



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Machu Picchu

Catherine Hamilton and Debby Kaspari, Birding & Sketching Peru

Machu Picchu pre-tour extension

This 4-day Machu Picchu extension is the perfect complement to the main Peru tour, and in fact is generally a must for those having traveled as far as Cusco.

We'll start out from Cusco to the town of Ollantaytambo, where we'll catch the historic and incredibly scenic PeruRail train along the Rio Urubamba River to the town of Aguas Calientes. Once there, we'll enjoy birding and culture around the town itself, but the absolute highlight will be our visit to the ancient Incan Citadel of Machu Picchu set high in the Andes overlooking the Urubamba River valley. Built in the 15th century and later abandoned, Machu Picchu is renowned for its sophisticated architecture and construction resulting in a breathtaking archaeological setting that plays on astronomical alignments and unforgettable panoramic views.

3 Nights/4 Days

Pre-Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrive Cusco (CUZ), overnight Cusco

Day 2: Transfer and train to Aguas Calientes

Day 3: Machu Picchu and environs

Day 4: Train and transfer to Cusco.

3 Nights/4 Days Itinerary

Day 1, Arrive Cusco:

After arrival in Cusco, pick up at airport, transfer to our hotel and have dinner before resting up for the following day.

Meals: Dinner

Lodging at Casa Andina Standard Plaza

Day 2, Cusco to Aguas Calientes:

Our group will depart Cusco early this morning for the 1 ½ hour drive to the town of Ollantaytambo, where we'll have lunch before boarding the historic and incredibly scenic Machu Picchu train for a fascinating and beautiful ride towards the town of Aguas Calientes, in the shadow of the famous Incan ruins of Machu Picchu. Along the way the track passes through breathtaking Andean scenery and follows the frothing Urubamba River where sightings of Torrent Duck and Andean Gull are common. Quick sketching from the train optional, ogling is mandatory. White-capped Dipper are also seen here.

We'll check into our hotel and in the afternoon do some birding along the train track that leads into the

town, passing through dense, transitional rain and cloud forest. Some of the more prominent species here include Fasciated Tiger Heron, Andean Motmot, Masked Fruiteater, Andean Cock of the Rock, Mitred Parakeet, Green and White Hummingbird, Peruvian Piedtail, the endemic Inca Flycatcher and the near endemic Sclater's Flycatcher, Bolivian Tyrannulet and a myriad of tanagers and others.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Casa Andina*

Day 3, AM visit to Machu Picchu ruins, PM birding Aguas Calientes:

Today we'll depart early for a 30-minute bus ride that winds its way up through cloud-laden tropical forests to the entry point for the imposing and mysterious Incan citadel of Machu Picchu.

"For the variety of its charms and the power of its spell, I do not know another place in the world that compares to it," is how Hiram Bingham, the American explorer who rediscovered ruins of Machu Picchu in 1911, described it. Located at 7,970 feet, overlooking the Urubamba River and surrounded by dense forests, Machu Picchu is by far one of the most incredible archaeological spectacles extant. The historic 15th century Inca sanctuary is a place that captivates not only for its dazzling architectural beauty, but also for its important historical and cultural legacy, which has led it to be recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and admired

worldwide.

Designated as such in 1983 by UNESCO, it is probably the most amazing architectural construction of the Inca Empire. This citadel is made up of temples, palaces, terraces, monuments, complexes and walls; in addition to water channels, built with large blocks of stone intricately fitted and interlocked together as surviving proof of the great wisdom of the Inca civilization.

Our morning will be spent ascending to the main ruins complex and we return to our transport down the mountain and have lunch around mid-day. The remainder of the day can be spent relaxing after this morning's adventure, or embarking on an afternoon birding walk with our guide along the Rio Urubamba downstream of the town of Aguas Calientes for species we may have missed yesterday.

We will carry only a few art supplies with us on the hike (a list will be provided). We can sketch as we hike and augment our sketches with photos for later completion, if desired. This will be an incredible opportunity to draw the archaeology of Machu Picchu and the natural beauty surrounding it. Monochrome studies for quickness and simplicity, using pen and ink, pencil, and one-color washes.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Casa Andina*

Day 4, Train and transfer to Cusco and start of main tour:

Today we'll leave our base in the shadows of Machu Picchu, taking the train back to Ollantaytambo and then heading back to Cusco for the night before starting the main tour Tomorrow.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Casa Andina Standard Plaza*

Included in this itinerary:

Accommodations from nights 1 to 3, meals from dinner on day 1 to dinner on day 4, soft drinks, all ground transport, bilingual bird guide for the entire trip, train passage, entrance fees to Machu Picchu. Instruction in sketching, reference photography, and warmup exercises for fast and loose drawings.

Not Included:

International flights to Cusco, travel insurance, international calls, medical issues, laundry, tips, alcoholic beverages, souvenirs and other items of a personal nature.

Travel Insurance is recommended for this and all travel. Please see <https://www.naturalselectionstours.com/travel-insurance/> for details.

[Click for Main tour Itinerary](#)

[Click for Tambopata Clay Lick Post-tour extension Itinerary](#)



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS

**109 Eaglewood Way, Athens,
Georgia 30606**

Tel: +1 (504) 9563-9689

info@naturalselectionstours.com

www.naturalselectionstours.com

