GOBUS
FREESTYLE ADVENTURE

LAND OF THE INCAS REVERSED - 21 DAYS

HIGHLIGHTS

- La Paz - Bolivia's capitals
- Lake Titicaca - guided tour and homestay at Lluquina & Taquile Island
- The Inca Trail + guided tour of Macchu Picchu
- Vibrant Cuzco and the ruins in and about the city
- Colca Canyon - home of the Andean condor - guided tour
- Arequipa - Peru's beautiful 'White City
- Puerta Inca - beaches and flora and fauna
- Nazca lines
- Nazca - guided touring of desert cemetery
- Lima - Peru's capital

INCLUSIONS

- 11 nights simple hotels,
- 7 nights participation camping,
- 2 nights homestay
- 11 breakfasts 12 lunches 10 dinners
- All relevant transportation
- All touring as specified
- English speaking tour leader to provide information and assistance in booking optional activities and accommodation

Please note: departure tax of US $32 not included

TOUR MAP

GO GUIDE

Your guide to on the ground...

VISA REQUIREMENTS

UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA passport holders don't require a visa for Peru and Bolivia for a stay of less than 90 days. SA passport holders do not require a visa for Peru for a stay less than 90 days, but DO require one for Bolivia.

This info can change regularly and at short notice, so we recommend that you check with each embassy individually. Visa procurement is your responsibility and not that of GOBUS. Visas cost money so be sure to budget for them! Please ensure that you have at least one blank page per visa and that your passport is valid for at least six months from the end date of your trip. Visas are your responsibility. Don't forget to check!

TIME

Bolivia is 4hrs behind GMT, Peru is 5hrs behind.

VOLTAGE

Plug types and voltages vary so you will need a universal adapter. Check www.kropla.com/electric2 for more info.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory on our trips and you will not be allowed to travel without it. Please ask a member of our reservations team if you would like us to book this for you. Please ensure that your insurance covers you for trekking at altitude and any optional activities you may like to do.

MONEY

Visa cards are the most widely accepted cards. While ATMs are widely available, there are no guarantees that your credit or debit cards will actually work in Latin America. Check with your bank. If purchasing products or services on a credit card a fee of 5%-10% usually applies. A combination of US dollar cash, travellers cheques (for emergencies only) and cards is best, although you will usually be charged a high commission fee or given a less-favourable exchange rate for travellers cheques.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE TIP: Slightly torn, faded or heavily marked notes may be difficult to exchange. It is best to bring notes in fairly good condition, in denominations lower than US $100 (or equivalent) as they can be hard to exchange or to break into smaller denominations. 100 dollar bills of certain series (e.g. CB B2) can be especially hard to cash!

TIPPING

It is customary in Latin America to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels.

Recommendations for tipping local guides range from US $5-10 per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your tour leader for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your Tour Leader and driver/cook did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline US $20-25 per person, per week can be used.

EXTRAS

- Allow US $200 for meals not included.
- Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional US $200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used if circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!
- See the end of this goguide for optional activities

GOOD ADVICE

- Take a money belt
- Prepare for the Inca trail by training before you go
- Bring a small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- Bring a first aid kit
- Bring a travel pillow for camping
- Don't forget to take some warm clothing!
- Keep a photocopy of your passport data pages and your yellow fever certificate
- Bring cutlery and bowl/plate for the days you would like to cook for yourself

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LAND OF THE INCAS REVERSED : ITINERARY

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

El Alto International Airport is a spectacular drive from the centre of La Paz, where our joining hotel is located. The easiest way to get there is via taxi. You can pay for the car at set rates (approximately US $8), from an official uniformed taxi driver. The trip takes approximately 30 minutes and is very scenic. The money exchange desk is open 9am to 7 pm.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, so you may arrive at any time.

Your Tour Leader will contact you at the hotel on Day 1 and make sure you are settled comfortably. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning. Your Tour Leader will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip.

DAY 1: LA PAZ

Welcome to La Paz, the highest capital city in the world! Although Sucre is the official capital, La Paz is the Bolivian centre of commerce, finance and industry, and the de facto capital. This is a busy modern city, with its centre at the base of a canyon 5 km (3 miles) wide and sprawling impromptu housing all the way up the surrounding hillsides. The city is at nearly 4000 m (13,120 ft) above sea level, so visitors should be prepared for cool evenings and mornings.

Today is an arrival day and no formal arrangements have been made so you've free time to explore and highlights include visits to museums, and excursions to Tiahuanaco ruins (cradle of Inca civilisation), the world's highest ski resort and the incredible Valley of the Moon named for its crater like formations.

Check out the Mercado de Hechicería (Witches' Market), where Paceños and visitors may purchase potions and incantations made from all sorts of herbs, seeds, and secret ingredients to remedy any number of illnesses (real or imagined) and protect from evil spirits. There is also a thriving black market and a Carnaval market, where locals purchase carnival costumes. You'll also find a wealth of shops selling all sorts of handicrafts, mainly alpaca wool products, silver jewellery, woven textiles and leather goods.

DAYS 2 - 4: LAKE TITICACA

We travel from La Paz around the shore of Lake Titicaca to the Lluqina Peninsula where we will spend two nights in a small, local community, mostly unaffected by tourism. Unlike the neighbouring islands the communities of Lluquina have only recently started to accept visitors and have a less commercial and more authentic feel. We will stay with a local family and get a true feel of life on the shores of Lake Titicaca.

After our homestay we will visit Lake Titicaca itself, the largest lake in the world above 2000m, and the views from Taquile Island are stunning. The people of Taquile Island's unique culture, style of dress and lifestyle make for a memorable visit. The men of the community do all the knitting, as this is strictly a male domain, while the women do the spinning. High quality, locally knitted goods are available for purchase at various cooperatives on the island.

After Taquile Island we pass the floating islands of the Uros people. The Uros began their unusual floating existence centuries ago in an effort to isolate themselves from the Colla and Inca tribes. Sadly, the Uros language has died out, and today they speak Aymara due to intermarriage with Aymara-speakers. Today about 300 families live on the islands, however their numbers are slowly declining.

The Totora reeds that grow in the shallows of the lake are used for making everything from the islands themselves to the model boats that the islanders sell. The reeds are also used to build their boats, which if constructed well will last up to 6 months.

DAYS 5 - 8: CUZCO

Next we head to the buzzing city of Cuzco. It is the perfect base for optional explorations of the city and area as well as a range of outdoor activities. We spend the next few days relaxing and exploring this fascinating city, while taking time to acclimatize to the higher altitude before our trek.

The city attracts thousands of travellers who come not just to visit a unique destination but also to experience an age-old culture very different from their 20th century way of life. It is steeped in history, tradition and legend. There are a myriad of very old and grand churches dotted around the city and several interesting ruins in and around Cuzco. While most ruins are just outside of the city, the main ruin within is that of the Coricancha, once the Inca Empire's richest temple. This ruin forms the base of the colonial church of Santo Domingo. During Inca times this temple was literally covered with gold, but within months of the arrival of the first conquistadors this incredible wealth had all been melted down. It is left to the individual imagination to envision the magnificence of the original structure.

Whilst exploring, why not visit the Archaeological Museum, which also houses a small art museum, the Regional History Museum and the Religious Art Museum?

Next we check out Ollantaytambo which is a major Inca ruin site and your first taste of what lies ahead on the Inca Trail. It is admired for its huge steep terraces guarding the Inca Fortress and for being one of the few places where the Spanish lost a major battle during the conquest. We spend the night in this small town before heading out for the start of the hike the next morning.

DAYS 9 - 12: THE INCA TRAIL

A trip to Peru is not complete without a visit to the Inca ruins. For those interested in a challenging but worthwhile hike, the Inca Trail is exceptional, however you must be prepared for it! It is a 40-km (25 mile) hike, with 3 high passes to be crossed, one of which reaches an elevation of 4200m (13776 ft). The trail is often steep, and it may rain even during the dry season. The temperatures at night may fall below zero, so it is important to come well prepared.

Our local crew of porters, cook and guide will look after us well for the duration of the hike. Walking the trail that linked this ancient empire will supply you with breathtaking views at every step, as we move from high plateau areas to dense cloud forest. Depending on the season, you may see a great variety of flora, including miniature and large orchids, and fiery rhododendron bushes.

You will be passing smaller ruin sites the first of which is Llactapata. The second day you will climb the long steep path to Warmiwañusca, or Dead Woman's Pass. At 4198 m (13769 ft) above sea level, this pass is the highest point of the trek. The second pass of the hike is at 3998 m (13113 ft) where on clear days, we enjoy superb views of the snow-capped Cordillera Vilcabamba. The trail goes through some beautiful cloud forest on the gentle climb to the third pass, where you will walk through a causeway and a tunnel, both original Inca constructions. The highest point of the third pass is at 3700m (12136 ft). You'll be rewarded by devastatingly beautiful views of the Urubamba Valley below (on clear days). Soon you will reach the serene looking ruins of Phuyupatamarca, or the 'Town above the Clouds', at about 3650 m (11972 ft) above sea level. We camp for the final night close to Wiñay Wayna (Forever Young) ruins, a grandiose terraced hillside site, with panoramic views of the valley below and just a short hike from Machu Picchu.

On the final day of the hike we climb the steps to the Sun Gate overlooking the peaks that surround Machu Picchu. There is no way to describe the feeling of the first views of Machu Picchu, as the mist rises off the mountains early in the morning and the famous ruin appears in front of you. We have the better part of the day to explore the site. In the afternoon, we have the chance to soak in the hot springs of Aguas Calientes before taking the train back to Cuzco.

Machu Picchu is both the best and the least known of the Inca ruins. It is not mentioned in any of the chronicles of the Spanish conquistadors and archaeologists today can do no more than speculate on its function. Machu Picchu was known for centuries by the local Quechua farmers in the area. It was not until the American historian Hiram Bingham, in search of Villcabamba, was led to the site by an 11 year old boy on July 24, 1911, that the rest of the world became aware of its existence. At that time it was covered in thick vegetation. Bingham and his team returned in 1912 and 1915 to clear the growth. Over the years, a lot of work has been done on excavating and studying the site. Despite these efforts, many unanswered questions remain.

NOTE: If you have always dreamed of trekking the Inca Trail be warned – the numbers are strictly controlled and the trail is periodically closed due to maintenance and/or inclement weather. So please book early!

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If the Inca Trail is unavailable we will offer the Lares Trek as an alternative. With its breathtaking passes, glacial lakes and hot springs, this less crowded option, which also ends with a full day's visit to Machu Picchu, is thought to be more spectacular and has more to offer than the Inca Trail (includes 2 nights camping, 1 night hotel – Aguas Calientes & comprehensive tour of Machu Picchu).

DONT FANCY THE TREK?

If you'd rather set your weary head upon a comfy pillow than spend 2-3 days hiking either Trail, then why not spend those days in the relative comfort of a Cuzco Hotel? On the day before the group reaches Machu Picchu, you will travel by train to Aguas Calientes and overnight. The next morning we take the bus to the Machu Picchu entrance and rendezvous with the hikers at the ruins (includes 2 nights Cuzco, 1 night Aguas Calientes & comprehensive tour of Machu Picchu).

Please specify either preference when making your reservation.

DAY 13 - 14: COLCA CANYON

The Colca Valley is an area of stunning natural beauty. Our excursion to the Colca Canyon involves a remarkable drive through Inca and pre-Inca terracing, we will see huge volcanoes towering above us. The Canyon itself is a spectacular sight, more than twice as deep as the Grand Canyon in the States. Once at the Canyon we will look for the king of the Andes, the mighty Andean Condor, as well as seeing a variety of birdlife, including the giant humming bird, eagles and alpacas, llamas and vicuñas,

DAYS 15 - 16: THE WHITE CITY

Peru's second largest city after Lima and hailed as the most beautiful, Arequipa, maintains a traditional colonial style and more laid back pace in comparison with the capital. Arequipa is built from a pearly white volcanic rock called sillar, the older buildings dazzle in the sun, thus the nickname, "the White City." The main plaza with its cafés and nearby cathedral is a top draw for visitors and the friendly locals make the city a great place for visitors.

Why not take an optional visit to the Convent of Santa Catalina, which offers a brief respite from the outside world and a unique view into a by-gone way of life.

In the evening you can explore and sample the yummy cuisine in the many restaurants (try an alpaca steak - low in fat and calories and very tender!), check out some of the nightlife (and do like the locals by tasting some Pisco sour) or just take a wander round the streets and squares. The city looks particularly beautiful at night when the Cathedral and other monuments are lit up.

DAY 17: PUERTO INCA

This beautiful sea shore location along one of the most important archeological sites off the Peruvian coast between Nazca and Copiapo is also called "Quebrada de la Vaca". Our campsite is located by the beautiful beach and we can enjoy swimming and sunbathing on the warm sands, or try to spot some of the fabulous flora and fauna, including a variety of birds, adorable sea lions and cute penguins, before perhaps trying some of the tasty seafood available and then settling down to a night under a blanket of stars.

DAY 18 - 19: THE NAZCA LINES

Huacachina is literally an oasis in the middle of the desert. Surrounded by some of the world's highest sand dunes sandboarding has become this area's claim to fame. Whether you are an avid snowboarder looking for something new or trying it for the first time you are sure to enjoy this optional activity.

Close by are the mysterious Nazca Lines, consisting of patterns and pictures etched in the ground, crisscrossing an area of flat desert. Some of the lines measure up to 10 km (32 miles) in length, and yet remain perfectly straight. The depictions of birds, insects and animals are only recognizable from the air. Who drew the lines, and why, is something about which modern archaeologists can only theorise. From the ground we can make out very little and the best view is from a light aircraft, which can easily be arranged.

Remains of the Nazca culture are still visible during our tour of an ancient desert cemetery site, which also includes a visit to a pottery workshop.

DAY 20 - 21: LIMA

Welcome to Lima, Peru's capital city! To get a feel for colonial Lima, take a cab to the Plaza de Armas and watch the changing of the Palace Guard in the afternoon. Walk around the streets surrounding the Jirón de la Unión for great examples of Spanish-colonial architecture and to experience life in a large South American city. There are many fine museums in and around the city, including the Museo Rafael Larco Herrera, which houses an equally impressive collection of pottery, mummies and textiles from the Paracas and Nazca cultures. An optional city tour visits many of the cities highlights.

The more affluent coastal districts of Miraflores, Barranco and San Isidro offer good nightlife and cafés. The Limeños are friendly and the city's many interesting museums, churches, markets, restaurants and nightlife will surely entice you. Seafood lovers should be sure and try a ceviche, for which Lima is well known.

Day 21 heralds the end of a trip of a lifetime. We hope you had a great time!

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LAND OF THE INCAS REVERSED: INFO

STYLE OF TRIP

When considering one of our South American expeditions, it is important to be aware that this choice of holiday is designed for people who have an adventurous spirit and understand that in developing countries things do not always run to plan. South America is a huge continent and so there will be some long days of travelling, but with the stunning scenery you won't be bored! To allow you to have total freedom and flexibiltiy to explore, we've included just the basics. Travel around on anything that moves, be it bus, train, ferry or good old foot power. You will experience life like a local by staying in remote or rustic guesthouses, and in cities and towns it will be hotels. Expect your multi-shared room or campsite to be simple and clean, with the occasional cold shower and sporadic electricity Our overland trips require some participation so expect a real hands-on experience as you set up camp, help out at meal times and team up with your fellow travellers as you cross rivers, plains, plateaus and mountain passes. This is South America, expect the unexpected!

TOUR LEADER AND STAFF

The trip is accompanied by one of our tour leaders and at least one driver/cook. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds.

MEALS

Eating is a big part of travelling. You will experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. The amount of meals included as per the inclusions on page one. We recommend you allow approx US $200 dollars for your other meals.

HEALTH

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. Please note this trip travels to high altitude. This is medically defined as anything over 8,000 feet (2,440 meters). Most people can travel to 8,000 feet with minimal effects. However, everyone reacts to altitude differently and altitude sickness can on set with some people irrespective of fitness and age.

We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that quite often we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities. We reserve the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our group leader they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Many countries in South America (including parts of Brazil and Ecuador) require you to have a yellow fever vaccination certificate in order to enter, so if you are planning to extend your travels after or before this trip please check if this is required by you.

SECURITY

The best advice is to stay alert. Don't bring any unnecessary, expensive jewellery with you. Keep an eye on your belongings at all times, listen to the advice of your tour leader and consider bringing a money belt. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions. We also recommend you photocopy all of your travel document and keep them separately from the originals.

CLIMATE AND THINGS TO BRING

Most people automatically assume that the weather is hot in South America, but because of the higher altitude in the Andes, the temperature can feel quite cold, especially at night. We recommend the use of a duffel bag or backpack, whichever is easiest for you to carry. A good size daypack is also essential.

Remember that although near the Equator, the higher altitude on some parts of the trip make for cool evenings and you will need a warm sweater or pullover and you should also think about bringing a warm hat, gloves, water/windproof jackets and thermal underwear. You will also need a sleeping bag for camping. It's best to layer clothes rather than bring a heavy parka so that you can take layers off. This is especially true on the Inca Trail, at which time warmer clothing is essential.

RECOMMENDED FOR THE INCA TRAIL

- Inner sheet (for sleeping bag)
- Rain poncho
- Strong plastic bags to help keep gear dry
- Sleeping bag (this can also be hired locally for approximately US $15)
- Mattress (a foam mattress is included as part of the hike; self inflating type mattresses are available for hire)
- Anti-inflammatory tablets (e.g. Ibuprofen)

All other camping equipment is provided for the Inca Trail excursion. Porters carry the camping gear, food, and a portion of your personal belongings. All you will need to carry is a day-pack, containing waterproof jacket, fleece top, camera, water bottle, snacks, sunscreen, and hat during the hike.

To support the rights of the porters on the Inca Trail we would like ensure that they never exceed the weight limit for their packs as set out by the National Institute of Culture in Peru. Porters are allowed to carry no more than 6Kg of personal belongings per hiker. That means that including your sleeping bag, toiletries, clothing, etc... you are allowed a total weight of 6KG for the hike. Any additional weight must then be carried by you in your day pack.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Prices in USD. To be booked and paid for locally. Prices are approximate and may change.

La Paz:
- Chacaltaya tour $15
- City tour $15
- Mountain biking $45-$60
- Tiwanaku ruins $10-15

Puno:
- Sillustani archaeological site $12

Cuzco:
- Boleto Turistico (tourist ticket) $14-25
- City tour $7
- Horseback riding around ruins (with guide) $25 - $35
- Horseback riding around ruins (without guide) $12
- Whitewater rafting $25
- Mountain biking $35
- Inca Museum $2 entrance
- Quad biking $80

Arequipa:
- Santa Catalina Museum $4 entrance
- Juanita Museum $3

Nazca:
- Flight over the Nazca Lines $50

Huacachina:
- Sandbuggy and sandboarding $13

Pisco:
- Ballestas Island tour $11

Lima:
- City tour $25 ($45 with Gold Museum)
- San Fransisco Church and catacombs $2.50
- Museum of the Nation $3 entrance
- Museum of the Inquisition $3 entrance

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