

Sacred Valley DH, Peru

An unforgettable adventure showcasing the biggest and best descents in Cusco and The Sacred Valley of the Incas



Trip Highlights:

- 8 big days of exclusively shuttle-accessed downhill singletrack riding
- Ancient Inca trails, mind blowing ridge lines & thrilling urban descents
- An aggressive itinerary with more riding than any other trip on the market
- 250 km's of incredible riding with a whopping 25,000m of descending

- Vibrant culture, fascinating history, and impressive architectural wonders
- Train ride to Machu Picchu and walks through the Historic Centre of Cusco
- Delicious Peruvian cuisine and gourmet meals at an affordable price
- Cold beers at the end of each day's ride and Pisco Sours by night



This document includes further details intended to help you better prepare for your trip. For the full itinerary and list of inclusions, please visit the trip page of our website, [here](#).



General Information

Riding:

We will be riding ancient Inca trails, local villager and agricultural routes, as well as some purpose built bike trails. Expect lots of fast flowy sections, plenty of rock gardens, some steep sections, exposed ridge lines, tight switchbacks, rocky old stair sets, a few small climbs and lot's of huge descents. Trails are a mix of soft grippy dirt, hard packed clay, some tree roots, and lots of rocks. There are no mandatory gap jumps or drops, but plenty of optional ones. Most trails are equivalent to "Blue" and "Black" rated trails in North America with some short sections pushing "double-black" ratings. Please exercise caution and ride within your limits!

Food:

A buffet breakfast will be available at our hotel every morning, typically consisting of eggs, bread, fruit, vegetables, cheese, pancakes, yogurt, coffee, tea, and freshly-squeezed juice. Lunch typically consists of freshly made sandwiches, fresh fruit, and a homemade sweet treat, while on some days we'll visit small local restaurants for their lunchtime "set menu" consisting of soup, chicken, rice, and potatoes. We'll have plenty of riding fuel available throughout the day such as granola bars, nuts, cookies, and fruit, and we'll finish each day's ride with some cold beers and salty snacks.

Cusco is home to a large variety of amazing and affordable upscale and local restaurants, and dinnertime is the time to really indulge. After all the big rides we'll be doing each day, you will have earned it! Peruvian cuisine is some of the best in the world and we'll get our fair share and variety of incredible dinners here. Don't forget to try the Pisco Sour!

Weather:

High elevation riding in the Andes means a wide range of mountainous weather and microclimates. You should be prepared for anything from cool temps and high winds to warm temps and strong sun. Rain can happen at any time but typically comes in short bursts in the late afternoons. Daytime temps in Cusco are around 18-20 degrees celsius with cooler evening temps of around 8-12 degrees. The Sacred Valley is at a slightly lower elevation than Cusco and can be a bit warmer. Obviously, temps will be cooler when riding at higher elevations in the mountains so be prepared for big laps with multiple layers.

The "Dry Season" in Cusco runs from May to October, while the "Rainy Season" runs November through April. We choose to run our trips during the rainy season for a variety of reasons;

- **Tacky Dirt**
 - During the dry season, these trails are extremely dusty and blown out. We all get our fair share of dry, loose trails at home all summer long and we prefer to ride these trails when they are moist and tacky.
- **Green Landscapes**
 - During the dry season, the landscape is brown and dull. With a bit of rain, the vegetation and flora on these mountain sides turns lush and vibrant green.
- **Warmer Temps**
 - Daytime temperatures in Cusco remain roughly the same all year round, but the evening temps are quite a bit warmer during the wet season, making for much more pleasant dinners and comfortable sleeping.
- **And More**
 - Mixed skies make for more dramatic scenery and photos, and just because it's the "rainy season" doesn't mean that it rains every day. Sure we might get rained on a couple of times, but hey... we're not made of sugar!

Elevation:

The first day of the trip is designed to be an acclimatization day. After arriving in Cusco at an elevation of 3400m, you'll build your bike and then head out for a casual walk around town to get used to the elevation. Our first riding day is also designed to help with acclimatization by doing several shorter laps and reaching a maximum elevation of 3850m. After these first two days you should be acclimatized well enough to proceed without any issues. Dealing with the altitude and recognizing the S/Sx of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) will be discussed in detail on our first night's pre-trip meeting. Your guides have a wealth of knowledge and experience in dealing with high elevations and AMS, so rest assured, you're in good hands! Keeping well hydrated is one of the best things you can do for acclimatization, so be sure to drink plenty of water before and during your trip!

Accommodations:

We'll be staying in traditional 3 star hotels in Cusco and Ollantaytambo. They are very clean and comfortable but don't expect anything too luxurious. The hotels have hot showers, good wifi, and comfy beds with extra blankets available. Keep in mind there is generally no heating in any of the accommodations in Peru, so bring some warm layers for the evenings. You will still be plenty warm in your beds without the need for a sleeping bag. The accommodations for our night in the mountains at the Lares Hot Springs will be more rustic with very basic rooms and beds.

All rooms are double occupancy so you will be sharing a room with someone of the same sex, unless you've booked and paid for the private room supplement. If you are attending the trip as a couple, you will be guaranteed a private room at no extra cost.

Currency & Spending Money:

The official currency of Peru is the Sol. While it is possible to exchange USD or CAD for Soles in Cusco, we recommend simply using an ATM to withdraw Soles. Transaction fees are around \$5, Major credit cards can be used at most shops and restaurants. The exchange rate for Soles is roughly 4:1 for USD or 3:1 for CAD. For example, an item for sale for 10 Soles would be \$2.50 USD, or \$3.33 CAD. This is not an exact conversion, but it's very close and it makes for some pretty easy math. We recommend that you budget \$20-\$40 USD for dinner and drinks every night, and about \$10-\$15 for lunches on non-riding days.

Tipping:

Gratuities of 10% are customary at restaurants in Cusco and the Sacred Valley and should be made in Soles.

Gratuities for your guides and drivers can be made in USD, CAD, or any leftover Soles at the end of your trip. Our team works very hard to ensure you have the best possible time on your trip and we're here for you every step of the way. If at the end of your trip, you feel that your guides have done an outstanding job, a gratuity of 10-12% of the trip price is common.

Tourist Visa:

Peru is an easy country to enter. People from most countries in the Americas and Western Europe do not need a tourist visa to enter Peru. The maximum length of stay that the authorities grant to tourists is 183 days, which cannot be extended. Keep in mind that while a visa is not required, your passport must be valid for at least six months, post-entry.

Pre-Trip Planning

Trip Insurance:

We partner with Global Rescue, the world's leading medical and security evacuation organization, to offer you the highest level of security and medical emergency evacuation support. Their policies include helicopter evacuation, local medical treatment, and home-country evacuation transportation, as well as trip cancellation coverage.

Though we recommend purchasing your policy with Global Rescue, you can also purchase your own private insurance through the broker of your choice. Emergency medical insurance coverage is mandatory. [Click here](#) to book your policy with Global Rescue.

Vaccinations & Travel Medications:

If you don't have much experience traveling to developing countries, you may want to make an appointment to visit a travel doctor at least 4 weeks before your trip. The travel doctor will advise you as to what you need in the way of medications and vaccinations.

Some common vaccinations for travel are: measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot. Hepatitis A, and Typhoid vaccinations are also likely required.

You will likely get prescriptions for Dukhorol and/or other travelers diarrhea medications such as Azithromycin or Ciprofloxacin. Over the counter meds such as Immodium and Pepto Bismol can also be helpful for less serious bouts of diarrhea or stomach problems. You may also get a prescription for an altitude medication called Diamox (Acetazolamide). Keep in mind, all of these medications, with the exception of Dukhorol, can be purchased over the counter here in Peru for significantly cheaper prices.

Travel Prep:

Try to be packed, organized, and prepared for your trip a few days before you leave. That way you're not too busy or stressed out before embarking on a big travel day to South America. Rest, hydration, and eating well are key ingredients to acclimatization and ensuring that you arrive healthy and ready to ride.



What to Bring

Your Bike & Travel Bag:

A modern full-suspension enduro bike with 5 to 7 inches of travel is ideal for this trip. Good 4-piston brakes with large diameter rotors are highly recommended. Check your bike thoroughly before your trip to ensure it is in perfect, working condition. Consider getting a full tune up at your local bike shop if needed. Ensure that all internal bearings, suspension, drivetrain, dropper post, and brakes are in good shape.

We recommend installing brand new sets of brake pads before your trip and having your brakes fully bled so that they're in perfect shape. If you're running tubeless tires, make sure your tubeless sealant is topped up and fresh.

You'll need to pack your bike in a travel bag or box for air travel. Bike bags/boxes will remain in secure storage at our Cusco hotel for the duration of the trip.

Spare Parts and Tools:

- Chain "quick-links" specific to your drivetrain (11/12 speed)
- Derailleur hanger specific to your make and model of bike
- A few spare spokes (spokes come very specific lengths, check with your local shop)
- Spare tube(s) and patch kit
- Spare brake pads
- Small bottle of tubeless sealant
- Small bottle of chain lube
- Multi-tool
- *Optional: spare tire
- *Optional: spare derailleur
- Any other spare parts or tools that you feel are unique to your bike

*There are a few small bike shops in Cusco however 12 speed Eagle drivetrain parts and many other modern bike parts like good 29" tires can be hard to come by. Better safe than sorry!

Your guides always carry a comprehensive trailside repair kit including: tire pumps, shock pumps, tire plugs, spare tubes, patch kits, multi-tools, quick links, and several other small parts and tools for emergency repairs.

CO2 Cartridges:

CO2 cartridges are ideal for tubeless tire repair and also make quick work of inflating tubes so that we can spend more time riding, and less time fixing flats. They are not available for purchase in Cusco and most airlines allow only 2 cartridges to be packed with your luggage, meaning that your guide cannot bring enough to account for the entire group over two weeks of riding.

- 2x 25 gram CO2 Cartridges

Backpack / Hip Pack:

Riding with a pack is not completely necessary as all of the rides we will be doing are downhill shuttle laps, and your guides will always be carrying plenty of tools, spare parts, first aid kits, etc. We do however recommend that you pack some water, a jacket, a warm layer, and some light snacks along with you on each and every ride.

Packing List:

A 60-80L durable and waterproof duffel bag is ideal for packing your clothing and gear for this trip. Your luggage will travel with you from Cusco to Ollantaytambo to Lares Hot Springs and then back to Cusco.

*Soft-shell duffel bags are recommended as opposed to wheeled hard-shell suitcases, if possible.

- Helmet (open face enduro helmet or full-face DH helmet)
- Sunglasses and/or goggles
- Riding pack with water bladder and/or water bottle
- 2-3 pairs of riding gloves
- Knee pads and any other body armour you normally wear on a typical enduro ride
- Arm and/or leg warmers (optional)
- 3 pairs of riding shorts/pants
- 3 pairs of chamois
- 3-5 riding shirts/jerseys (light short sleeve for hot weather and thicker long sleeve for cool temps)
- 5-7 pairs of riding socks
- 1-2 pairs of riding shoes
- 1 set of warm base layers for cool evenings/overnight
- 1 pair flip flops or sandals (optional)
- 1 pair regular running shoes for walking
- Swimsuit and packable towel for hot springs
- Warm puffy jacket
- Packable waterproof/windproof shell jacket
- Personal toiletries
- Phone charger
- Small power bank (recommended)
- Sunscreen with strong SPF level
- Over the counter medications such as extra strength ibuprofen for altitude headaches, Imodium or Pepto-Bismol for stomach and diarrhea relief
- Small personal first aid kit
- Non-riding clothing (socks, underwear, pants, shirts, sweaters, etc)