



**MOUNTAIN
LODGES**

Peru

**ARCHAEOASTRONOMY
JOURNEY
TO MACHU PICCHU**

Itinerary

Join us on a fascinating adventure during the autumn or spring equinox in Cusco to study the sacred sites of ancient Andean civilizations and their architectural alignment with the constellations that transformed them into living stone calendars. This journey of breathtaking vistas, exciting excursions, visits to unique archaeological sites, and lectures led by experts in the field will give you an in-depth understanding of Andean archaeoastronomy as a foundation for the history, mythology, symbology, and architecture of the Incas.

ITINERARY

DAY 1

WELCOME TO CUSCO

Your journey begins in Cusco with an introduction to this magical city, the historical center of the Inca Empire

- Arrival in Cusco and transfer to hotel
- Lunch at leisure
- Afternoon walking tour of Cusco: ancient temples, historical streets, and more. (Approximately 2.5 hours)
- Early evening lecture: Andean Cosmology—Delve into the Mythology and Use of Symbology in this Diverse Andean Region - led by Andres Adasme, MLP Archaeoastronomer
- Welcome dinner in Cusco City.

Notes:

- All guests are required to provide valid proof of travel insurance before the start of the trip, including specific coverage for adventure travel activities in Peru.
- We recommend that you arrive in Cusco at least 1 – 2 days prior to the departure date for altitude acclimatization and to participate in the pre-trip briefing.

Meals: D (Restaurant in Cusco)

Overnight: MLP Hotel in Cusco

DAY 2

ASTRONOMICAL TEMPLES IN CUSCO

Connect the dots between your new understanding of Inca/Andean philosophy and the architectural elements in the sacred sites that you will visit throughout the journey.

- Morning excursion on the outskirts of the city to visit Sacsayhuaman, considered the most revered Inca site in Cusco, and the Bohic-Ruz 'Chinkana' archaeological excavation area
- Lunch at Pachapapa
- Early afternoon visit to the Koricancha, the sacred 'golden temple' of the Incas in the center of Cusco, and the site of significant archaeological excavations that have confirmed the correlation between Incan architectural planning and the sun, moon, and stars
- Visit to the Cusco planetarium and lecture: Why the Incas Looked to the Sky—An Introduction into Andean Astronomy and the Notable Constellations that Defined Inca Civilization.
- Dinner at Incanto

Meals: B (MLP Hotel in Cusco), L (Restaurant in Cusco), D (Restaurant in Cusco)

Overnight: MLP Hotel in Cusco

DAY 3

PISAQ EXPLORATION

Your journey continues on a mountaintop in the Sacred Valley with a visit to the village of Viacha, followed by a downhill hike to the PISAQ archaeological site. Comprised of fascinating ceremonial, agricultural, and residential architectural components as well as evidence of the Inca's scientific research practices, it is one of the most comprehensive sites in the region and will give you true insight into their 'cycle of life' philosophies, especially those that connect man with nature.

- Morning visit to the village of Viacha
- Downhill hike from Viacha to explore the PISAQ archaeological site
- Optional drive and visit to the town of PISAQ
- Scenic drive to Lamay Lodge
- Traditional Pachamanca late lunch at the lodge and afternoon at leisure to relax in the Lamay gardens and outdoor hot tub
- Early evening lecture before dinner: Ancient Cusco and the Bohic Ruz Explorations—the Symbology and Intentions Behind the Design of Ancient Cusco and Alignment of the Sacred Temples on the Planetary Axis - led by Andres Adasme

Meals: B (MLP Hotel in Cusco), L (Lamay Lodge), D (Lamay Lodge)

Overnight: Lamay Lodge

DAY 4

THE QAPAQ ÑAN AND THE ENTRANCE TO PAITITI—THE CITY OF GOLD

Begin your day exploring Ancasmarca in the Calca region, once the most important grainery and storage site for food and other goods on the Antisuyu Trail from Cusco to the jungle, followed by a scenic drive to the Lares town of Choquecancha for lunch alongside members of this remote Andean community. Afterwards, embark on a thrilling (optional) hike that follows the footsteps of the Incas along part of the original 'Qapaq Ñan' (Inca trail network), also known as the 'Road to Paititi', or 'El Dorado', the legendary lost 'city of gold'.

- Morning drive to Ancasmarca
- Guided exploration of the Ancasmarca archaeological site
- Lunch in Choquecancha
- Optional afternoon hike from the trailhead in Choquecancha to Jaukani

Meals: B (Lamay Lodge), L (Choquecancha), D (Huacahuasi Lodge)

Overnight: Huacahuasi Lodge

DAY 5

CONNECTING WITH THE APUS

As significant as the stars were to Inca culture and mythology, so too was their connection to the 'apus', or earth gods, especially Pachamama (*Mother Earth*). Revered for her role in providing life and abundance, the Incas often dedicated ceremonies to Pachamama in gratitude and hope for her continued grace. Today you will have the opportunity to participate in a traditional Pachamama ceremony alongside members of the remote Marcacocha community, followed by visits to two significant archaeological sites during your journey back to the Sacred Valley. In preparation for Day 6, enjoy an evening lecture on the architectural design of Ollantaytambo and its importance as a 'cog in the Inca constellation wheel'.

- Scenic morning drive to Marcacocha through the highland lagoon region surrounded by breathtaking mountain peaks
- Pachamama ceremony in Marcacocha
- Drive to the pre-Inca Pumamarca archaeological site for lunch and guided exploration
- Continue on to Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley for an optional visit to Quellorakay, an original royal Inca residence
- Evening lecture at hotel: The Archaeoastronomical Design of Ollantaytambo and Pakaritampu - led by Andres Adasme
- Dinner at hotel

Meals: B (Huacahuasi Lodge), L (Pumamarca), D (Partner hotel in Ollantaytambo)

Overnight: Partner hotel in Ollantaytambo

DAY 6**THE EQUINOX—PAKARITAMPU PYRAMID AND OLLANTAYTAMBO**

The pyramid of Pakaritampu is arguably the most significant Inca structure related to the equinoxes and solstices. In Cusco, it is believed that the ancient sundial precedes Inca culture by thousands of years, which would confirm the theory that the Incas were the final link in the archaeoastronomical heritage of the region. Today you will witness the effect of the equinox sunrise over the pyramid, followed by an exploration of the fascinating and enigmatic structures of the Ollantaytambo archaeological compound.

- Uphill hike at dawn to explore the Pakaritampu Pyramid, followed by a comprehensive tour of the Ollantaytambo fortress
- Lunch in the town of Ollantaytambo, the oldest ‘living city’ in South America
- Afternoon train to Aguas Calientes at the base of Machu Picchu
- Early evening lecture: Machu Picchu—Unravel the Secrets of this Mysterious Citadel - led by Andres Adasme
- Dinner at hotel

Meals: *B (Partner hotel in Ollantaytambo), L (Ollantaytambo), D (Partner hotel in Aguas Calientes)*

Overnight: *Partner hotel in Aguas Calientes*

DAY 7**MACHU PICCHU**

Your archaeoastronomy journey culminates today with an exploration of Machu Picchu. Similar to PISAQ, the citadel is divided into multiple ceremonial, residential, and agricultural areas. Scientifically, however, this mysterious site was much like an institute of higher learning, dedicated to the study of astronomy, architecture, engineering, hydraulics, and more. During your visit you will delve further into its history, purpose, and subsequent discovery after hundreds of years, hidden high above the Urubamba River and covered by the lush foliage of the cloud forest that borders the Amazon Jungle. More importantly, though, you will discover why this ‘jewel of the Inca Empire’ is the basis for the Andean people’s profound connection to the cosmos.

- Early morning shuttle bus to Machu Picchu (*approximately 20 minutes*)
- Guided exploration of the citadel
- Afternoon train ride to Ollantaytambo followed by a scenic sunset drive back to Cusco.

Meals: *B (Partner hotel in Aguas Calientes), L (Sanctuary Lodge, A Belmond Hotel)*

ADDITIONAL NOTES | ARCHAEOASTRONOMY JOURNEY

- **Extend Your Stay:** Combine MLP Trip Extensions with your MLP Signature Adventure to create your own customized travel experience. Contact your MLP Travel Specialist for more details and help with securing reservations for your extended itinerary.