



Yoga and Trekking in the Peruvian Andes:
*A Spiritual Exploration of Cuzco, the Sacred Valley, the Salkantay
Mountains and Machu Picchu*
March 13th – March 27, 2010

Join Lotus Expeditions and Simple Yoga Owner/ Instructor, Meg McCracken on a trans-Andean luxury lodge to lodge yoga and trekking adventure to Machu Picchu, Peru.

Nestled deep in the Andes Mountains, and hidden to the outside world for centuries, Machu Picchu is an archaeological masterpiece. Inexplicably abandoned by the Incas and never revealed to the Spanish conquistadors, it is known as “the lost city of the Incas.” Accidentally discovered by archaeologist Hiram Bingham in 1911, it has been carefully reconstructed over the last century to closely resemble its former splendor.

Our journey to Machu Picchu begins in the quaint colonial town of Cuzco, once the capital of the vast Inca Empire. The Spanish conquistadors destroyed much of the original Inca architecture, leaving cobblestone streets, elaborate cathedrals, and colonial mansions built upon the stones of Inca foundations.

Surrounding Cuzco is a patchwork of traditional Andean villages and ancient Inca ruins. We will spend two nights in the beautiful Urubamba Valley, also called Valle Sagrado (Sacred Valley). Here you can visit ruins, stroll through Indian handicraft markets, practice yoga and meditation or simply enjoy the rural countryside.

Our trekking journey begins in the enchanting valley of Soraypampa, the starting point of the “other” trek to Machu Picchu--- one that is much less traveled, but, by many accounts, more scenic than the “Inca Trail” itself.

We will spend each day trekking to a different, stunningly situated lodge where eiderdown bedding, private full bathrooms, a shared Jacuzzi, fireplace and gourmet cuisine are our reward for a challenging day.

Trip Summary

- Visit Cuzco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu
- Stunning mountain scenery, waterfalls, alpine lakes
- Experience traditional Quechua culture
- 07 nights hotels; 05 nights luxury lodges; 06 days hiking
- Professional daily yoga instruction to support your trip (optional)
- Volunteering at Casa De Milagros orphanage

Itinerary

**Key: B, L, D—breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner included; O/N—overnight in hotel or lodge*

Day One—Depart Home Country, March 13th, Saturday

Travel from your home country to Lima, Perú. Most flights from the US travel overnight.

Day Two—Lima to Cuzco and Onward to the Sacred Valley, March 14th, Sunday

Arrive in Lima and transfer to the Domestic Terminal for your flight to Cuzco (10,976 feet/3,326meters). A Lotus representative will meet you at the airport and transfer the group (one hour) to the Willka T'ika Lodge in the Sacred Valley.

We will spend the next two nights at the beautiful Willka T'ika Lodge. Willka T'ika, "Sacred flower" in Quechua, the language of the Andean people - is not a hotel or *hostal* in the ordinary sense of the world. Staffed entirely by Quechua neighbors, it was, from its inception, established as a Garden Retreat, and a living dedication to the heritage and spirit of the people of the Andes.

The gardens are laid out as 'Seven Sacred Gardens'. Each is dedicated to a different energy center, or *chakra*, to provide for personal meditation, healing and rejuvenation. Meals are vegetarian using ingredients filled with living energy from the Lodge's organic gardens.

After a group orientation, Meg will lead an afternoon yoga practice in Willka T'ika's beautiful studio. Or you can choose to relax or explore the beautiful gardens surrounding the Lodge. *D; O/N, Willka T'ika Lodge*

Day Three—Sacred Valley Tour, March 15th, Monday

Sleep in, or join Meg to start your day with an invigorating yoga practice. After breakfast, we depart for an all-day guided tour of the Sacred Valley and an introduction into Inca history and culture. We will visit the village of Pisac and its Indian handicraft market. From lower Pisac, we will drive to the extensive ruins of Pisac with tremendous views over the valley. After lunch, we continue to the village of Ollantaytambo, built on traditional Inca foundations, it is the best surviving example of Inca city planning. *B, L, D; O/N, Willka T'ika Lodge*

Day Four—Transfer to Cuzco, March 16th, Tuesday

Enjoying the Willka T'ika's fabulous yoga studio one more time, Meg will lead a strong yoga practice before we transfer back to Cuzco and the lovely Casa Andina Hotel. The afternoon is free to relax or explore the city's museums and cathedrals. *B; O/N, Casa Andina Hotel*

Day Five—Half-Day Tour Near Cuzco, March 17th, Wednesday

After breakfast we will drive to several ruins above Cuzco including the impressive Sacsayhuaman complex. A local guide will continue our introduction into Inca History and architecture. From the ruins we will hike back to Cuzco, helping with our acclimatization for our upcoming trek. You can join Meg in the afternoon for the beginning of the Yoga for Hikers series or spend the afternoon exploring on your own. *B; O/N, Casa Andina Hotel*

Day Six—Salkantay Lodge at Soraypampa, March 18th, Thursday

After breakfast we begin our drive to the Salkantay Lodge (3,600 m/11,800 ft). En route we will visit the impressive Inca ruins of Tarawasi near the town of Limatambo. After leaving Limatambo, we pass through the mountain village of Mollepata where we will have lunch before ascending a winding mountain track to the spectacularly situated valley of Soraypampa.

The Salkantay Lodge is named after the majestic peak at the head of the valley, the most sacred peak in Inca mythology and, at 20,500 feet (6,240 meters), the highest in the region.

After a warm welcome by our friendly staff, we will be shown to our rooms. The first afternoon is spent at leisure to adjust to the altitude. You may choose to join Meg on the mat for another yoga practice geared toward preparing you for the trek, or participate in any of the optional activities offered at the lodge such as hiking or trout fishing or simply rest and take in the spectacular surroundings. An evening briefing by the fire is followed by aperitifs and dinner. *Driving time, 3–4 hours; B, L, D; O/N, Salkantay Lodge*

Day Seven—Rest Day at Soraypampa, March 19th, Friday

A morning yoga practice, once again designed to support the upcoming hike, will start your day off right. Today is spent at leisure for rest or activities, depending upon your level of acclimatization. You may go on local hikes, fish a high glacial lake for rainbow trout with a fishing guide, or do a scramble to a viewpoint to take in the panorama. In the evening, our local guide will brief us on the itinerary for the next four days. *B, L, D; O/N, Salkantay Lodge*

Day Eight—Trek to Wayra Lodge at Huayracmachay, March 20th, Saturday

Today we begin our four-day trek to Machu Picchu. After an early start we will hike up the Rio Blanco valley, circling Humantay Peak across from Salkantay. The highest point on the trek is a pass at 15,000 feet/4,600 meters. At the pass we stop to take in views of the snow-capped peaks of the Vilcabamba Range in every direction, the 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 continue our descent toward the Wayra Lodge--- the place where the wind lives--our destination for the evening at 12,000 feet/3,650 meters. Join Meg at the lodge for a short yoga session that will relieve and revive your tired legs. *Hiking time 4-6 hours; B, L, D; O/N, Wayra Lodge*

Day Nine—Trek to Colpa Lodge at Colpa Pampa (3,150m/10,300 ft).

March 21st, Sunday

Following the long first day, sleep in or get your body prepared for the upcoming hike with a fun yoga practice before we enjoy a leisurely breakfast at Huayracmachay. The early morning is free for exploration. We take an early lunch at the lodge and then hike downhill above the Salkantay River, through increasingly verdant scenery. The Colpa Lodge is located in an open promontory at the confluence of three rivers. We arrive in time for an optional excursion to a nearby hot spring. *Hiking time 3-4 hours; B, L, D; O/N, Colpa Lodge (10,300 feet/3,150 meters)*

Day Ten—Trek to Lucma Lodge at Lucmabamba, March 22nd, Monday

After an early breakfast we head down the Santa Teresa River Valley, through more populated rural areas with coffee plantations and orchards. We stop along the river for lunch. From the river it is a short climb to Lucma Lodge, set in an avocado orchard. We arrive in time to allow for exploration of the village and meeting with members of the local community. *Hiking time 4-5 hours; B, L, D; O/N, Lucma Lodge (6,600 feet/2,000 meters)*

Day Eleven—Trek to Vilcanota River; Train to Aguas Caliente

March 23rd, Tuesday

After an early start and a hearty breakfast, we tackle the last day of our trek. We head uphill for two hours towards Llactapata pass (8,500 feet/2,600 meters), where we will have lunch. Shortly beyond the pass, we come upon a distant but quite special view of Machu Picchu from the southwest, a view few tourists ever glimpse; an added value are the Llactapata Ruins, which have recently been restored. We then begin our final descent to the Vilcanota River through lush bamboo forests and more orchards and coffee plantations (2-3 hours descent). A short, scenic train ride brings us to Aguas Caliente where we can join Meg for yoga, soak in natural hot springs or relax in the comfort of our hotel. *Hiking time 4-6 hours; B; O/N, Hotel Machu Picchu Inn (6,600 feet/2,000 meters)*

Day Twelve—Explore Machu Picchu; Transfer to Casa De Milagros March 24th, Wednesday

We will rise before the sun for the first bus to the ruins at 0530. Meg will lead a magical sunrise yoga practice among the first rays of light as they illuminate the stunning terraced hillsides, stone staircases, and temples of Machu Picchu. Alternatively you can climb a steep staircase up to the ruins (1-2 hours 2,310 feet/700 meters). After a guided morning tour, there will be ample time for the 90-minute climb of Huayna Picchu, a small peak with an Inca tunnel above Machu Picchu. From Huayna Picchu, the views of the ruins below, the Urubamba Valley, and the Cordillera Vilcabamba mountain range are unparalleled.

We return to Aguas Caliente in time for the afternoon train to Ollantaytambo where we will transfer to Casa De Milagros, a children's home in the Sacred Valley. *B,D; O/N, Casa De Milagros*

Day Thirteen—Volunteer at Casa De Milagros, March 25th, Thursday

We will spend the day volunteering at the orphanage. The purpose of Casa de Milagros is to nourish the mind, body and spirit of orphaned children and instill in them a sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Join Meg for a fun yoga practice with the kids. *B,L,D; O/N, Casa De Milagros*

Day Fourteen—Transfer to Cuzco; Fly to Lima; Return to Your Home Country March 26th, Friday

Morning transfer to Cuzco for return flight to Lima and international departures for home. *B*

Day Fifteen—Arrive Home, March 27th, Saturday

2010 Prices

4-5 participants \$5395* (\$5180 for payment by check)

6+ participants \$4550* (\$4365 for payment by check)

Single Supplement \$1000

Forced Single Supplement \$650

**4% Discount for payments by check (Prices as low as \$4365)*

What is Included:

- Round trip airfare Lima-Cuzco
- All ground transportation
- Cuzco Tourist Ticket (valid for 10 days)
- All accommodation based on double occupancy (includes breakfast)
- Professional, English-speaking local guides
- Professional yoga instructor and trip leader, Meg McCracken
- All meals where noted on the itinerary
- 2-Nights accommodation at the Wilka Tika Lodge in the Sacred Valley including all meals made from organic, locally grown foods
- Daily yoga classes taught by certified yoga instructor Meg McCracken
- All-day, guided tour of Inca Ruins in the Sacred Valley
- 2-Nights accommodation at the Casa Andina San Blas Hotel in Cuzco
- Half-day, guided hike of Inca ruins near Cuzco
- 5-Night luxury Lodge to Lodge Trek through the Salkantay Valley to Machu Picchu with Mountain Lodges Peru. Lodges include: private double rooms with eiderdown bedding, full bathrooms, shared Jacuzzi, fireplace, and gourmet food
- Note: an extra day and night will be spent at the Salkantay Lodge in order to acclimate. Optional activities include day hiking, trout fishing or a scramble to a high viewpoint
- Experienced, professional cooks prepare gourmet cuisine
- Group first aid kit
- Baggage transport of personal duffel on trek by porters and/or pack animals (limited to 10kg)
- Fair wages for porters
- 1-Night accommodation at the Machu Picchu Inn in Aguas Caliente
- Guided tour of Machu Picchu including entrance fee
- Train to Ollantaytambo
- 2-Nights/1-Day volunteering, meals and accommodation at Casa de Milagros orphanage in Ollantaytambo, Sacred Valley

What is Not Included:

- International airfare to Lima
- Peru Visa
- Hotels in Lima if arriving early or leaving late (we can book Lima Airport Hotel if necessary)
- Required travel insurance (can be booked through Lotus Expeditions)
- Airport or departure taxes and any excess baggage fees (10kg duffel and 5kg backpack allowed on trek and train)
- Salkantay Park Entrance Fee of S/. 127.00 or US\$50 (based on current exchange rate and paid in person by each traveler upon arrival in Molleta)
- Rescue or medical expenses
- Personal clothing, equipment, first aid and drug kits
- Single room supplement fees for hotels and lodges if requesting single accommodation or if traveling alone. If you are willing to share a room we will try to match you with a roommate of the same gender.
- Hotels, meals, transport or other fees if leaving trip before scheduled departure
- Meals not listed on your itinerary
- International and local staff gratuities (suggested \$250)
- Personal items such as laundry, telephone, email, alcohol, bottled drinks, etc.
- Personal cash for emergencies, gifts, meals, drinks, etc. (suggested \$500)

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