

EMPIRE OF THE INCAS

June 19-30, 2018

Cuzco • Machu Picchu • Inti Raymi Festival • Inca Sacred Valley •
Temple of the Sun • Amazon • Manu Biosphere & Rainforest •
Saqsayhuaman • Lake Titicaca • Floating Islands of the Urus Indians •
Lima • Ollantaytambo • Pisac • Andahuaylillas • Koricancha Temple •
Raqchi • Wiracocha Temple (“God the Creator” temple)

Every year during the month of June thousands of natives, descendants from the Incas gather on June 24 to celebrate the Inti Raymi or “Festival of the Sun”. This magnificent festival starts at the Temple of the Sun. Dressed in full regalia, the native representing the Inca proceeds to the ancient fortress of Sacsayhuaman where the ceremonies take place. The “Inca Emperor” enters the plaza on a golden throne carried on the shoulders of soldiers and guards dressed in colorful costumes. They are followed by his “Queen” and high priests garbed in ceremonial robes. They re-enact the sacrifice of the llama and pray for good crops and blessings on the Inca and his people as they start the New Year. Columbus Travel has secured tickets and reserved seats to view this colorful festival.

This tour is unique. Frankly, there is nothing like it anywhere else. In addition to visits to expected sites, such as Cuzco and Machu Picchu, our tour will take us off-the-beaten track to immerse ourselves in the world and empire of the Incas. We visit historic and cultural sites, temples and native Indian festivals that see few outsiders. We visit UNESCO World heritage sites, we navigate one of the tributaries of the Amazon (yes, the best Amazon viewing is in Peru) and overnight in a jungle lodge nestled deep in the Manu National Park and Candamo Biosphere Reserve with over 1,000 species of birds, 300 species of trees, endangered animal and plant species. Manu and Candamo, the largest protected area in Peru, with its endless tropical forests, rainforest, cloud forests, and jungle rivers brimming with life, is referred to as the “Living Eden”.



We journey to the church of San Pedro called the Sistine Chapel of South America for its paintings that cover the ceilings, then on to Raqchi and Temple of Wiracocha, a site rarely seen by foreign visitors. Wiracocha, “God the Creator”, was the white deity to the Inca natives. This massive temple was built to honor their God of Creation and to seek His forgiveness. Nearby Raqchi remains one of the largest Inca archaeological sites ever. We continue to Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world and the floating islands of the Urus natives.

Of course, no journey to the empire of the Incas would be complete without a visit to Cuzco and Machu Picchu. Cuzco, nestled high in the Andes Mountains and a UNESCO World heritage site, was once the capital of the Inca nation. Cuzco still retains its indigenous and colonial heritage and architecture. Machu Picchu, the ancient Inca citadel, boasts more than 150 buildings and sits above the Urubamba River valley is another UNESCO site on our tour.

This is no ordinary tour. This is an adventure for travelers who want to see, feel, and experience the Inca nation, people, and heritage. There is no other tour like this one. While staying in first class comfort and accommodations, you will journey in what can only be described as daily *National Geographic* type experiences with expert guides and most meals included. This truly is one of those life changing experiences that do not often come our way. Please join us!



Tour Host Carlos Fida: I am a native of Argentina where I held teaching positions at the University of Patagonia and at the Military Academy. I have lectured for university groups on the rich history of pre-Columbian and modern Latin American history.

I immigrated to the United States and after working for five years in the travel industry, I earned my Certified Travel Agent degree in 1985. Since then, I have devoted 39 years of my life as a highly qualified specialist in Latin American travel.

I was instrumental in setting the Latin American programs for LAN Vacations and United Vacations and was nominated among the top specialists in Latin American Travel by *Travel & Leisure Magazine* starting in 2006. My travels have taken me to every corner of Central and South America and many other exotic countries.

Itinerary:

June 19: Lima

We depart Los Angeles and fly to Lima, Peru. Airport welcome and transfer to our hotel.

June 20: Lima – Puerto Maldonado - Amazon

This morning we transfer to the Lima Airport for a short flight to Puerto Maldonado, gateway to the Amazon and Manu National Park Biosphere and rainforest capital of Peru. We travel by boat up the Madre de Dios River to our Amazon jungle lodge considered one of the best accommodations in the primeval jungle. The diversity of wildlife is due to its location at the confluence of the lowland Amazon forest and three other ecosystems. This area is home to at least 13 endangered animals, including the jaguar, giant otter, ocelot, harpy eagle, and giant armadillo. After dinner we enjoy a night walk with local native guides to observe some of the animals that inhabit the jungle. Overnight in our Amazon jungle lodge. This really is right out of *National Geographic*! (B, BXL, D)



June 21: Amazon

Our excursion today takes us to a lake where we board our boat and explore the region for wildlife in the water, on land, in the trees, and in the sky; including the elusive Hoatzin, a rare tropical bird found in the mangroves, waters and forests in the Amazon. We also go spotting for caimans, macaws and other endemic species that inhabit the Amazon rainforest. Upon returning from the oxbow lake we ascend a canopy tower for a complete overview of the area. Overnight in our Amazon jungle lodge. Talk about spectacular sunsets! (B, L, D)

June 22: Amazon

This morning a boat ride takes us to a parrot clay lick, similar to what you have seen on “Animal Planet”. From behind the blind we see parrots, parakeets, and macaws flying to the banks of the river to feed on the clay lick. After lunch and not far from our lodge we come to the Brazil Nut Trail Camp. The natives will demonstrate the gathering and processing of Brazil nuts. Later we visit a mammal clay lick and will see a parade of animals of the forest gather at the lick every evening. Overnight in our Amazon jungle lodge. This is simply a spectacular day! (B, L, D)

June 23: Cuzco & the Corpus Christi Festival

We bid farewell to the Amazon, its flora, fauna, wildlife, and indigenous native people and navigate by boat down the Tambopata River passing indigenous villages and spotting wildlife along the way, returning to the port city of Puerto Maldonado and transfer to the airport for our flight to Cuzco, the former capital of the Inca Empire, located in the Andes Mountains. Upon arrival we visit Koricancha, known as the “Temple of the Sun”, dedicated to Inti, the ancient Inca sun god and worshipped as a patron deity of the Inca Empire. This is the most sacred and important temple in Cuzco. Today, June 23rd, the locals celebrate the Corpus Christi, a colorful and festive celebration where processions come from different places in the city to the cathedral of Cuzco to “greet” the body of Christ and honor the Holy Eucharist. The festival starts with statues of highly decorated saints carried on the shoulders of specially chosen bearers and are taken to the cathedral from their respective parishes. The saints are followed by large bands, crowds, singing groups, and the devoutly religious. When the Spanish conquistadores arrived in Cuzco in the 16th century, they enforced the Festival of Corpus Christi on the natives in a bid to overshadow the traditional Inca festival of Inti Raymi. Nowadays, both Corpus Christi and Inti Raymi are celebrated and we will experience, and see both, which is rarely done by foreign visitors! We may also be able to see some of the processions on this day. Overnight Cuzco. (B)

June 24: Inti Raymi Festival

Shortly after breakfast we transfer to the Koricancha Temple where the opening ceremonies start and the re-enacting of the Inti Raymi begins. The Inti Raymi (Quechua from “sun festival”) is a religious ceremony of the Inca Empire in honor of Inti, god of the sun and one of the most venerated deities in Inca religion, and to commemorate the winter solstice. (In the southern hemisphere, June is a winter month.) The person representing the Inca Emperor addresses the multitude in the Quechua language. After the opening remarks, we walk to the main square for the continuation of the colorful ceremonies.

Later our motor coach will take us to Sacsayhuaman, a fortress built on the northern outskirts of the city, where the main ceremonies continue. We return to our hotel after the festival concludes. This is a one-day and one-day only festival, and we are here! Overnight Cuzco. (B, BXL)



June 25: Machu Picchu & Inca Sacred Valley

Today we experience the highlight of any journey to Peru: Machu Picchu, the Lost Citadel of the Incas. We take the morning train to Aguas Calientes, a wonderful and exciting village at the base of the Machu Picchu Mountain. Vans are waiting to ferry us to the top of the mountain and Machu Picchu, perched high atop the Andes Mountains. An expert guide will introduce us to the history of the city and its mysterious abandonment. Following the tour and some free time to enjoy the overwhelming majesty of the site, we return by train through the valley to Ollantaytambo. Overnight Sacred Valley. (B, L)



June 26: Sacred Valley, Ollantaytambo, & Písaq

Our visit to the *El Valle Sagrado*, the Inca “Sacred Valley”, will connect us to the glorious past of the Ollantaytambo fortress and is an area packed with Inca sites, colonial towns, and isolated weaving villages. Ollantaytambo, a former Inca administrative center and gateway to the Antisuyo (the Amazon corner of the Inca Empire), sits at the northern end of the Sacred Valley. At the time of the Spanish invasion and conquest of Peru, Ollantaytambo served as the last stronghold for the Inca resistance at the time. We continue to the quaint village of Písaq and its famous native market, a world renowned market famous for handmade textiles, articles in gold and silver, handicrafts, and ceramics. Overnight in Cuzco. (B, L)

June 27: Valley of Cuzco, Andahuaylillas, & Lake Titicaca

Today we drive through the Valley of Cuzco to the Andean village of Andahuaylillas and visit San Pedro Apóstol de Andahuaylillas church. Andahuaylillas is often referred to as the “Sistine Chapel of South America”. The chapel’s ceilings and walls are painted in bright colors and the altar is covered in gold, making this little church an architectural jewel and a UNESCO monument. The church dates to 1570. As we continue our journey we explore native villages lost in time where little has changed since colonial days. After visiting Raqchi and the Temple of Wiracocha, we arrive in Puno a town near Lake Titicaca. Overnight Puno. Today is one of those memorable days so rich in history it’s a step-back-in-time to a world that few ever see due to its remoteness. (B, L)

June 28: Lake Titicaca & the Floating Islands

After breakfast we journey out for a full-day excursion to the Floating Islands of the Urus Indians. Our boat will navigate to the island of Taquile, located in Lake Titicaca and some 30 miles from Puno. We visit several floating islands and have opportunity to interact with the locals. This is a great shopping day with a wide variety of handicrafts made by the Urus available from the natives. Overnight Puno. (B, L)

June 29: Lima

This morning we transfer to the Juliaca Airport for our flight to Lima. Upon arrival city tour of the City of Kings, as Lima is called. This afternoon we set out to discover the exciting sites and history of Lima, Peru’s capital city. We see Plaza de Armas, the core and center of the city surrounded by the Government Palace, the City Hall and the archbishop’s residence. We continue on to Casa Aliaga, the oldest colonial palace in Peru still inhabited by the direct descendants of Count Aliaga, co-founder of the city of Lima. It is believed by many to be the oldest in South America. After a visit to the Larco Museum, we are invited to a typical dinner. Late this evening we transfer to the Lima International Airport for our return flight home following an adventure and journey never to be forgotten! (B, D)



June 30: Arrive USA

Morning arrival at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Connecting flights to our home city.

Hotels:

- Lima: Wyndham Airport Hotel
- Amazon: Rainforest Lodge
- Cuzco: Sonesta Hotel
- Sacred Valley: Sonesta Yucay
- Puno: Jose Antonio Hotel

Meals: B breakfast, L lunch, **BXL** Box lunch, **D** dinner

Gratuities: Driver and guide gratuities are included. Gratuities for included meals (\$2.00 per person per meal) are not included.

Land Price:

\$2,777.00 per person based on double occupancy

\$3,624.00 single occupancy

Airfare from Los Angeles:

\$1,278.00 per person including taxes and fees



RESERVATION INFORMATION CONTINUED

Rates include all taxes and fuel surcharges current as of September 1, 2017. Taxes and fuel surcharges are subject to change.

DEPOSIT:

\$400 per person for land.

\$100 per person for airfare.

FINAL PAYMENT:

Final payment for land and air is due by **February 20, 2018.**

CANCELLATION AND REFUND:

In case of cancellation the following per person cancellation penalties apply:

<u>Land Package</u>		<u>Airfare</u>	
Dates	Amount	Dates	Amount
Prior to February 21, 2018	\$400 deposit refundable	Prior to February 21, 2018	\$100 deposit refundable
February 21, 2018 or later	Land is non-refundable	February 21, 2018 or later	Air is non-refundable

TRAVEL PROTECTION: Columbus Travel recommends that you purchase a Travelex travel protection plan to help protect you and your trip investment. Consider travel protection for:

- Trip Cancellation
- Trip Interruption
- Emergency Medical Expenses
- Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation of Remains
- Trip Delay
- Baggage & Personal Effects
- Baggage Delay and more

For a summary of plan details on benefits, coverage, limitations and exclusions, please refer to the applicable Description of Coverage. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Transamerica Casualty Insurance Company, Columbus, Ohio; NAIC #10952. 1308333

INTERNATIONAL TRIPS:

For all tours and cruises that include international air, a valid passport is required. Columbus Travel must receive a copy of your passport information page by final payment date. Airlines have strict policies concerning name changes/corrections after tickets have been issued. If a name change/correction is required on your ticket, you will be required to cover the cost of the fees.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Travel Services, Inc., d.b.a. Columbus Travel, ("Agent") gives notice that all services, reservations and arrangements for transportation, or cruise, or conveyance, or hotel or lodging, or meals or sightseeing services or any other activities made by Agent, are made by Agent as dual agent for the traveler, (Passenger) and for the air carriers, hotels, sightseeing companies, transportation companies, cruise lines and other companies (Suppliers) providing services for this program. As such, Agent shall not be liable for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reasons of defect in any vehicle or mode of transportation, through the acts, defaults, financial difficulty or bankruptcy or omissions of the Supplier or person engaged in carrying out the arrangements of the trip or otherwise in connection therewith. Agent is not liable for delays and/or cancellations of services and resultant expenses or loss caused by acts of God, sickness, quarantine, weather, strikes, war, terrorism, social or labor unrest, local laws, mechanical or construction difficulties, abnormal conditions or other situations, actions, omissions or conditions outside Agent's control. Agent is not liable for loss of, or damage to baggage or personal possessions. Agent and Supplier reserve the right to alter or cancel the itinerary or substitute services as conditions require or for the safety of Passenger.

As a matter of privacy, we do not disclose addresses or other personal information about other travelers in the group. We do all in our power to assure seats for passengers traveling together on aircraft are assigned together, but because airline seating assignments for groups are controlled by the air carrier, we cannot guarantee specific seat assignments. Passengers must be in good health and able to care for their own needs. Please contact us regarding any health concerns you may have or if you need to bring any specialized medical equipment such as wheelchairs, oxygen tanks, C-Pap, etc. so that we can determine if transportation services, hotels, and other suppliers can accommodate your equipment. If it is determined that your equipment can be accommodated, you or your traveling companion are fully responsible for it and must be able to lift, fold, push, and handle the equipment. Tour directors on the trip cannot be of assistance with such needs. We reserve the right to remove passengers from the group at their own expense if the care of or actions of a passenger become detrimental to the functioning of the tour. Payment of deposit(s) as outlined in this agreement shall be deemed consent to be bound by the terms and conditions of this agreement.



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