



## Itinerary

### 17 Day Best of Peru Tour & Galapagos Cruise With Flights

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.

#### DAY 1: Depart Australia, Arrive in Lima, Peru

Today you will depart on your flight from Australia to Lima, Peru. Because of the time difference you will depart and arrive on the same day. Upon arrival you will be greeted at the airport by our tour representative and transferred to your hotel.

If time permits, In the afternoon, you will embark on a Lima City Tour. On this fantastic guided tour of Lima you will explore the beautiful and fascinating City of Kings. You will visit iconic places that are rich in history. There will be plenty of picturesque churches and exquisite colonial architecture.

Begin your journey by travelling thousands of years into the past. Your first stop will be the ancient ceremonial centre called "Huaca Pucllana", which was built centuries before the arrival of the Spanish.

Next, you will drive into the centre of the city so you can stroll around the main square, the Plaza de Armas of Lima. Here you will find imposing architecture which was built a very long time ago. Also, on the main square is the grandiose Lima Cathedral. After that you can tour the Santo Domingo convent and its extensive monastery.

**MEALS:** None

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Lima

#### DAY 2: Lima ~ Cusco

After breakfast at the hotel, you will be picked up from your hotel to transfer to the airport for a short flight to Cusco. On arrival, you will be picked up and transferred to your hotel for check-in. Spend the rest of the day at your own leisure or take advantage of one of our optional tours.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Cusco

**OPTIONAL:** Cusco City Tour USD \$30 | Cooking Class USD \$40 | Folklore Show and Dinner USD \$25

#### DAY 3: Cusco Free Day

Enjoy the whole day at your own leisure exploring Cusco. Alternatively, you can take advantage of one of our optional tours.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Cusco

**OPTIONAL:** Sacred Valley USD \$45 | Rainbow Mountain USD \$90 | Maras Moray USD \$40

#### DAY 4: Cusco ~ Aguas Calientes

This morning you will be picked up at 8am to head to the train station to board the train to Aguas Calientes, the gateway to Machu Picchu! The train leaves at approximately 11:30am (time may change depending on availability and changes to timetable). After a 2-hour journey of majestic views you will arrive at Aguas Calientes to spend the night. Also known as Machu Picchu Pueblo, this town lies in a deep gorge below the ruins. As a virtual island, it's cut off from all roads and enclosed by stone cliffs, towering cloud forest, and two rushing rivers. Aguas Calientes is surrounded by thermal hot springs, on arrival there will be plenty of time to relax and enjoy a hot bath in the natural springs.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Aguas Calientes

#### DAY 5: The Marvellous Machu Picchu!

Wake up early for breakfast before our guide will pick you up from your hotel at 5:40am to begin the short bus journey to the gates of Machu Picchu where you will watch the sunrise. After entering the Citadel begin a guided walking tour (approximately two hours) of the citadel complex. After this experience, enjoy some free time to explore the mysterious city as you please. Then, you will take the bus down to Aguas Calientes for lunch, later we will board the train back to Poroy. Upon your arrival to the train station, we will pick you up and take you back to your hotel in Cusco.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Cusco

#### DAY 6: Cusco ~ Puno, Lake Titicaca

After breakfast, you'll be picked up from your hotel at 06h00 and dropped off at the bus station to take a bus trip, more like a tour - a guide will be on board, and you'll stop at four exciting sites: Andahuaylillas, Raqchi (Wiracocha God Temple), La Raya and Pukara. Andahuaylillas is the Sistine Chapel of South America. This church is one of the most beautiful examples of Andean popular religious art. Raqchi was an Inca church of considerable dimensions; 328 feet long, 85 feet wide and 45 feet high. The temple is divided into two naves, and each nave has 11 large columns. La Raya is the half-way point between Cusco and Puno and also the highest point (14,222 feet above sea level). The landscapes here are stunning and typical Andean animals like the llama, alpaca and vicuña are familiar sights. It is also the geographic border between two cultures - Quechua and Aymara. Finally, Pukara is the most important and oldest ceremonial centre of the altiplano which holds new lite-sculptures and tombs. After you will proceed to Puno and arrive at about 5pm.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Puno

#### DAY 7: Uros Floating, Taquile & Luquina islands

After breakfast between 7.00am and 8 am, we will take you from the hotel to the port of Puno; there you will board the motorboat to the floating Islands of Uros, located 25 minutes from the port of Puno. More than 65 small islands are still there today and you will visit two. While visiting the guide will explain a little about the history and lifestyle of the people that have been living in these floating islands for many years, you will also have the opportunity to talk with the people of these islands and visit their homes and learn a little about their lifestyle.

Afterward, we will sail towards "Taquile Island," which takes approximately two hours. On the island is a traditional Quechua speaking community, full of ancient agricultural terraces and some ruins dating back to the pre-Inca times. The Taquile population was relatively isolated from the mainland until the 1950s, and the notion of the community and family is still powerful among them. The weaving tradition of this Island goes back to early civilizations, thus keeps elements from pre-Inca Andean cultures alive in the present. The most original garments are the "Chullo," a knitted hat with an earflap; and "The Calendar Waistband," depicting the annual cycles connected to ritual and agricultural activities. When you reach the island, you walk up along a narrow path, enjoying impressive views of Lake Titicaca and seeing gorgeous little houses inhabited by the direct descendants of the Inca Culture. You will then have free time to explore the Island on your own, and afterward, you will meet the group for lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch, we will go down to the harbour to take a boat to continue with a one-hour boat ride to the peninsula Chucuito. The remarkable thing about this place is that the tourist feel it is new. The inhabitants of this place are very willing to receive visitors in their community, you will be welcomed directly by the families, and they will take you to their homes and spend the night. Karina community has Lake Titicaca, and hence you will be able to do activities like fishing and farming.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Traditional Home Stay

#### DAY 8: Luquina Island ~ Puno

Today we will enjoy the breakfast with our host family, and then we will participate in the local activities provided. Then we will have lunch and finally, say goodbye to the local family and go down to the harbour to take the boat. Afterward, we will sail towards Puno, which takes approximately two hours. We arrive back to Puno at around 5:00 pm.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Puno

#### DAY 9: Puno ~ Lima ~ Guayaquil, Ecuador

After breakfast, you will be transferred to Juliaca airport for your flights to Guayaquil, Ecuador via Lima. Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel for the night. The rest of your day is at leisure.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Guayaquil

#### DAY 10: Guayaquil ~ San Cristobal ~ Lobos Island

This morning you will be transferred back to the airport for your short flights to San Cristobal. Unfurl the sails of adventure and embark on an unforgettable journey to the Galapagos Islands. You'll arrive at San Cristobal Airport, where a seasoned naturalist guide, the custodian of this ecological gem, will greet you. Feel the flutter of anticipation as your exploration of this astonishing world heritage site commences.

Venture to Lobos Island, a tranquil islet secluded from San Cristobal by a slim channel. This nature's cradle, amidst a serene bay, is the playground for sea lion pups frolicking in tidal pools. The island might be modest but bursts with life, particularly with "lobos marinos" or sea lions. As you step ashore, welcoming committees of sea lions would greet you, only to be outraged by the male frigatebirds inland, presenting their inflamed red balloons amidst the verdant foliage. Stay vigilant for the blue-footed boobies nesting on the trails, ready to treat you to a display of their whimsical courtship dance.

**Snorkeling Experience:** Dive into an underwater ballet at this renowned snorkeling spot, sheltered by the calm waves. Playful sea lions would eagerly display their acrobatic prowess. In contrast, sea turtles and rays find solace resting on the sandy seabed, giving you a glimpse into the harmonious marine life that thrives beneath the surface.

**Highlights:** Galapagos sea lions, marine Iguanas, magnificent & great frigatebirds, blue-footed Boobies, and San Cristobal Lava Lizards.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** M/Y Galaxy Orion

#### DAY 11: Espanola Island: Suarez Point ~ Gardner Bay

Embrace the morning at Suarez Point. This rocky trail presents a natural gallery of the Galapagos islands, brimming with an awe-inspiring array of fauna. Upon landing, you'll be greeted by sea lions and marine iguanas, your first hosts in this nature carnival. As you venture further, you'll encounter a mosaic of seabird colonies - from the striking Nazca and blue-footed boobies to the elegant gulls and tropicbirds. The pinnacle of this journey brings you face-to-face with the waved albatross, the island's largest bird (present from April to January). This majestic creature, exclusive to Española, will captivate you with its powerful flight and intricate courtship display.

**Highlights:** Sea lions, Waved Albatross, Galapagos hawks, Española mockingbirds, Darwin finches, marine iguanas, Nazca & Blue-footed Boobies, Red-billed Tropicbirds, Swallow-tailed gulls, herons, lava lizards, herons.

Transition into the afternoon with a thrilling adventure to Gardner Bay, a pristine piece of paradise in the Galapagos archipelago. Sugar-white coral sands merge with crystal-clear turquoise waters, creating a tropical oasis. Watch as the beach becomes a theatre, starring sun-basking sea lions in a playful performance. This idyllic setting invites you to stroll along the coast, immersing yourself in an enlightening experience as you delve into the biology of the endemic fauna - from the melodious Española mockingbird and the unique marine iguanas to the regal Galapagos hawks.

**Snorkeling Experience:** Submerge beneath the azure waves to witness a spectacular performance choreographed by marine life. Swim alongside playful sea lions, graceful reef sharks, and gliding rays. Discover an array of fish, including vivid Angelfish, charismatic Parrotfish, dynamic Damselfish, and the ever-busy Surgeonfish coloring the underwater landscape. Highlights: Coral sand beach, sea lions, Galapagos hawks, Española mockingbirds, Darwin finches, marine iguanas.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** M/Y Galaxy Orion

### DAY 12: Floreana Island: Post Office Bay ~ Cormorant Point

Begin your day by stepping into the footprints of the past at Post Office Bay, located on the enigmatic Floreana Island. This locale is imbued with tales from the late 1920s and '30s involving German settlers, a baroness, unsolved mysteries, and captivating intrigue. The bay was a historic anchoring point for whalers, who journeyed to the highlands for freshwater and tortoises. A mail system over two centuries old was established as a hub for visiting vessels centered around a barrel near the beach. This system endures today, offering a unique opportunity to send postcards from this remote part of the world. Apart from its rich history, Post Office Bay presents natural attractions such as a scenic beach, a lava tunnel, and sea tours that can unveil sea lions, green sea turtles, shorebirds, small sharks, and, if luck permits, Galapagos penguins.

**Snorkeling Experience:** Delve beneath the waves from the beach, opening up a mesmerizing world of sea turtles, rays, and a diverse plethora of fish. Keep your fingers crossed for a special appearance by the elusive Galapagos penguin.

**Highlights:** Sea Lions, sea turtles, finches, shorebirds, marine iguanas, and penguins.

Shift your expedition northwards to Cormorant Point, renowned for its expansive coastal lagoon teeming with American flamingos, white-cheeked pintails, black-necked stilts, and other shorebirds. This natural haven also features a pristine white sand beach, a crucial nesting ground for green sea turtles, and a newly established breeding ground for blue-footed boobies near the trail. Amidst this vibrant wildlife, also take the opportunity to admire the island's unique flora.

**Snorkeling Experience:** Snorkeling at Cormorant Point, Floreana, Galapagos, unveils a vibrant underwater world. Visitors swim among tropical fish, rays, sea turtles, and occasionally sea lions beneath crystal-clear waters. The unique olive-green sand beach adds a magical touch to this one-of-a-kind snorkeling experience.

**Highlights:** American flamingo, blue-footed booby, frigatebirds, tropicbirds, Galapagos shearwaters, sea lions, sea turtle nesting site, finches, shorebirds, coral-sand beach.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** M/Y Galaxy Orion

### DAY 13: Santa Cruz Island: Charles Darwin Station ~ Back to Quito, Ecuador

Kickstart your day with a profound encounter at the Charles Darwin Station, a dedicated non-profit working hand-in-hand with the Galapagos National Park to safeguard the archipelago's unique biodiversity. This visit provides insights into the collaborative efforts of these institutions to shield native species and combat the invasive ones threatening the delicate balance of the Galapagos ecosystem. One of their emblematic endeavors includes the captive breeding of giant tortoises, an integral part of the conservation strategy. Amidst the educational venture, enjoy the setting of an outdoor native dry forest adorned with towering cacti and a rich array of fascinating endemic flora. This is an ideal spot to discover various endemic Darwin finches, vivacious flycatchers, and melodious mockingbirds.

**Highlights:** Galapagos giant tortoise & land iguanas breeding program, Darwin finches, Galapagos mockingbirds, Galapagos flycatchers, yellow warblers.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Quito

#### DAY 14: Quito: City Tour & Middle of the World

After enjoying a delicious breakfast, embark on a guided tour of Quito, a city steeped in history and culture. As a UNESCO World Heritage-listed site, Quito's historic centre offers a treasure trove of architectural and cultural wonders. Wander through its cobblestone streets, admire the stunning colonial-era buildings, and visit some of its most iconic landmarks, such as the Basilica del Voto Nacional, a Gothic masterpiece, and the ornate San Francisco Church, and the beautiful La Compañía de Jesús Church, renowned for its ornate gold interior. Along the way, your guide will share fascinating stories about the city's history and its blend of indigenous and Spanish influences.

In the afternoon, journey to the Middle of the World monument (La Mitad del Mundo), located just north of the city. Here, you can stand with one foot in each hemisphere at the equatorial line, an experience that perfectly combines science, history, and fun. Learn about the cultural and geographical significance of this location, and don't forget to take memorable photos to mark the occasion. You may also explore the nearby museum to discover more about the local traditions and scientific experiments related to the equator.

Return to your hotel in the evening to relax and reflect on a day filled with incredible experiences. Prepare for the adventures that await in the days ahead.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 or 4 Star Hotel, Quito

#### DAY 15: End of Tour ~ Departure

This morning, after your final breakfast and check out you will be transferred to the airport for your return flight home. We hope you had a memorable experience of Peru and the Galapagos Islands.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, In-Flight

**OVERNIGHT:** In-Flight

#### DAY 16: In Transit

#### DAY 17: Arrive Home

Today you will arrive home to Australia. Because of the time difference you arrive home +2 days later and we build this into the itinerary to give a clear idea of how many days you will away from home.