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President's  Picks

Peru

13 Days



We Don't Tell Stories Better, We Tell Better Stories®



2016
2015
2014
2013
2012
2011
2010
2009



2013
2012
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2009
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1999



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Welcome

"When I look at Peru, I see more than Machu Picchu. I see a country that is only showing 10% of its true character. There is so more to Peru then one empire, more than three or four stops. It's time to reinvent the way we think about Peru, change our view. This journey is about blending history with nature, about bringing out the active historian in you."

Ashish Sanghrajka

Day By Day Itinerary

Day 1: Lima, Peru / Iquitos

Welcome to Peru! Upon arrival in Lima, proceed through Immigration and Customs. After claiming your luggage, exit the Customs Hall where a representative from Big Five will be waiting for you. Once you are met and assisted, you will connect your internal air to Iquitos, where staff from the lodge will be waiting to transfer you to Treehouse Lodge - the only lodge of its kind in the Amazon Rainforest!

From Iquitos, the journey to the lodge - first by car, then by boat - takes approximately two and a half hours. The boat ride begins on the Marañón River, crosses the Amazon River, and continues up the Ucayali River before connecting to the Yarapa River. The lodge sits at the black and brown water confluence of the serene and protected Yarapa and Cumaceba rivers near the Pacaya Samiria Reserve. As you travel toward the lodge, you feel the outside world falling away. At Treehouse Lodge, you'll see the rainforest from a thrilling new perspective that most visitors to the Amazon never experience. From the comfort of your treetop bungalow, watch monkeys and birds at eye level as every morning as you wake up to a jumble wildlife even before you get out of bed. Every bungalow is equipped with showers, sinks, toilets, and clean white linens. You'll get a little extra exercise walking up to your bungalow. **Treehouse Lodge**



Days 2/3: Iquitos

You will fill your days at the lodge with life-enhancing experiences that this ancient setting has to offer such as exploring the life of Amazon dolphins. Dolphins are considered magical among the native Peruvians. According to local legend, dolphins could transform into humans and kidnap beautiful women from the communities, taking them to their kingdom under the river. Though dolphins are spotted year round on the Amazon, there are specific feeding areas that your guides have designated along the Ucayali where you are allowed to swim and interact with the dolphins. You can jump in and experience the joy of swimming with these beautiful and powerful creatures!



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Navigating along the Ucayali River, you will also have the opportunity to observe other types of wildlife such as sloths, monkeys and iguanas basking in the sun as well as many species of birds that feed on the fruits of trees that grow along the edges of the River. Another adventure takes you on a jungle walk to learn about medicinal plants in this green pharmacy. You can find forest medicines for headaches, stomachaches, broken bones, hernias, and rheumatism - even for diabetes. Learn some of the secrets of the jungle and its relationship with humans. The Amazonian people are the preservers of knowledge passed from one generation to another. Before cutting a plant in preparation for extracting medicine, many medicine men ask permission of the protector of the forest. It is their belief that if they don't ask permission, the medicine doesn't work.

During a dugout canoe excursion, you learn how centuries of river people have moved through the forest. Even today, this mode of transportation is the best way to explore the waterways, navigating slowly, listening to the sounds of the jungle, and observing nature. You get a glimpse of how ribereño people see the forest. If you are a bird watcher, you can observe many species of birds that feed and nest close to the river shores. Many species of primates such as brown capuchins, squirrel monkeys, and saddle backed tamarins are easy to spot. You may even be able to see rare and elusive creatures such as the river otters. At some point, you can fish for piranha! During a jungle walk to Oxbow Lagoon, you see the famous giant water lilies that can grow to six feet in diameter with flowers the size of cabbage. The lagoon is also home the strangely interesting hoatzin, a bird that feeds exclusively on poisonous plants that it can keep in its crop for several hours. Another species of bird you will find on this Amazon jungle walk is the horned screamer that is related to the geese family and feeds on water lettuce and water hyacinth. Lastly, though perhaps most fascinating, you will be able to spot the wattled jacana, nick-named Jesus Christ because it can walk on water. These are just a few of the many animals that live in this varzea forest.



For a different view of the forest, join a jungle walk to see the only nocturnal monkey that can be spotted during the daytime. These primates make their homes in tree holes and, once located, can be seen sticking their heads out to take a peek. You will walk along a trail that runs close to an old tree where these night monkeys can be seen. They have a good sense of hearing, are very curious, and apparently evolved into nocturnal animals in order to avoid competition for food.

During your time in here, you have the opportunity to engage with two indigenous communities to learn about their lives. Many years ago, tribal disputes prompted members of the Jibaro community to move from their ancestral land on the Pastaza River to an area closer to the equatorial border. They traveled along the Amazon to finally arrive at the Tahuayo River - a small, blackwater tributary where they created their community in peace, away from other villages. Here, they continue to preserve their traditions and the knowledge of their ethnolinguistic group. You will take a boat from the lodge downstream on the Yarapa River to reach a community called Jaldar. From this village, you will walk about 40 minutes on a jungle trail



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to arrive at the Jerusalem Jibaro community on the Tahuayo River. Here you will have a chance to learn the art of fishing in the Jibaro style as well as explore their river in dugout canoes. You will also discover how to make a dugout canoe; prepare masato (a jungle beer made out of manioc); and make blow darts, bows and arrows still used in fishing and hunting. While there, you will see original handicrafts made by girls of the village to help generate income for the community. Enjoy a picnic lunch at the chief's house – a way of thanking him for his hospitality.

Travel to Puerto Miguel to encounter a Kukama Community, river people who also preserve their traditions, ancient knowledge and language. Visit their homes made of wood and palm trees and see how they live, what they cook, and the way they survive using the natural resources of the rainforest. It is fascinating to see how they coexist with their environment, sharing their space with countless insects, dangerous animals and poisonous plants that can be used to kill or cure. They are skillful craft makers and have a communal house where you have the chance to purchase their beautifully hand-crafted items made using materials found in the Amazon jungle.

If you enjoy the river by day, just imagine the life that awakens at night. You can enjoy night excursions both on the river and during walks. Traveling along the river, look for creatures like beautifully colored frogs resting on the floating plants on the edges of the creeks, and fishing bats that catch their prey using sophisticated sonar. By the light of your flashlight, you will see potoos, owls, and caimans that venture through the dark to hunt. At night, you will also find creatures such as kinkajoes that feed on fruits and berries. They are easy to see while jumping from branch to branch on trees along the river. Even the opossum that feeds on birds can be spotted primarily at night. These are just a few of the many creatures that love to come out at night. On night walks, you discover the realm of insects. Once the sun sets, many



creatures come out, some are predators and others prey. You may see exotic beetles (rhinoceros and elephant species); moths (sphinx and roschildia species); and lizards sleeping on the leaves. On your walk, you might see the famous owl frog that makes holes in the ground and weighs over half a pound. Amazonian people use the skin of these frogs to make drums, but the owl frog protects itself from its predator by releasing a milky liquid from its skin. There is also a frog called gladiator tree frog that makes its nest close to the water to keep it from potential rivals and attract females for mating. At some point on the walk, you turn off your

flashlight and stay quiet to let your senses adapt to the darkness, listening to the sounds of the rainforest in order to identify what they are and where they come from. At this moment, you will truly be able to appreciate the vastness of the Amazon Jungle with all its countless secrets.

Another excursion takes in the early morning life of the forest with its own chorus of hundreds of birds and monkeys. Travel on suspension bridges that bring you closer to all the wildlife that exists around the lodge. You will see tanagers, toucans, parrots, parakeets, antbirds, antwrens, woodpeckers, and monkeys that come



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to feed on the fruit and insects found on the trees. There are species of birds that never venture close to the ground because the fruit they eat is found on the tree tops. Being closer to the canopy, it's easy to see the beauty of these species. In only one early morning, you can observe at least 50 species of birds, 20 of which are uncommon. The variety of wildlife in this type of forest is outstanding. The more appreciation we can gain of these species and the more research that can be carried out to find new species, the more likely they are to be preserved for future generations.

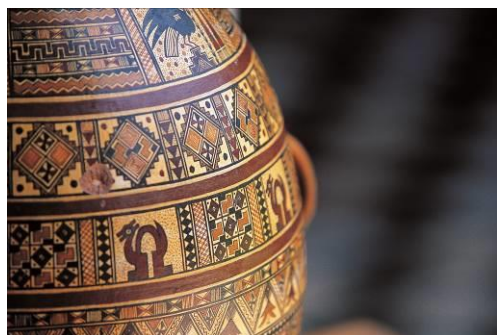
Peru hosts close to 4,000 species of butterfly, more than any other place in the world. Many of the species are endemic and, therefore, restricted to Peru. The community of Vista Alegre, together with a Peruvian NGO, took measures to reproduce and protect some species of butterfly by creating a butterfly farm where farm villagers learn about the entire process of metamorphosis of these beautiful creatures. School children are especially interested in participating along with their parents in this educational project. As many butterflies are born every day on this farm, you will have the opportunity to release them into nature, contributing to the repopulation of butterfly species and the maintaining of environmental equilibrium.
Treehouse Lodge (B,L,D)

Day 4: Iquitos / Lima

Return to Iquitos, where you transfer to the airport to board your flight to Lima, where you are welcomed and transferred to your hotel. **Casa Andina Private Collection Miraflores (B)**

Day 5: Lima / Cusco / Sacred Valley

This morning, fly to Cusco. You are met on arrival and transferred to the village of Chinchero, one of the loveliest towns in the Peruvian highlands and in the fertile Sacred Valley of the Incas. Located in a high valley, this graceful, traditional Andean village dates from before the Spanish conquest. It was once the country estate of the late 15th-century Inka Tupac Yupanqui. Encircled by lush farming terraces, village houses are built on the foundations of Inca buildings, including the remains of an Inca palace. The early-17th-century church features frescoes and mural paintings.



Visit *The Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco* (CTTC), which is dedicated to helping preserve the ancient Incan textile traditions and to providing support to weaving communities. Traditional textiles and practices in Peru date back thousands of

years, and, even today, continue to be of great importance to Andean cultures as a symbol of their cultural identity. Each region, each community, displays its own unique designs, colors, styles and materials in its textiles. During a visit to the CTTC's facilities, you learn about the history behind weaving in Peru, and also the skills and process that go into producing such impressive works of artistry. Weavings are produced by hand on belt looms or four-stake looms. Traditional dyes are finding rejuvenation in the center's dyeing workshops. The practice of natural dyeing was heavily displaced by the introduction of industrial and synthetic dyes. The CTTC's partner communities now utilize plants, insects and minerals to dye their wool. It also has a store and museum which exhibits a wonderful collection of textiles, and presents a look into the different functions textiles are used for in the different stages of the life of an Andean weaver. You can also find textiles at Chinchero's authentic, traditional market in the central plaza. This is one of the best places in the entire valley to find genuine Andean textiles. You may want to barter for some of these rich textiles now that you know the story behind their creation. **Aranwa Hotel Sacred Valley (B)**

Day 6: Sacred Valley

Depart by road this morning to the ruins of Moray. Your guide will take you down into these ruins and explain their function. It is said that the ancient agricultural terraces of circular and concentric shape, which were built by the Incas, were used as a seed-producing area for the principal crops of the empire: maize and potato. Start walking towards the town of Maras through the countryside, surrounded now by farmlands and the occasional local habitat. Enjoy the view of the mountain ranges as you walk the mostly flat path. Once you get to Maras, you have the opportunity to visit a local puba 'Chicheria,' where they brew the famous corn beer. Influenced by the Spanish conquerors, some of the beautifully worked doorposts are in colonial style.

After lunch, you venture out on another walk, this one about two hours. Near the salt pans, take a trail used by the local inhabitants to move their cattle, and also by those who transport salt from the pans to Maras by donkey. Your guide will explain how the salt-draining process works. Your descent into the Sacred Valley begins on a narrow path, and you may even spot the Cara Cara, a member of the falcon family. The path runs alongside a gorge, and takes you down to the Urubamba River. On one side is the brook, which also runs through the salt pans. Because of the high salt content, it turns the earth on its banks white. You might also spot the Andean gull and the hummingbird. After you cross the hanging bridge, the van will pick you up to take you back to the hotel. **Aranwa Hotel Sacred Valley (B,L)**



IMPORTANT NOTE: *This evening you will need to pack a small bag for your rail journey tomorrow. For all Perurail journeys, each passenger is allowed 1 bag or backpack which must not exceed 05kg/11pounds and/or 62 inches/157cm (length + height + width). Please pack light. Baggage that exceeds these measurements will not be allowed. Your additional luggage will be stored by your Big Five representative.*

Day 7: Sacred Valley / Machu Picchu

Depart early this morning on a private land transfer to the Ollanta train station. Board the Vistadome Valley



train to Machu Picchu. The scenery is simply spectacular as your train winds through a changing landscape during the hour and a half journey. There are wonderful mountain vistas and, deep in its dramatic canyon, the beautiful Urubamba River running through the Sacred Valley.

On arrival in Machu Picchu, you transfer by small buses to the entrance of the ruins to commence your exploration of this incredible site. Machu Picchu rises to an altitude of some 2,408 m/7,900 ft above sea level between the Huayna Picchu (young peak) and Machu Picchu (old peak). It lies within the spectacular

framework provided by the exuberant vegetation of nearby jungle and the rugged landscape. The ruins are



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situated on the eastern slope of Machu Picchu in two different areas: the agricultural and the urban. The latter includes the civil sector (dwellings, canalizations), and the sacred sector (temples, mausoleums, squares, royal houses). Although constructions show different levels of architecture, religious buildings exhibit a high degree of perfection. The construction was with general use of stone, and the roofs were built of tree trunks and thatched with ichu straw. The walls were made with an inward inclination for protection against earthquakes. **Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel (B,L,D)**

Day 8: Machu Picchu / Cusco

The morning is at leisure to explore Machu Picchu area. Your private guide is available to assist with the many leisure options available. You may choose to visit the Indian market in Aguas Calientes village or the hotel's cloud forest trails, including the Orchid Garden that has some 372 species and endemic birds such as the Cock of the Rock, Peru's national bird, and about 18 species of hummingbirds. Here, too, is South America's only bear - the spectacled bear.

For those who wish to return to the archaeological site, your guide will assist you to pay the round trip bus ticket and admission fee locally, and will privately accompany you back to Machu Picchu. For a truly mystical experience, we suggest early rises might want to also hike the Huayna Picchu Peak, situated opposite the fortress, where you gain panoramic views of the imposing site and the Urubamba Valley. Also, you can walk along to the Sun Gate, which is the last section of the famous Inca Trail.

Later in the afternoon, you board the Vistadome Valley train to the Ollanta station, where you will be met and privately transferred to your hotel in Cusco. **Aranwa Hotel Cusco (B,L)**

Day 9: Cusco / Chalhuanca

Early this morning, set out with a private tour guide and private comfortable vehicle to start this unforgettable journey from the Andes to the Pacific Coast on the brand new Interoceanic Highway. Visit the Zurite Archaeological Complex, which boasts the largest group of terraced hills fashioned by the Incas as well as exceptional views of Condorwachana Sacred Hill and Anta Pampa. Then, stop at Killarumiyoc (Temple of the Moon) and explore its incredible structures. The view of Mount Salkantay (apu or guardian



spirit), with its green valleys and mighty rivers, is simply spectacular. Continue on to Tarawasi, which has an Incan temple and stones shaped like flowers. Enjoy views of Curahuasi area, dotted with farm fields. The road now follows the Apurimac River. You stop to take a about an hour hike through the landscape to gain an appreciation of the mountains, rivers, rocky canyons and surrounding countryside. Saywite Archaeological Site is regarded as a center of religious worship focusing on water. An important feature on the site is the Saywite monolith, with more than 200 hundred geometric and zoomorphic

figures. You will notice the changing vegetation, from orchids and cantutas (Peru's national flower) to



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passion flowers as you cross into varied ecosystems. Enjoy a picnic lunch with great Andean views. Travel along the Pachachaka River until you arrive at your hotel near Challwanka. **Tampumayo Lodge (B,L,D)**

Day 10: Chalhuanca / Nazca

After breakfast, you stop briefly at the Challwanka Market before heading on to Caraybamba, an impressive archeological site with terraced slopes that rise for several kilometers from the banks of the Caraybamba River to the top of the mountains. There is no other place like this on the earth, and you will be among the first to see it. Yet, very soon, it will become a major tourist attraction. Journey through charming Andean towns and see the locals dressed in traditional outfits. At Pilluni, stop for a short visit to see a forest formation of conical shaped rocks. As you travel the winding road, you'll pass llamas and alpacas, and pass by Negromayo Plateau, which some have compared to the Tibet plateau. Then you encounter the impressive natural giant rocky formations in Puquio. Savor a picnic lunch along the way. This afternoon, stop at the Pampas Galeras Natural Reserve, which has the largest population of vicuñas in the world, which possess the finest wool found anywhere. You may also see condors sailing the sky as well as eagles, falcons, and Andean geese. Continue your descent through towering mountains that flaunt all different colors and past bluish green lakes. At this point, the landscape changes dramatically from mountains to sand dunes crowned with gigantic cacti. There are few places where you can experience twilight views from the Andes down to the Coast. You see Cerro Blanco Sand Dune, considered the highest sand dune in the world at 2,070 meters/6,686 feet. We finally reach the arid coastal plains and the Cantayoc Aqueducts as well as Las Agujas (first site of an observable Nazca Line). After that, it is on to your hotel and dinner at the hotel. This property has an incredible private collection of pre-Columbian textiles. **Majoro Hotel (B,L,D)**

Day 11: Nazca / Paracas

After breakfast, you head directly to the Nazca Airfield for a 45-minute flight over the mythic Nazca Lines and Palpa Lines as well, where the oldest Chakana (Andean Southern Cross) can be seen from the air. The Nazca Lines are a series of geoglyphs in the Nazca Desert, and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Located at the high, arid plateau stretches more than 80 km (50 mil) between the towns of Nazca and Palpa. These geoglyphs resemble Paracas culture motifs and hundreds of individual figures range in complexity from simple lines to stylized figures of hummingbirds, spiders, monkeys, fish, sharks, orcas, and lizards.

Then, it is off to the city of Ica for lunch at a fine restaurant. In the afternoon, you visit the regional museum exhibiting Nazca and Paracas artifacts; and also, stop by the Huacachina Oasis to marvel at its picture perfect dunes. The next stop is a winery where they produce

excellent wines and high quality pisco brandies. And last but not least, end your eventful day at the Paracas Bay and check in to your luxurious hotel. **Hotel Paracas Luxury Collection Resort (B,L)**

Day 12: Paracas

The morning is set aside for a boat ride to the famous Ballestas Islands. These islands are an important sanctuary for marine life such as the guanay guano bird, the blue-footed booby and the tendril. Other notable species include Humboldt penguins and two varieties of seals (fur seals and sea lions), pelicans, dolphins, whales and flying fish. Paracas Bay is said to have the greatest concentration of birds in the world due to the



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influence of the cold Humboldt Current. The remainder of the day free to enjoy your luxury resort. **Hotel Paracas Luxury Collection Resort (B)**

Day 13: Paracas / Lima / Depart

This morning, visit the Paracas National Reserve that includes Bahía de la Independencia and miles of coastal waters. Its main purpose is to preserve the marine ecosystem and protect the historical cultural heritage related to ancient indigenous peoples, mostly of the Paracas culture. It is home to many species of wildlife, particularly birds, which are largely concentrated at the water's edge. After lunch at the hotel, you are transferred by private vehicle on the Pan American Highway for about four hours to Lima, where you board your flight home. **(B,L)**

End of Big Five Services



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Included In The Tour Cost:

- Hotel accommodations as indicated in the itinerary, including taxes and service charges
- Meals as indicated (B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner)
- Private airport / hotel transfers as indicated on itinerary
- All ground transportation by private vehicle as necessary and excursions as indicated, inclusive of entrance fees
- Expert English-speaking guide services during included transfers and excursions
- Baggage handling assistance and tips to porters at airports
- Comprehensive assortment of pre-tour planning materials and amenities
- Big Five's 24-hour White Glove Service® guest assistance
- Complimentary one year membership to One More Generation, including adoption of an endangered species

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Optional:
Your Company Logo Here

Big Five Edge

- **900 + Hours:** You are working with one of the most experienced groups of individuals in our industry. Big Five Destination Specialists receive *900+ hours of on-site and in-office on product training annually*, and are part of a diverse team assembled from 11 countries over 5 continents speaking a combined 10 different languages. With an average of 20 years' experience in the travel industry, our Destination Specialists answer 8 out of 10 questions immediately based on their personal experiences.
- **24 Hours a Day:** Every guest receives complimentary enrollment in our *24-hour White Glove Service® guest assistance* program. A team of specialists using proprietary software to track your progress is available 365 days from anywhere in the world. WGS® starts two weeks before your departure to help with anything from concierge services to travel emergencies. We proactively call every guest from North America to check in and assist with requests such as checking local weather; dealing with lost luggage or cancelled flights; or even the rare medical emergency. In the last 18 months, we have proactively reached out by telephone to our guests on tour to welcome them or assist with a specific requests almost 1,500 times... and counting.
- **Ahead of the Crowds:** Our Destination Specialists combine creativity with their impressive knowledge. As a result, we are on average two years or more ahead of the pack when it comes to *new and innovative travel ideas*. We focus on lesser known unique touring activities and emerging concepts that are not yet mainstream. We forge paths and take risks few others are willing to because we are committed to the principles of authenticity and sustainability. Most tour companies rely on an in-country counterpart for product ideas. At Big Five, we don't wait for anyone else. In 30 of our 44 destinations, and counting, we pioneered the itineraries and activities that are well ahead of current trends, and have taught our ground team, who actually live in those countries. We invest in our team, constantly sending them out to find new experiences that most overseas companies are unaware of because they rarely leave their home territories.
- **Booking in North America vs Booking Overseas:** Before you work directly with a company overseas, look closely to insure you are comparing apples, and not grapes to kumquats. What appears to be a \$1,000 price difference, actually is almost at par when you add in all the "extra fees" overseas companies put in their fine print. We don't charge merchant fees for using a credit card, most overseas companies will charge you 3% or more to pay by credit card. Your Big Five journey comes with complimentary enrollment in our 24-hour White Glove Service® guest assistance program up to 2 weeks before your departure; something no overseas company has the ability or capacity to do. We usually have more inclusions with fewer "optional" activities. You are backed by a comprehensive liability coverage plan that was written and is operated in North America. Booking overseas leaves you in the hands of the liability coverage that is written and operated in the country you are visiting, following local rules and guidelines, which may not be known to you. Make sure your apples are really apples – *otherwise it might cost you more than just money.*
- **Sustainability:** We believe in a sustainable future for all. Big Five has been consistently recognized as *a leader in the sustainable travel*, receiving accolades for our work to help change the world through travel. Big Five has also been honored by an internationally recognized travel network as the only company to twice receive an award for *Sustainable Leadership* after being judged against nearly 100 other companies by two separate independent panels.