



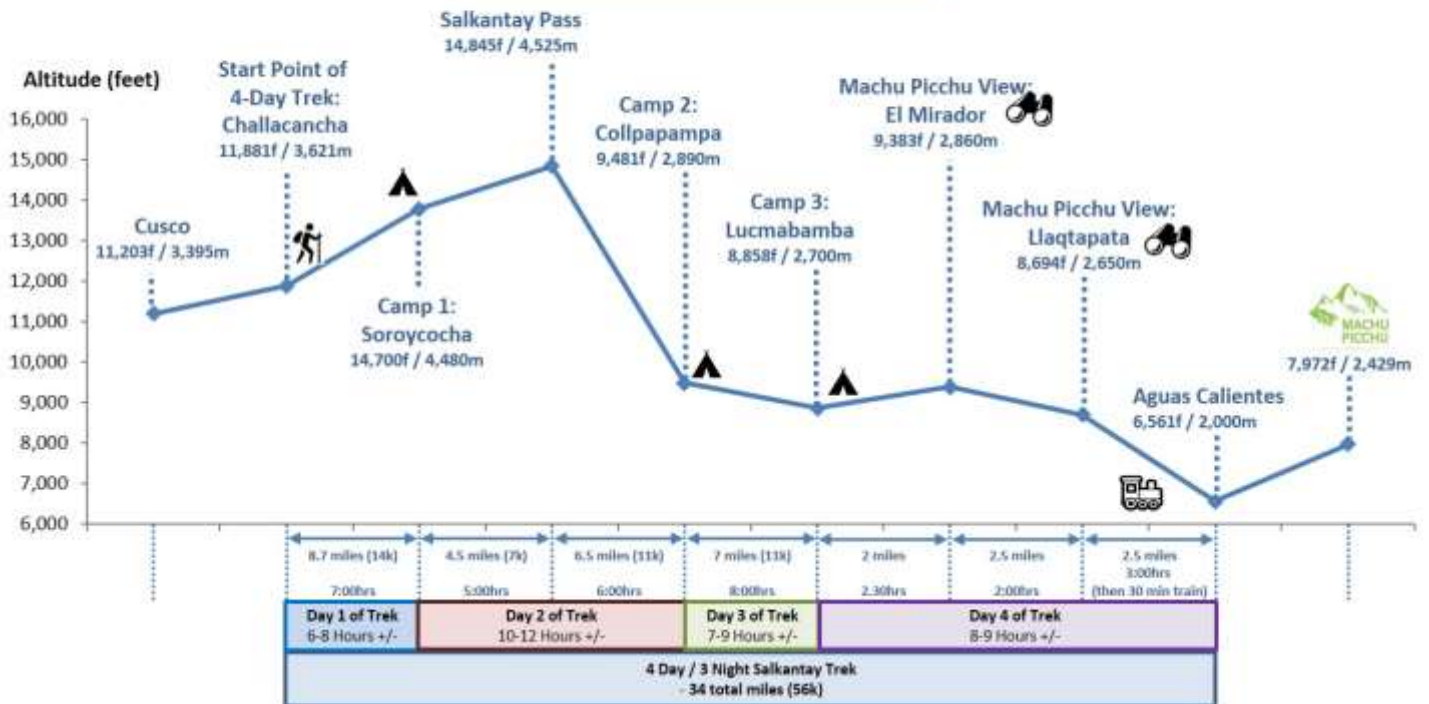
## Machu Picchu Trek

### Important Information & Example Packing List

Please find the following list of important information and a non-exhaustive example packing list. If you have any questions, please be sure to let us know. If you have further questions about altitude, your health, immunizations, etc., your doctor is the very best resource for information on these topics.



### GECtravel: Salkantay Trek to Machu Picchu



NOTE: the above is subject to the Trekking Guide's discretion, pace of the group, weather, trail conditions/closures, etc.



## 1. PHYSICAL FITNESS

Although the trek to Machu Picchu is not a technical mountain climb, it is still a challenge and you should not underestimate the rigors of trekking long days at altitude. The pace of your ascent coupled with good acclimatization will help you on the trek, but it is also essential to be mentally and physically prepared before you start. Regular hikes are one of the best ways to prepare, increasing frequency and length of your hikes as you get closer to the trek. All aerobic exercises such as cycling, running, swimming, and aerobics classes are good for strengthening muscles and the cardiovascular system. Any exercise that increases your heart rate for 20 minutes is helpful, but don't overdo it just before the trek.

On this trek you can hike up to 34 miles in total (averaging about 9 miles a day) and be on the trails about 8-10 hours per day (including rest, lunch and snack stops). **If you don't think that you are capable of trekking at this pace, this distance and at these altitudes, please contact us about trips to Machu Picchu that do not involve trekking.**

## 2. ALTITUDE AND ACCLIMATIZATION

### Altitudes are generally defined as follows:

- **Significant altitude:** 8,000 ft. – 13,800 ft. (2,400 m – 4,200 m)
- **High altitude:** 13,800 ft. – 17,700 ft. (4,200 m – 5,400 m)
- **Very high altitude:** above 17,700 ft. (5,400 m)

### The Salkantay Trek:

- **High pass (Salkantay Mountain Pass):** 14,845 feet (4,525 meters)
- **Cusco:** 11,203 feet (3,395m)
- **Machu Picchu:** 7,972 feet (2,430m)

It is likely that all trekkers will experience some form of altitude related effects during their trek to Machu Picchu. It is caused by the inability of the body to adapt quickly enough to the reduced level of oxygen in the air at an increased altitude. Acclimation is an important process of going to higher altitude, then returning to a lower level to sleep. It triggers the body to create more red blood cells to carry more oxygen, thus helping your body acclimate to higher altitude.

There are many different symptoms related to hiking at higher altitude, but the most common are headache, light-headedness, nausea, loss of appetite, tingling in the toes and fingers, and a mild swelling of ankles and fingers. These mild forms are not serious and will normally disappear within 48 hours. **Remember to always keep your local trekking guide informed of how you feel as he/she is trained to distinguish between the various altitude related symptoms and how to address them with your safety in mind. Also, it is important to follow your guide's instructions, from the preparation stage of the hike to the finish. That said, if ever in doubt, the best remedy for altitude related symptoms is to immediately return to lower altitudes.**

**Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate:** One of the most important things you can do at altitude is stay hydrated. Drink much more water per day than you would normally drink... up to 5 liters a day while trekking. It is also very important to stay very well hydrated on your flight before arriving into Cusco and while in Cusco. At altitude



there is less oxygen in the air and the air is very dry. To maintain oxygen levels in your body you breathe at an faster rate. The combination of breathing more and the intensely dry air causes your body to loose water vapor at an accelerated rate. As a result your intake of water needs to increase exponentially to replace the fluids. Failure to do so will lead to headaches, dehydration and increased altitude related affects. Adding hydration salts to your water is said to help tremendously as well (see "Other Items to Consider" in the packing list below).

**✓ Please Note:** It is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that you arrive in Cusco at least 1 to 2 days before the start of your trek in order to allow your body to start adjusting to higher altitude. Cusco is at an altitude of about 11,203 feet (3,395m). Furthermore, assuming your feel good in Cusco, we recommended that you take an excursion (by vehicle or trekking) up into the hills above Cusco to introduce your body to even higher altitude and return down to Cusco to sleep at night. A good excursion is to visit the amazing ancient Incan ruins of Saqsaywaman in the hills above Cusco.

### 3. OTHER HEALTH TIPS

All contact lens wearers should take care to remove the lenses at night, as the eye needs to absorb oxygen from the atmosphere. The rarefied conditions of altitude reduce oxygen levels and in extreme cases a Corneal Edema can develop. Also, be sure to always stay well hydrated by drinking far more water than you would at lower altitudes. This is extremely important at high altitudes, as dehydration is a very common effect of hiking at altitude and can lead to other serious side effects. Be sure to discuss this with your eye professional and follow their instructions.

### 4. PHOTOGRAPHY

Cameras, whether video or film, need to be protected against the severe cold weather either in warm pouch or the interior pockets of your clothing. A selection of lenses will aid the final results although weight and bulk will obviously influence your selection. A polarized or neutral density filter is great for SLR users.

For digital equipment, check with the manufacturer's specifications for temperature range (especially battery life), water tightness, and general hardiness.

### 5. WEATHER

Packing can be a challenge for the Trek as you will encounter multiple conditions from warm sub-tropical weather to very cold mountain conditions. Also, while we schedule treks during the 'drier' season you are up in the high Andes Mountains, so rain and/or passing showers are always a possibility. And if you are doing the Amazon trip after, you have to prepare for tropical jungle weather (a Dossier with a packing list will be sent to you specifically for this trip if you purchase it).

Before discussing the trek, it's important to know that you will leave your primary luggage behind in the hotel's luggage room in Cusco before you leave for the trek (the hotel porter checks your bag, but it's best to put a lock on the bag) and you will pick it back up after returning from the trek... so pack your clothes for the days



before/after the trek in Cusco (and the Amazon if you purchased that add-on) separately from what you'll use on the trek.

**Cusco Weather:** Cusco is high in the Andes (11,200 feet or 3,395 meters). The thin atmosphere at this high altitude means temperatures can vary widely based on cloud coverage. If the sun is out it can feel in the 70's (shorts and t-shirt), if not it can feel quite cool (in the 60's). At night it gets quite cool... down in the 40's (long pants, warm sweater/fleece and an outer jacket).

**Trek Weather:** It's best to break the trek into two parts (days 1 & 2 and days 3 & 4);

1) **COLD High Altitude (Days 1 & 2 and Night 1):** the first 2 days of the trek are at high altitude (up to 15,200 feet or 4,632 meters) and temperatures can range widely from warm to cold (to very cold at night).

- a. **Day Time Temps:** During the day temperatures can range anywhere from 40's to 70's depending on cloud coverage and wind. Due to the thin atmosphere at high altitude, if the sun is out and there is no wind it can feel hot (almost like the 70's or even 80), but if the sun is behind the clouds it can feel cool (in the 40's). And if the wind is high it can feel even colder. Therefore it is very important to wear/carry multiple layers (moisture wicking base shirt, long sleeve shirt, sweater/fleece, wool hat, wool or waterproof gloves (a second dry pair of gloves and a second hat is a good idea), breathable and waterproof wind/rain outer layer, etc.) in your day bag on days 1 and 2 of the trek.

*NOTE: Try to avoid wearing cotton items as your base layer on these two days if you can, as cotton traps moisture/sweat which can cool rapidly/freeze as the temperature drops (which isn't good).*

*NOTE 2: Bring a few garbage bags to keep your clothes and important things dry, both in the day bag you carry and the bag that goes on the horse.*

*NOTE 3: It's dry season, but you are in the mountains so rain is possible at any time during the trek. It's important that you have a wool hat, wool or waterproof gloves, a waterproof cover for your backpack, waterproof hiking boots (like Gore Tek), and high quality breathable and waterproof wind/rain outer layer. (a second dry pair of gloves, a second hat, and a second dry pair of hiking shoes is a good idea)*

- b. **Night Time Temps:** During the evening of the first night it can get very cold. Again, depending on the cloud coverage (lots of clouds keeps some of the warmth in the air) and wind, it can be a crisp 30's or down as low as the 20's or lower with wind chill. Multiple warm layers are very important (including thermal under garments, wool socks, hat, gloves, shirts, pants, sweater/fleece, outer layer, warm sleeping bag, etc.)... you'll be wearing most of the clothes you bring on the trek this evening (except those worn during the day that might be moist from sweat and/or rain).

*NOTE: Having a second pair of comfortable hiking shoes is important to have, as your primary pair may get moist from sweat or rain. Having a dry pair of shoes in the cold*



*weather (at night and as a back-up) is important in keeping you warm, dry and comfortable. A cheap pair of thin flip flops is good too (for getting out of tent and if the hot springs are open later in the trek).*

**2) WARMER Lower Altitude (Days 3 & 4 and Nights 2 and 3):** On the second day of trekking you go over the high pass and then descend down toward the lower sub-tropical levels for the remainder of the trek. Therefore, the third and fourth days of the trek (and second and third nights) are much warmer.

- a. **Day Time Temps:** On the third and fourth days of the trek the weather warms up as you continue to go lower in altitude. You'll still want to have a few layers, especially a wind/rain coat or if the weather is cooler than normal, but you'll likely be mostly in a t-shirt and long light pants (or even shorts).
- b. **Night Time Temps:** During the 2nd two nights of the trek it gets warmer as the altitude is lower. You'll typically see temperatures in the 40's - 60's at night.

*NOTE: Much of your outer layers can/will be worn multiple days, but changing your under garments daily with clean and dry ones is very important.*

**3) Amazon Weather (if adding extension):** We schedule visits to the Amazon during the 'dry' season, but it is a rainforest so showers aren't out of the question.

- a. **Day Time Temps:** The weather in the Amazon during the day can be hot (around 80f / 27c) and humid. Long light pants and a long sleeve t-shirt are recommended during the day while you are out exploring the rainforest with your guide. If the ground is wet at all, the eco-lodge provides tall rubber boots that you'll use whenever you leave the lodge (you just need socks - typical mid-calf athletic style are fine). Otherwise you'll wear the hiking shoes/boots you wore on the trek. While you are in the lodge you'll wear your flip-flops or second pair of dry/clean shoes.
- b. **Night Time Temps:** During the evening it's milder and more comfortable, but still warm (around 70f / 20c). That said, while the bugs aren't typically an issue we still recommend you keep covered and wear light long pants, a long sleeve shirt, socks and closed toed shoes (the ones you hiked in are fine). It's good to have some bug spray handy and use if needed.



## Climber's Packing List

### **Machu Picchu - Example Travel Packing List**

Keep in mind that the temperature can get chilly at night (typically into the 40's, but definitely below freezing on the first night of camping). During the day, it can be warm, especially in the lower altitude levels... in the 60's or 70's (can get as low as the 30's-50's over the high pass and/or on cloudy days). During the trek, especially at higher altitudes, it is quite warm in the sun and can get instantly cool in the shade. Rain can come at any moment too. Layers are the best for these conditions including for warmth and for rain. In the evening, it can be quite cold. Again, layers (including long johns), warm clothing, and hats/gloves are best.

We therefore suggest you bring several layers of warm clothes (that can also be used in the warmer weather) and a water proof outer shell.

Below is an extensive, but certainly not exhaustive, check list to help with your preparation and packing.

#### **Documents**

- Valid Passport
- Medical insurance card
- Airline tickets, e-tickets
- A printed copy of the Pre-Departure Dossier** (we will email to you about 3 weeks before departure)

**✓ Please Note:** We suggest scanning your passport, airline tickets/schedule, travelers checks numbers, credit and ATM cards (front & back), and medical cards. Password protect this scanned document and email it to yourself to an email you can access on the road. Also, leave a copy with someone trusted at home.

#### **Baggage**

- For Trekking (Horses Carry):** In Cusco the night before the trek starts, the local trekking guides will provide each person **one (1)** personal duffle bag to hold up to around 15-20 lbs of your clothing, gear, etc. (you will return this bag to the guide at the end of the trek). Only this bag can be used as it is designed to fit the horses, both in size, design and weight. They are water resistant, but NOT waterproof, so please bring waterproof bags (a couple of garbage bags works too) to put your clothes and other person items in (garbage bags, zip lock bags and/or air-tight compression bags are a great idea). Sleeping bags are carried separately from the duffle bag with your gear and are not counted towards the weight limit.
  - Example:



- **For Trekking (You Carry):** Small day backpack - you bring your own backpack from home and you carry this backpack during daily treks (to carry layers, rain gear, water, snacks, camera, etc.). Be sure this bag has a waterproof cover or bring along a waterproof bag to cover it - even a garbage bag.
  - Example:



- **Your Primary Luggage (You Leave it Behind at Hotel with All Your Non-Trekking Gear):** You will leave your primary luggage behind at the hotel in Cusco before starting the trek and pick it up again after the trek is done (rolling suitcase, backpack or whatever size and style works for you). This way you don't need to bring anything you don't require for the trek, lessening the burden on the horses. Please securely lock your bag and do not leave any valuables or fragile items in it - talk to the hotel desk about storing these items in the hotel safe.
  - Example:



- Sleeping Bag:** Bring a cold weather sleeping bag and wrap it in a waterproof bag or heavy-duty garbage bag. Your bag should be rated at least zero degrees or lower. A fleece liner is a great idea to have for those colder nights or as a light cover on warm nights. Sleeping bags are carried separately from the duffel bag with your gear and are not counted towards the weight limit. **Clean quality warm sleeping bags with fleece liners are available for rent so you don't need to carry them to Peru... please advise us before departure if you wish to rent a sleeping bag.**
- Waterproof plastic bags** for storing clothing, cameras & valuables, sleeping bags, and gear (garbage bags, zip lock bags and/or air-tight compression bags are a great idea). We recommend bringing along 4-5 garbage bags and zip lock bags.

### **Clothing (layering is the best with water resistant material for the outer layer)**

- Consider taking breathable, lightweight, hand-washable, and quick-drying clothes
- Shorts
- Couple pair of long lightweight pants (zip-off pants are very useful)
- Shirts, T-shirts, long sleeved shirts
- Undergarments
- Comfortably fitting compression shorts (or similar - to prevent leg chaffing while walking)
- Long johns
- Sport bras for women
- Fleece, wool sweater, jacket, windbreaker
- Rain/water proof jackets and pants (these are important... and quality highly breathable raingear can perform double duty as outer layer wind breakers too... cheap ones get sweaty inside easily)
- Winter hat (wool or fleece)
- Gloves (a light pair for cool days and second warmer pair for cold days/ nights... waterproof or wool are best)
- Neck gaiter
- Sun hat with brim
- Belt
- Pajamas





- Swimsuit (there are hot springs during the trek - *subject to being open as the river floods periodically wash them out*)

### **Footwear**

- Trail hiking shoes/boots - comfortable, breathable, water proof/resistant, broken in
- 2<sup>nd</sup> backup pair of shoes for wearing in camp or if your primary pair gets wet
- Flip flops or light/easy packable shoes for in camp/showers/hot springs
- Multiple pairs of comfortable, breathable socks (wool hiking socks for beginning of trek and the cool nights are a good idea)

**Toiletries** (for the trek, pack just a sandwich bag with the essentials (travel/trial sized items are best) and leave the bulk of items in your checked bag you leave behind at the hotel)

- Soap, shampoo
- Shaving items
- Toothbrush, toothpaste
- Small quick dry towel
- Moist towelettes (handi-wipes anti-bacterial and Cetaphil gentle skin wipes are great - very helpful on the days without showers)
- Hand sanitizer
- Sunscreen (definitely needed as you are in high altitude!)
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Insect repellent (important)
- Toilet paper (can get at the hotel before the trek, but important to have on the trek as some stops don't have any available)
- Tampons and sanitary napkins

### **Electronics**

- Headlamp or flashlight (headlamp is best... you will need this for night time - **KEEP IN YOUR DAYPACK** while hiking as you may need it if trek runs late)
- Extra batteries for Headlamp, camera, etc. (very limited to no electricity on the trek, but there will be in Aguas Calientes!)
- Camera, lenses, filters, memory cards
- Video camera, tapes
- Alarm clock (for hotel - no need for trek)
- Calculator (for currency conversion - again, no need for trek)
- Battery chargers, Electricity adapter (very limited to no electricity on the trek, but there will be in Aguas Calientes!)

### **Note:**

- ✓ Store electronics in sealed water-proof bags



### Other Items to Consider

- Prescribed medicines if any
- Hydration salts (example: Nunn Active Hydration: <http://www.nuun.com/products>)
- Sunglasses, eyeglasses, contacts, solution
- Trekking poles (very helpful during downhill trekking)
- Leg gaiters
- Notebook, pencil and pen
- Playing cards, games, books, etc.
- Energy bars, hard candy, snacks, and comfort food (can buy some in Cusco before and randomly in little snack shops along the trail)
- Cash, credit cards, ATM (if bringing USD cash, be sure they are small denominations and of the newer style bills in good condition (no tears))
- Money belt
- Water bottles - Nalgene and/or Camelback (Camelback's are useful while trekking, though not required)... bottled water for purchase is plentiful and inexpensive in Cusco. Guides will also boil water at the beginning and end of the day (and sometimes at lunch) so you can refill your bottles.

### Note:

- ✓ About a week or so before departure, it is important that you advise your credit card and banks (ATM) that you will be traveling so that your cards don't get frozen for overseas use.
- ✓ Bottled water is readily available for purchase all over Cusco, including at shops, restaurants, hotels and markets. It can often be purchased at the camps (and sometimes on the trail), but guides will also boil water at the beginning and end of the day (and sometimes at lunch) so you can refill your bottles.

### First Aid

- Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, or Aspirin
- Disinfectant, antiseptic cream, antibiotic ointment
- Blister treatment (like Mole Skin - which you can buy in most pharmacies in the US)
- Band-Aids
- Gauze bandages and tape
- Sunscreen
- Throat lozenges
- Vitamins
- Imodium or other antidiarrheal tablets
- Antihistamines
- Antacids
- Cold tablets
- Insect repellent (important)
- Ace bandage
- Antibiotics (consult your doctor)
- Prescription drugs (consult your doctor)
- Etc.