Sacred Valley wakes up.

[Google Maps >](#)

Cevichería Inti Raymi

Peruvian ceviche · Lunch · \$\$

Ceviche with tiger's milk so sharp it clears your head. Sit upstairs overlooking Ollantaytambo ruins.

[Google Maps >](#)

Pacha Papa

Peruvian highland · Dinner · \$\$

Alpaca stew and ají de papa in Urubamba's main plaza. Warm, local, proper mountain food.

[Google Maps >](#)

Sacsayhuamán, Qenko, Puca Pucara and Tambomachay

Sunrise 6:00 AM

Golden hour 5:00 PM

Sunset 5:30 PM

Sleep in Cusco · night 3 of 3

A relaxed day on the hills above Cusco, visiting four ruins in a row, starting with Sacsayhuamán and ending at Tambomachay.

1

6:30 AM · 2.5 hours

Sacsayhuamán

\$4 per person · Open 9 AM-5:30 PM

Colossal Inca fortress above Cusco with precisely fitted stone walls and panoramic views. The site's quietest at dawn before tour groups arrive. Take a taxi or Uber from your hotel (15 minutes, 8-12 soles). Head straight to the upper terraces.

Insider tip: Arrive by 6:45 AM before the tour buses. Stand on the upper western wall at 7:15 AM for sunrise light on the stones.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2

9:15 AM · 1 hour

Qenko

\$4 per person · Open 9 AM-5:30 PM

Carved limestone shrine hidden in a small ravine, often missed by tourists. Stone channels carved for ritual offerings and a natural tunnel running through the rock. A 15-minute walk downhill and east from Sacsayhuamán.

Insider tip: Crouch into the tunnel at the base. The site is usually empty mid-morning.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

3

10:30 AM · 45 minutes

Puca Pucara

\$4 per person · Open 9 AM-5:30 PM

Red-stone military checkpoint with layered terraces and tight stone corridors. Smaller and quicker than Sacsayhuamán but equally impressive engineering. A 10-minute walk further downhill from Qenko.

Insider tip: Climb to the highest terrace for views of the surrounding mountains and a natural stop before lunch.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

4

11:30 AM · 45 minutes

Tambomachay

\$4 per person · Open 9 AM-5:30 PM

Sacred water temple with functioning Inca aqueducts still flowing after 500 years. Three tiers of baths carved into the mountainside. A 10-minute walk east from Puca Pucara.

Insider tip: Wade into the cold lower pool if you're comfortable. The water is considered pure and sacred.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

5

4:45 PM · 1 hour

Chikchon viewpoint

Free

Unmarked mountain overlook south of Tambomachay with unobstructed 360-degree views of Cusco and the surrounding valleys. Head back towards Cusco by taxi or on foot (30 minutes downhill). Stop here for golden hour light at 4:45 PM.

Insider tip: Bring coca tea or snacks. No facilities, but the silence and light here beat crowded viewpoints.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

6

7:00 PM · 1.5 hours

Book ahead

Inkaterra La Casona

\$13-32 per person for dinner · Open 7 PM onwards

Colonial-era restaurant in a restored mansion in central Cusco. Peruvian cuisine with mountain herb touches, cosy stone rooms and a fireplace. Taxi back to Cusco (20 minutes, 12-15 soles). Book a table.

Insider tip: Order the causas with local trout. The alpaca steak is tender but try regional dishes instead.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

[Open Day 5 as a route in Google Maps](#)

Where to eat

Café Aychu

Peruvian · Breakfast · \$

Early stop near Plaza de Armas. Fresh juices, pastries, strong coffee before the hike.

[Google Maps >](#)

Pachacutec

Peruvian · Lunch · \$\$

Back in Cusco centre after Sacsayhuamán. Ceviche, quinoa soup, local trout. Solid, unpretentious.

[Google Maps >](#)

Inka Grill

Peruvian · Dinner · \$\$

Plaza de Armas views at golden hour. Alpaca steak, ceviche, pisco cocktails. Book a table upstairs.

[Google Maps >](#)

Aguas Calientes: Mandor Garden and Toto's House

Sunrise 6:02 AM

Golden hour 5:03 PM

Sunset 5:33 PM

Your base for 2 nights: Aguas Calientes

Get to Aguas Calientes and take an easy day before Machu Picchu, with a walk to Mandor Garden and dinner at Toto's House.

GO

7:30 AM · 3.5 hours

Cusco to Aguas Calientes by PeruRail

A 3.5-hour train ride through the Sacred Valley along the Urubamba River, descending from 3,400m to 2,040m with mountain views all the way. Book the Vistadome carriage for huge windows (extra cost worth it). Trains depart Cusco at 7:30 AM or 1:30 PM; take the morning slot. Cost around 60-120 USD depending on class.

- PeruRail (Expedition or Vistadome) · 3.5 hours · \$32-43 one way
- Inca Rail · 3 hours · \$35-49 one way
- Local train (slower, cheaper) · 4 hours · \$22-27 one way

1

1:30 PM · 1.5 hours

Mandor Garden

Free

A lush botanical garden 15 minutes walk upstream from town along the Urubamba, full of orchids, ferns and waterfall pools. It's where locals come to unwind, and the river views are the best in Aguas Calientes without hiking. A 20-minute walk from the train station, heading left along Avenida Hermanos Ayar.

Insider tip: Go now while light is still good; the garden closes at 5 PM. Bring water shoes if you want to wade in the pools.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2

6:00 PM · 1.5 hours

Toto's House

\$11-16 per person for dinner

A beloved local restaurant serving ceviche, causas and grilled trout in a cosy, unpretentious setting. Expect honest food, huge portions and a line of locals eating at the bar. It's a one-block walk from the Plaza, on Calle Principal. Mains run 25-35 PEN (7-10 USD).

Insider tip: Order the ceviche mixto and the trucha a la sal (salt-crusted trout). Go early or late to avoid the 7 PM rush of other travellers.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)
[Open Day 6 as a route in Google Maps](#)

Where to stay in Aguas Calientes

Book in the historic town centre near the main plaza and the train station. You're walking distance to restaurants, markets and the riverside path. Avoid the newer hotels on the outskirts; you'll spend the evening stuck.

Hostal Wasi

Budget · Hostel · \$

Budget-friendly, social common areas. Clean dorms, basic but right in the thick of it.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

Mid-range · Resort · \$\$

Jungle setting just outside town. Orchids, river walks, good dinner before the climb.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Hatun Hotel

Mid-range · Hotel · \$\$

Mid-range comfort in Aguas Calientes. Hot springs nearby, good breakfast, friendly staff.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Sanctuary Lodge

Luxury · Resort · \$\$\$

On Machu Picchu grounds. Skip the town rush, wake early for sunrise trek.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Belmond Hiram Bingham

Luxury · Hotel · \$\$\$

Luxury train experience included. Private Machu Picchu access at dawn before crowds.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

[All stays in Aguas Calientes](#)

[Holiday rentals](#)

Where to eat

Cafe Inkaterra

Peruvian · Breakfast · \$

Light breakfasts, strong coffee. Grab a table early before the tour groups arrive.

[Google Maps >](#)

Indio Feliz

Peruvian fusion · Lunch · \$\$

Ceviche with passion fruit and fresh catch. Rooftop seat overlooks the Urubamba River.

[Google Maps >](#)

Toto's House

Peruvian · Dinner · \$\$

Alpaca stew and local trout. Small place, arrive by 6:30pm or queue forms.

[Google Maps >](#)

DAY 6: AGUAS CALIENTES: MANDOR GARDEN AND TOTO'S HOUSE (CONTINUED)

TOURS & DAY TRIPS FROM AGUAS CALIENTES

FULL DAY

Sacred Valley day trip with market visits and local lunch

See Ollantaytambo fortress, weaving villages, and Pisac ruins on the same day with stops at working indigenous communities.

[Book now](#)

3 HOURS

Cloud forest hike to Mandor Waterfalls

A local favorite starting from town: you'll see mountain vegetation, birds, and a waterfall in mist without fighting other tourists.

[Book now](#)

HALF DAY

Ceviche cooking class with market tour

Learn to make Peru's national dish with a local chef, then eat what you cook while they explain the history and ingredients.

[Book now](#)

Machu Picchu and Huayna Picchu

Sunrise 6:02 AM

Golden hour 5:03 PM

Sunset 5:33 PM

Sleep in Aguas Calientes · night 2 of 2

Go up early to Machu Picchu and climb Huayna Picchu, then have lunch at Chez Maggy and wander down by Puente Ruinas.

GO

5:00 AM · 1.5 hours

Aguas Calientes Train Station to Machu Picchu

Catch the first train up the mountain (leaves 5:30 AM, arrives 6:15 AM). You'll be among the first through the gates and have the ruins nearly to yourself for two hours. Around 30 minutes by train.

PREFER A GUIDE? · FULL DAY

Machu Picchu sunrise entry

You'll have the ruins almost to yourself for two hours before the crowds pour in from 8am onwards.

[Book this tour](#)

PREFER A GUIDE? · 2-3 HOURS

Huayna Picchu or Machu Picchu Mountain hike

Trade the main site crowds for a steep 1-2 hour climb with views down onto Machu Picchu from above.

[Book this tour](#)

1



6:30 AM · 3 hours

Machu Picchu

\$41 per person · Open 6 AM-5:30 PM

Spend the morning exploring the ruins with a local guide (hire one at the gate for 60-80 soles). You'll learn the real stories behind the temples, terraces and carved stones. The early light and quiet make it magical. You're already there from the train.

Insider tip: Head straight to the Temple of the Sun and Machu Picchu Mountain overlook before 8 AM. Skip the crowds by staying off the main paths.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2

9:45 AM · 1.5 hours

Book ahead

Huayna Picchu

Included with Machu Picchu entry (separate permit required: · Open 7 AM-1 PM

Hike the steep stone steps up this peak for the most iconic view of Machu Picchu itself. It's tough but short (45 minutes up), and the photo from the top is worth it. Start soon after 9:30 AM or the afternoon crowds will overwhelm the narrow trail.

Insider tip: Tickets for Huayna Picchu are timed slots and often sell out. Book online the day before (entry included in your Machu Picchu ticket, but you need the separate time slot). Only 200 people allowed per slot.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

DAY 7: MACHU PICCHU AND HUAYNA PICCHU (CONTINUED)

GO

3:15 PM · 1 hour

Machu Picchu Train Station to Aguas Calientes

Catch the train down the mountain at 3:30 PM (arrives 4:15 PM). You'll descend through cloud forest as the light softens. Around 45 minutes by train.

3

5:00 PM · 1 hour

Cevicheria Chez Maggy

\$11-19 per person for dinner

Sit down to excellent ceviche (15-22 soles) in this simple, busy spot that locals trust. The fish is fresh, the portions are honest, and the lime juice does the work. A 5-minute walk uphill from the train station through the main street.

Insider tip: Order the ceviche clásico and ask for extra leche de tigre on the side. Go early; it fills with tour groups by 6 PM.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

4

5:55 PM · 45 minutes

Puente Ruinas

Free

Walk to this footbridge at the edge of town for sunset views over the Urubamba River and the mountains that hold Machu Picchu. It's peaceful and rarely crowded. A 10-minute walk from the town centre, upriver.

Insider tip: The light peaks between 5:15 and 5:33 PM. Go straight from dinner to catch the last glow on the peaks.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

[Open Day 7 as a route in Google Maps](#)

Where to eat

Café Inkaterra

Peruvian · Breakfast · \$

Early coffee and pastries before the train. Open 5:30am, walk from town centre.

[Google Maps >](#)

Indio Feliz

Peruvian fusion · Lunch · \$\$

Back in Aguas Calientes by afternoon. Trout ceviche, quinoa dishes. Relaxed vibe.

[Google Maps >](#)

Tree House Restaurant

Peruvian · Dinner · \$\$\$

Elevated spot above town. Local alpaca, river views. Book ahead, they fill up.

[Google Maps >](#)

BEFORE YOU GO: LIMA

How do I get to Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley from Lima?

Fly to Cusco (1.5 hours, 60-150 soles) or book a tour operator's package that includes transport and lodging. A 2-3 day Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu tour costs 600-1200 soles all-in. Book before you leave home; May fills fast.

Where should I have ceviche in Lima?

Skip the tourist trap cevicherías on the main plaza. Go to La Mar or Chez Wong in Miraflores (35-60 soles for a good plate), or ask your hotel for a local recommendation. Lunch is 12-2pm, dinner after 7pm.

Can I walk between neighborhoods safely?

Miraflores to Barranco is a pleasant 20-minute walk south along the coastal cliffs during daylight. Avoid walking at night; use Uber instead. Don't wander inland from the coast.

Do I need to book museums ahead?

No. The Museo Larco, Museo de la Nación, and Museo Peruvian rarely sell out. Just go. Opening hours are 10am-5pm, most days closed Monday.

What's the weather like in Lima in May?

Expect 15-21°C (59-70°F), mostly sunny, almost no rain. Bring layers: it's cool in the morning and evening, warm at midday. A light jacket and closed shoes for hiking are essentials.

Do people speak English in Lima?

Spoken here: Spanish. English is spoken in most hotels, restaurants, and tour operators, but not reliably in local markets or neighbourhoods outside the centre.

Useful phrases:

- Hola (OH-lah): hello
- Una mesa para cuatro (OO-nah MEH-sah PAH-rah KWAH-troh): a table for four
- La cuenta, por favor (lah KWEN-tah, por fah-VOR): the bill, please
- ¿De dónde es esto? (deh DOHN-deh es ES-toh): where is this from?
- Gracias (GRAH-see-ahs): thank you

Is Lima safe for visitors?

Lima is generally safe for travellers in tourist areas and upscale neighbourhoods like Miraflores and Barranco. Avoid walking alone at night, don't flash valuables, and use registered taxis or Uber.

What's the emergency number in Peru?

Police 105, ambulance 106, fire 116.

Do you tip in Peru?

Tipping isn't expected but is appreciated. Leave 5-10% in restaurants if service was good, round up taxi fares, and give tour guides S/ 20-30 per person per day.

BEFORE YOU GO (CONTINUED)

What do only locals know about Lima?

- Start your Machu Picchu trip from Cusco, not Lima, because the bus ride from Lima takes 22 hours; fly instead (2.5 hours, around \$100-150 return).
- Eat ceviches at lunch not dinner, as Peruvians believe raw fish is best early in the day.
- The Larco Museum is smaller and less crowded than the National Museum but has the best collection of pre-Columbian erotic art and textiles.
- Book your Sacred Valley tour through a local guide in Cusco, not Lima, to save money and skip the travel time.

BEFORE YOU GO: CUSCO

When exactly should I go to Machu Picchu to avoid crowds and have time?

Take the earliest train from Ollantaytambo or Cusco (around 6am). You'll reach Machu Picchu by 8-9am when crowds are light. Hire a guide at the gate (100-150 soles) for 2-3 hours; do it before 10am. Start your hike down by 1pm to catch the afternoon train home.

How do I avoid altitude sickness at this elevation?

Don't rush. Spend your first full day in Cusco (3,400m) resting and drinking coca tea. Chew coca leaf if offered. Ascend gradually to the Sacred Valley (2,800m) next, then hike Machu Picchu the following day. Stay hydrated, avoid alcohol your first night, and see a doctor if headache, nausea, or dizziness hits.

Where do I get the best ceviche?

Skip tourist restaurants. Head to Mercado San Blas or Mercado Central in Cusco for tiny lunch counters serving ceviche for 15-25 soles. The best fish came in that morning. Go at noon when locals eat. Look for long queues and no English menus.

Do I need to book Machu Picchu entrance in advance?

You can buy tickets at the gate, but booking online (machupicchu.gob.pe) 3-5 days ahead gives you a specific time slot and saves you queueing. May isn't peak but it's getting busy. Book your train ticket first, then your entrance time to match.

What's the weather like in Cusco in May?

Expect 15-20°C (59-68°F) during the day, dropping to 5°C (41°F) at night. Pack layers, a warm jacket, and sunscreen. Rain is rare but mornings can be chilly.

Do people speak English in Cusco?

Spoken here: Spanish. English is spoken in hotels, restaurants, and tour offices in the city centre. You'll need Spanish or a translation app in markets and rural villages.

Useful phrases:

- Hola (OH-la): hello
- Gracias (GRAH-see-as): thank you
- Cuánto cuesta (KWAN-toh KWES-tah): how much does it cost
- La cuenta, por favor (lah KWEN-tah, por fah-VOR): the bill, please
- Ayuda (ah-YOO-dah): help

BEFORE YOU GO (CONTINUED)

Is Cusco safe for visitors?

Cusco is generally safe for tourists but watch your belongings on crowded buses and in the Plaza de Armas. Altitude sickness is the real concern; drink coca tea, move slowly on day one, and see a doctor if headaches don't ease.

What's the emergency number in Peru?

Police 105, ambulance 106, fire 116.

Do you tip in Peru?

Tipping isn't expected but appreciated. Leave 5-10% in restaurants if service was good, or just round up. Tour guides usually get \$5-8 per person per day if they've earned it.

What do only locals know about Cusco?

- Spend day one in Cusco at a slow pace; coca tea at a café helps with altitude more than you'd think.
- The Sacred Valley towns like Ollantaytambo are less touristy than the main plaza and have stronger market culture.
- Book Machu Picchu tickets online two weeks ahead; the train from Cusco to Aguas Calientes takes 4 hours but the views are worth it.
- Street food ceviche is good but seek out a restaurant with a proper kitchen for lunch; locals eat their main meal at midday.

BEFORE YOU GO: AGUAS CALIENTES

When should I go up to Machu Picchu?

Arrive early afternoon so you've got three hours before dark. Sunrise trips mean a 4am start from Aguas Calientes. Afternoon visits are less crowded and give you a full day to explore. Book your bus ticket up the night before.

What's the best way to fit in ceviche?

Lunch on day two, after your Machu Picchu visit. Head to the main market (Mercado de Artesanías) or ask locals for the cevichería they eat at. Order the white fish variety (ceviche blanco) if you're unsure. Seafood's fresher than you'd expect at 2,000 metres.

Should I visit the Sacred Valley on the way up or the way out?

Go on day two if you're driving or have three days. With two days and public transport, pick one: either sunrise at Machu Picchu then Sacred Valley market towns (Ollantaytambo, Urubamba), or skip the Sacred Valley and spend more time at Machu Picchu. Both are worth it; neither is essential.

What's the weather like in Aguas Calientes in May?

Expect 10-18°C (50-64°F). Pack layers: mornings are cold and misty, afternoons warm up. Bring a waterproof jacket, sturdy walking shoes, and a fleece or wool sweater for evenings.

Do people speak English in Aguas Calientes?

Spoken here: Spanish. English is spoken in hotels, restaurants, and tour offices. You'll need Spanish or a translation app in markets and smaller shops.

Useful phrases:

- Gracias (GRAH-see-ahs): thank you
- Un café, por favor (oon KAH-feh, por fah-VOR): one coffee, please
- ¿Cuánto cuesta? (KWAN-toh KWES-tah): how much does it cost?
- Agua con gas / sin gas (AH-wah con GAS / sin GAS): sparkling / still water
- La cuenta, por favor (lah KWEN-tah, por fah-VOR): the bill, please

Is Aguas Calientes safe for visitors?

Aguas Calientes is safe and well-traveled. The main concern is altitude sickness from the train ride up (though you're only at 2,040m here). Drink coca tea on arrival and move slowly for the first day.

What's the emergency number in Peru?

Police 105, ambulance 106, fire 116.

Do you tip in Peru?

Tipping isn't expected but is appreciated. Leave 5-10% in restaurants if service was good. Tour guides and porters appreciate small tips (10-20 soles / \$3-6 USD per day).

What do only locals know about Aguas Calientes?

- Arrive early at Machu Picchu: take the 5:30am train from Aguas Calientes and aim for the 6am gate opening to beat crowds and catch sunrise.
- Skip the town's main drag restaurants and eat where locals do, down side streets near the market. Prices drop by half.
- The walk up to Machu Picchu from the hydroelectric station (1.5 hours) saves you 50 soles on the bus and gives you a gentle warm-up hike with river views.
- Buy your return train ticket the day before: afternoon trains fill up and prices spike.