



# Andes & Amazon between Lima and Cuzco (DXLC)

**Lima to Cuzco 17 days.**

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- Route: Lima to Cuzco
- Length: 17 days
- Transport: Overland expedition vehicle and local minibus
- Accommodation: Mainly hostel/hotel and wildcamps.

## Countries Visited

### Peru



Peru is home to some of South America's most glorious landmarks, and the opportunity to partake in an activity seem endless.

The capital is [Lima](#) and it is known as the City of the Kings, it was founded by the Conquistador Pizarro in 1535. The elegant architecture runs through the capital and the cultural effects of the museums are all tucked away in this classic city.

Any introduction to Peru wouldn't be complete without the Inca civilisation. [Cuzco](#) is the ancient capital of the Inca empire. Even today, many of its buildings have original Inca stonework as part of their structure. The Incas had a highly organised and labour intensive society. They managed to conquer vast tracts of land and, through strong central and regional government, retained control over an empire that spanned [South America](#), from mid Colombia in the north, to the middle of [Argentina](#) in the south and lasted for over four centuries.

The most famous Inca legacy is undoubtedly the [Inca Trail](#) the ancient set of pathway in the Andes that include the route up to the fantastic site of Machu Picchu. You can trek through the countryside making your way through the unspoilt land and view the breathtaking scenery that carries on to the horizon and beyond. When you reach [Machu Picchu](#) you will realise what a beautiful place it is, no photograph can really do the site justice. The long forgotten site was rediscovered by Hiram Bingham in 1911 and is simply awe inspiring and is a must visit place in [South America](#).

Peru is flowing with fabulous landscapes and this continues at Lake Titicaca. On the border of Peru and [Bolivia](#) it is the highest navigable lake in the world. In the culture of Lake Titicaca, comes the sound of panpipes. An Andean music form, this woodwind instrument plays tranquil sounds and is a nice form of relaxation. The Charango is the national instrument of Peru. This stringed instrument

was from a Spanish influence and has a distinctive sound. The taste is as distinctive as the sound and the national dish of Ceviche. This is a fish based dish where the fish is 'cooked' in lemon or lime juice.

The history and sites of Peru are outstanding, but also the friendly welcome visitors receive make Peru one of the most enjoyable countries in the world to visit.

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## Daily Itinerary

### Day 1: Lima

**Border information:** Welcome to Lima, the capital of Peru. If you are starting in Lima, enter Peru at Lima Airport.

Day free to explore Lima, with a group meeting at 18:00 hrs. We stay in a good quality hotel in the centre of the city.

Hotel for the night: Hotel Inka Path

Jr. de la Union 654

Lima

+51 1 426 1919

+51 1 426 9302

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the Gold Museum & Catacombs of Lima	USD 20
Overnight stay in colonial Lima	Included in Kitty

### Lima



Lima is a city of hidden beauty. Dive in and explore the Peruvian capital's streets, parks and plazas and you will discover a real gem of a city. Infact there's so much to see here, a city tour is a great opportunity to find out about more about the rich history of Lima itself and [Peru](#) as a whole. The city was founded by Conquistador Pizarro in 1535 and was originally the administrative centre for Spain's Vice royalty in South America, making it the continent's most important city for nearly three centuries. It became a city of great wealth financed by the massive quantities of gold and silver that were mined in the area.

Whilst you are here there are many museums you can visit, such as the Museo de la Nacion and the Gold Museum, which showcase the finest artefact's from the country's many ancient civilisations. You can also visit the finely preserved catacombs at the Church of San Francisco, and take in a bit of local culture at an evening folklore show.

## **Day 2: Paracas, Ballestas Islands, Huacachina**

We have a very early start and head south and out of Lima to begin a 270kms drive to Paracas. There we board a boat trip to the Ballestas Islands to view wildlife before returning to Paracas to explore the national park. We will bush camp either in Paracas National Park or in Huacachina for optional sand boarding and dune bugging

### **Activity**

### **Approximate Cost**

Boat trip to see the seals & seabirds on the Ballestas Isles

### **Paracas**



Spanning 335,000 hectares of land and sea, Paracas National Park is widely regarded as one of the most important marine reserves in the world. This coastal and marine national park is located on a peninsula in the Pacific Ocean and is home to one of the highest concentration of marine birds in the world. Providing a vital habitat for sealions and dolphins, Paracas is without doubt one of the most biologically diverse coastal areas in the Americas.

Historically the peninsula was the home to the Paracas people from 1200BC through to around 200 AD and some remains of their culture can be found in the area, the most spectacular of which is the enormous candelabra - a giant etching depicting a cactus inscribed onto a coastal hill overlooking the ocean.

### **Ballestas Islands**



The Ballestas Islands has weird and wonderful wildlife. From the boat trip you will be able to see

Humboldt Penguins, Blackish Oystercatchers, Guano Cormorants and Peruvian Boobies living alongside vast colonies of Sea Lions nosily crowding the Ballestas coastline. The startlingly biodiversity around the Ballestas Islands and [Paracas](#) National Park is the result of two merging currents; the warm northern waters El Nino and the cooler waters of the Humboldt. The climatic conditions produced by the combination of these two currents create the perfect environment for a proliferation in the number of plankton and fitophankton, the core constituents in the diet of fish. The Ballestas Islands are one of the most popular ecotourism points of view along the Peruvian coast.

## Huacachina

Known as the 'oasis of America', Huacachina is near Ica in northern Peru, and is perhaps more reminiscent of the Sahara than South America. The picturesque lagoon is surrounded by palm trees and towering sand dunes and creates a tranquil oasis in the dusty coastal desert. The small town here has become a popular destination for sand boarding and buggying, although care should be taken before going on any of these trips, as standards are not always quite up to western expectations.

## Day 3: Nazca, Huacachina

In the morning we will have a chance to stock up on supplies before driving approximately 200kms to Nazca where we camp. En route we have the chance to glimpse the Nazca lines from a viewing platform

Activity	Approximate Cost
Dune buggying or boarding in the spectacular sand dunes of Peru Desert	USD 20

## Nazca



Nazca is home to the famous and enigmatic Nazca lines, enormous designs inscribed in the Desert on the arid high plateau between Nazca and Palpa. Many of the lines form stylised depictions of animals, for example you can make out llamas, monkeys, sharks and spiders, as well as trees and other designs.

Archaeologists believe the lines were created between 200BC and 700AD by three successive, different civilisations. The global importance of the region is reflected in UNESCO's declaration of the Nazca lines as a World Heritage Site in 1994. You can view the lines from viewing towers or take a flight in a small plane to see them from above.

**Important - Flight over the Nazca Lines** - As of November 2010 some western countries' travel advisories advise against this optional activity due to concerns around proper aircraft safety and

maintenance standards not being reliably adhered to. For more information please refer to your country's travel advice website. Please note that due to Dragoman's internal safety policy our leaders are specifically prohibited from recommending or assisting with booking this activity.

Close to Nazca is the Chauchilla Indian Cemetery, where you can see the tombs of people of the ancient Nazca civilisation, dating from 100AD to 700AD. It is something of an eerie sight to see the skulls, bones and even hair of the dead, preserved in a remarkable state thanks to the dry desert air.

## Day 4: Nazca, Puerto Inca

In the morning there is an optional flight over the mysterious Nazca lines and an included visit to Chauchilla cemetery. In the afternoon there is a 270kms drive to Puerto Inca for an overnight stay at a beach camp site

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the Nazca Lines and Chauchilla Cemetery	Included in Kitty
Fly over the Nazca lines	USD 100

## Puerto Inca

Puerto Inca is situated on the Peruvian coast in a beautiful bay and was once the Inca port that supplied the city of Cuzco with supplies of fish. There are a number of Inca ruins here, which includes a cemetery, a temple of reincarnation and part of the road that set out from the coast to Cuzco is still clearly visible. It is a great place to relax with a nice beach, the sea and swimming pool; water sports are also sometimes available. However, swimmers should be aware that there is often a strong under-current here.

## Day 5: Arequipa

380kms drive day takes us to altitude and to the 'white city' of Arequipa where we overnight in a good quality hotel

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 night stay in the beautiful white city of Arequipa	Included in Kitty

## Arequipa



Situated on the Peruvian Altiplano, Arequipa sits at almost 3500 meters above sea level and is the second largest city in the country. Set against the stunning backdrop of the snow-covered volcano "El Misti", salt lakes, thermal springs and high-altitude deserts, the landscape of the area around Arequipa truly unique. If you have time, it's possible to arrange mountain-biking and rafting trips in

the area as day tours from the city - and at certain times of year you can even try for an ascent of El Misti itself, though it's not an easy trek at these altitudes, so not for the faint hearted.

The city itself is very beautiful, full of beautiful colonial buildings built out of the soft white volcanic rock that is found in the area. As a university town, there is always a lively buzz about the place and there are plenty of good bars and restaurants to discover.

No trip to Arequipa would be complete without paying a visit to Juanita, the "Ice Maiden." This mummy of a young Inca girl has been described as one of the 10 most important historical discoveries of recent times by Time Magazine. Because the body was frozen at such low temperatures and high altitude, a really extensive study into the physical health of ancient Peruvian civilisations has been possible, with fascinating results. You should also try to visit the Santa Catalina Convent, which is almost a city within a city in the centre of the town. Not only are the buildings of the convent stunningly beautiful, with brightly painted walls and shady courtyards, it also has a fascinating history which you can learn about on a guided tour.

## Day 6: Arequipa

Free day to explore the colonial city of Arequipa

Activity	Approximate Cost
Guided tour of Arequipa's Santa Catalina convent	USD 10
White water rafting, grade 1-4	PEN 60

## Day 7: Chivay and Colca Canyon, Chivay

Time in Arequipa to explore further in the morning. Then drive 150 km drive to Chivay with an optional visit to thermal springs. Overnight in a hotel at Chivay.

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 night stay and guided trip to see Colca Canyon and condors	Included in Kitty
Visit the thermal springs in Chivay	USD 10

### Chivay and Colca Canyon



Chivay is a small town nestled in the hills at the base of the Colca Canyon. The River Colca runs from high in the Andes right down to the Pacific, and between Chivay and Cabanaconde it flows through the bottom of a deep gorge, often claimed to be the deepest in the world. It is certainly spectacularly beautiful, the vast Andean terraces tower up over the canyon, dotted by tiny villages that haven't changed in centuries. The canyon is also renowned as a haven for condors and they can often be seen here at quite close range as they float on the rising thermals and scan for carrion far below.



Catching a glimpse of these magnificent birds as they rise from their nests, gliding high above you is a truly magical experience and one you will never forget.

Chivay is also home to some natural hot springs that provide a welcome relief from the cold night air high up here in the Andes. The springs are known as "La Calera" and are located just a short distance outside the town.

## Chivay



Upstream from the renowned Colca Canyon, lies the rural town of Chivay. Heated pools just outside the town are one of the main highlights and a place to relax after a morning exploring the town centre and markets. Another magnificent site is the stone Inca bridge that crosses the Colca River Ravine that is thousands of years old.

## Day 8: Chivay and Colca Canyon, Chivay

Short driving day to visit the spectacular Colca Canyon to view condors and also local communities. Overnight in the same hotel at Chivay.

## Day 9: Raqchi

Drive day to Raqchi and stay overnight in local homestay. We stay in traditional family houses with clean but basic facilities. Whilst we are there we enjoy some of the ceremonial aspects of village life as well as much singing and dancing. This is a great local experience.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Quechua Indian homestay and community crafts project	Included in Kitty
Guided visit to the Raqchi ruins	Included in Kitty

## Raqchi



Raqchi is a small village situated a short distance outside of [Cuzco](#). On Dragoman trips we stay here



as guests of the local families in their traditional houses, a fantastic way to get a real insight into how people live here and to learn about their culture and customs. If we are lucky there may be the chance to participate in some of the ceremonial and spiritual aspects of village life - and there is always plenty of singing and dancing as we get to know our new Peruvian families. The village is also well known for its talented craftsmen and women and there will be the chance to buy some of the beautiful hand-made and intricately decorated pottery that is made here.

## Day 10: Cuzco

In the morning we visit the ruins at Raqchi and also a local artisan centre. In the afternoon we drive 160kms drive to Cuzco. Overnight in a lovely colonial hotel

### Activity

7 nights in and around Cuzco and the Urubamba Valley

### Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

## Cuzco



Cuzco is the ancient capital of the Inca empire and any adventure tour to [Peru](#) is centred around this stunning city. Even today, many of its buildings still retain some of the original Inca stonework as part of their structure. It is interesting to know that despite their advanced civilisation, the Incas did not know how to write and had not invented the wheel, yet they were skillful irrigation engineers, inventing the suspension bridge and hammock. They must have had theories on constructing buildings to avoid damage by earthquake, which may account for the way they fitted huge carved blocks of granite together in an incredibly precise jigsaw when creating new structures. Examples of their amazing building techniques can still be seen in and around Cuzco, including the infamous "twelve sided stone", now famous as part of the logo of Cuzco's native "Cusquena" beer.

The town is a fantastic place to spend a few days. A good place to start your explorations is the majestic main plaza, heading out into the cobbled streets lined with attractive colonial buildings. Head up the hill into the neighbourhood of San Blas and you will discover another hidden square with a quiet laid back feel. All the streets are lined with shops, bars and restaurants, from small local cafes to five star dining experiences. If you're interested in learning more about the history and culture of [Peru](#), there are also some fantastic museums here and the many churches are well worth a look as well. So take to the streets and wander around, haggle with the street vendors, kick-back and enjoy a coffee in one of the many cafes with balconies overlooking the square and just enjoy Cuzco and its beautiful surroundings.

Cuzco is also the gateway to [Machu Picchu](#) with most people trekking one of the many [Inca Trails](#) to reach this ancient Inca city.

## Day 11: Cuzco

Non-driving day with free time to explore the wonderful city of Cuzco, the capital of the Inca kingdom. There will be a trekking briefing today and we stay in the same colonial hotel.

## Day 12 to 15: Inca Trail , Sacred Valley, Cuzco

Trekking in the Andes - We will have a tour of the sacred valley and either begin the community trek or the classic trek to the world heritage site of Machu Picchu. The nights are spent camping.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Tour of the Sacred Valley, Sacsayhuaman and Ollantaytambo	Included in Kitty
TREKKING OPTIONS	
Option 1	
Trek the Classic Inca Trail up the Royal Inca Road. Your kitty has been budgeted to accommodate for this option as it is the most costly of the 3 options.	
Option 2	
Hike unspoilt Inca Trails in remote stunning Andes scenery away from tourist treks on our exclusive Community Inca Trek. If you choose this option you will get a small refund from kitty.	Included in Kitty
Option 3	
Relax in Cuzco and take the train to Machu Picchu without trekking. If you choose this option you will get a substantial refund from kitty.	
<b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> YOU MUST ADVISE AT TIME OF BOOKING IF YOU WISH TO BOOK THE CLASSIC INCA TRAIL OR THE NON TREKKING OPTION, OTHERWISE YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE PUT ON OUR COMMUNITY TREK.	

### Inca Trail



When people talk about "The Inca Trail", they are usually referring to a particular trekking route that follows an ancient pathway that leads to [Machu Picchu](#). What many people don't realise is that there are actually a huge number of Inca Trails that criss cross the Urubamba Valley and surrounding mountain ranges, many of which are genuinely remote, rarely used by western tourists, offering a chance to experience the real unspoilt Andes. On all Dragoman overland tours that travel via [Cuzco](#) we offer you the choice to trek either the "Classic" Inca Trail or our unique alternative, the Community Inca Trek, which is exclusive to Dragoman.

### The Classic Inca Trail

The "Classic" Inca Trail route usually starts at Kilometre 82 of the Cuzco - Machu Picchu railtrack, taking in Abra Warmihuañusca (Dead Woman's Pass, 4200m) and the ruins of Phuyupatamarca and Wiñay Wayna en route, eventually arriving at the Sun Gate above [Machu Picchu](#) early in the morning after 3 days of trekking. This route is still extremely popular as it is seen by many as the "original" Inca Trail. It's also probably the best trek to choose if you're really interested in history and archaeology, because of all the other Inca sites it passes along the way.

Unfortunately, in recent years the classic trail has almost become a bit of a victim of its own popularity. It is important to realise that the trail is now very busy, with 500 people starting the trek every day. There are only a certain number of places where it is feasible to camp, so your group will be camped alongside others, and you will meet a lot of other trekkers along the way. Nevertheless, it is still an awesome trek, passing through some stunning scenery from snow-capped peaks to abundant cloud forest, and the sense of achievement you'll have when you catch your first sight of the Lost City of the Incas is something you'll never forget.

### **The Community Inca Trek**

Dragoman's Community Inca Trek is a unique trekking route where you'll hike through pristine unspoilt andean scenery, walking ancient Inca Trails and pass through local communities as part of our pioneering community-based tourism project, Tarpuy Yachay. This trek is all about getting away from the overcrowded thoroughfares of the Classic Inca Trail and getting out into the real Andes - not to mention being part of a project which provides a genuine, direct benefit to the host communities we travel through, by supporting education, income generation and environmental sustainability projects. The trek itself is about the same as the Classic Inca Trail in terms of length and difficulty, taking three to three and a half days and ascending to about 4700m when you cross the highest pass. The scenery out here is truly magnificent, spectacular mountain peaks, verdant hillsides dotted by isolated villages and the odd llama and alpacas, you are unlikely to see another tourist here. If you were to ask Dragoman which one we prefer, there is no contest, as the Community Inca Trek and Tarpuy Yachay Project is a much better and far more worthwhile experience.

Why we think the Community Inca Trek is better than the Classic Inca Trail:

- You will trek through genuinely unspoilt, spectacular mountain scenery without seeing any other western tourists
- Llamas, mules and horses are used instead of porters to carry equipment. These animals are sourced from the communities we travel through, providing a direct source of income for local families
- You'll be helping to give something back to the local community. On this trek the staff and pack animals are all from the local villages, so they directly benefit from your trekking
- We also make a financial donation from the group kitty, matched by Dragoman, for every person who does this trek. These donations help support a variety of projects, e.g. paying teacher wages for local community schools
- By having the horses and mules along with us, you also have a much needed safety net if you suffer from altitude or exhaustion... because you can always swallow your pride and hitch a ride
- You will arrive to Machu Picchu well rested after a night in a comfortable hotel - ready to get the most out of the tour of this magnificent site

And a few things to consider when choosing the Community Inca Trek:

- It's important to realise that whilst both treks finish at Machu Picchu on their final day, on the Community Trek you will not trek right through to the Sun Gate as you do on the Classic Inca Trail.

However, you will still arrive before the crowds and it is possible to walk up from Machu Picchu itself to the Sun Gate to take in the famous view

- The Inca trails that form part of the Classic Inca Trail route are what would have been the King's roads - and therefore they are better preserved than the trails we use on the Community Inca Trek
- The ruins you will see on the Classic Inca Trail are more numerous than those on the Community Trek, however you will still see the main sites of Machu Picchu, Sacsayhuaman and Ollantaytambo
- The Classic Inca Trail is closed for maintenance during February each year

## **Sacred Valley**

The valley of the Urabamba river is more often referred to as “El Valle Sagrado de los Incas”, or the Sacred Valley. Close to [Cuzco](#) in [Peru](#), the valley extends from the small market town of Pisac to Ollantaytambo, nestling at the foot of the Andean mountain ranges that are home to the magical lost Inca city of Machu Picchu.

Together with [Machu Picchu](#) itself, the Sacred Valley was a cradle of the Inca empire. The area is littered with archaeological sites which include the magnificent ruins of Pisac, Sacsayhuaman and Ollantaytambo, as well as the Lost City itself. Together with the temperate climate, lively markets, sleepy andean villages and stunning surrounding landscape, the rich history of the area makes it a truly bewitching place.

If you travel with Dragoman, whether you choose to take the Community Inca Trek, the Classic Inca Trail, or not to trek at all, everyone in the group will be able to take part in a tour of the Sacred Valley. We will typically leave [Cuzco](#) first thing in the morning and drive to Sacsayhuaman ruins which are just 15 mins from our hotel. These ruins are best known for the gigantic blocks that make up the zig zag frontal of this fort like construction. There are many theories as to why Sacsayhuaman was originally built and what it was used for but the most likely is that it was a temple complex where offerings were made to appease the gods. Sacsayhuaman is an amazing place and the early morning light makes the great view of the [Cuzco](#) rooftops that we get here even more beautiful.

We will then head further on into the Sacred Valley proper, stopping high on the mountainside to explore the ruins of Pisac. We will walk downhill along small pathways, through ancient arches, storage buildings and houses, learning about the history of the site from our local guide.

If you are doing the Classic Inca Trail you will then head straight to Ollantaytambo from Pisac, exploring the ruins here that afternoon and camping overnight, heading to the Classic Inca Trail start point early the next morning.

If you are doing the Community Inca Trail we will drive to Chincheros, a small village in the Sacred Pampa where the locals speak mostly Quechua, the language of the Incas. There you will see a weaving demonstration that has been unchanged for a thousand years and you will tour the archaeological ruins there for another hour and a half. From Chincheros we will drive an area with great views to have an energizing picnic lunch. We will then drive to Quillarumiyoc, also known as the Temple of the Moon. From there we will start our hike, returning to the Sacred Valley at the end of the trek when we arrive in Ollantaytambo. Here you are joined by any of your group who prefer not to trek at all for a guided tour of this Inca site, before leaving next morning on the early train for [Machu Picchu](#).

## **Day 16: Machu Picchu**

Visit to Machu Picchu one of the world's most iconic sights. We'll have a guided tour with a local expert and plenty of time on site before catching the train back to Cuzco.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Guided tour of Machu Picchu	Included in Kitty
Train back from Machu Picchu to Cuzco	Included in Kitty

## **Machu Picchu**



Machu Picchu is usually the highlight of any adventure tour to [Peru](#). It is one of those genuinely magical places, and catching your first glimpse of the lost city of the Incas through the early morning mist is definitely a moment you'll never forget.

The most popular way to approach the ruined city is via one of the many [Inca trails](#) that wind their way through the Andes Mountains. The Classic Inca Trail is a much-used route taking four days and culminating with an arrival at the 'Sun Gate' at sunrise on the final morning from where you descend into Machu Picchu itself. However the sheer number of trekkers following this route has resulted in erosion, deforestation, litter and overcrowding at campsites. To address this issue Dragoman has been running a 'Community Inca Trail' for the past seven years. This unspoilt route is totally unique to Dragoman clients so you will be able to enjoy the trek in peace and away from the crowds on the main trail. It visits local communities allowing you to learn about the Quechua way of life and travels through stunning mountain scenery enabling you to fully appreciate the majesty of the Andes.

Machu Picchu itself is stunningly located, perching high in the Andes surrounded by verdant cloud forest, with the River Urumbamba running through the gorge far below. It's thought that the city was the location of a royal palace and estate, home to the Inca emperors, or possibly a sacred religious and ceremonial sight.

Discovered in 1911 by the explorer Hiram Bingham, although the ruins were heavily covered by dense jungle foliage, many of the buildings were well preserved and in excellent condition. The city consists of more than 200 buildings, from houses to temples, storage buildings and public spaces. It's fascinating to be able to gaze down on the city from above and imagine how it would have looked during the height of the Inca empire.

## **Day 17: Cuzco**

**Border information:** If you are leaving in Cuzco, exit Peru at Cuzco Airport.

The trip ends this morning. No accommodation is provided for tonight. Free day to explore the city or do activities such as white water rafting.

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## **Important Notes**

**The routes, activities and places visited described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.**

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

We update these notes regularly and so please ensure you have an up-to-date version of these trip notes.

We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often without western infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

### **Multiple departures and amended itineraries**

South America is very busy for travel at certain times of the year, particularly in connection with the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro but also at other times of the year. Please note that there may be more than just one truck on your specific departure date, and in addition you may from time to time meet up with other groups at some locations to partake in activities jointly with other groups. Trucks on multiple departures will operate on slightly different itineraries and your day to day itinerary may vary from your trip notes. You will of course still visit all the highlights listed, and the presence of other trucks can make for a great atmosphere. If you should have any concerns then please contact your sales agent.

### **Trek Overlap**

Please note that there is an overlap for the Inca trek. This means a group starting a trip in Lima or La Paz will do the Inca trek at the same time as a group starting their trip in Cusco. This means there could be several groups on the Inca trek at the same time.

### **The Community Inca Trek, Classic Inca Trail and Non Trekking Package - more information**

The Inca Trail usually refers to the ancient pathway used by the Incas leading to Machu Picchu, but in fact there are a number of Inca Trails running through the Urubamba Valley. On all Dragoman trips that travel via Cuzco we include the choice between three options: the Classic Inca Trail, our Community Inca Trek which is exclusive to Dragoman, or a non trekking package.

The kitty has been budgeted to include the cost of the Classic Inca Trail as this is the most expensive

option. This means that you will receive a small kitty refund if you do the Community Inca Trek, and a substantial kitty refund if you do the non trekking package.

PLEASE NOTE: You must tell us at the time of booking if you want to book the Classic Inca Trail or the non trekking option. If you do not tell us this you will automatically be booked onto the Community Inca Trek.

Full details of all three options are below.

### **Option 1: The Community Inca Trek**

This unique and pioneering trekking route is automatically included in all of our trips that visit this area of Peru. The trek travels through spectacular scenery, passing through some minor Inca ruins and staying close to remote villages. You will be hiking unspoiled trails used only by local villagers and Dragoman passengers, avoiding the crowds of the Classic route. This is the real Andes, trekking pristine trails with spectacular mountain scenery at every turn. After a comfortable overnight stay in Ollantaytambo we head to the ancient citadel Machu Picchu. Although we do not enter the site through the Sun Gate as on the Classic Inca Trail there is plenty of time to hike to the Sun Gate for those who wish.

This option is **automatically** included as part of your trip unless you advise us otherwise. So if you want to take the Community Inca Trek no further action is required. If you would prefer to trek the classic Inca Trail, or choose not to trek at all, you let us know at the time of booking.

To be able to buy your train ticket between Ollantaytambo and Aguas Calientes, it is vital that you provide the following information at the time of booking:

- Full name (EXACTLY as it appears in the passport you are travelling on)
- Date of Birth
- Passport Number
- Passport Expiry Date

Any inconsistency between the information provided and the passport you travel on **may result in you not being allowed to board the train.**

#### **DAY 1: Cuzco to Zurite**

Leaving Cuzco early in the morning, we proceed to Sascaywaman for a 1 hour tour of the archeological ruins. From there we will go to Pisac to visit the ruins, before continuing on to Chincheros, a small village in the Sacred Pampa where the locals speak mostly Quechua, the language of the Incas. There you will see a weaving demonstration that has been unchanged for a thousand years and you will tour the archaeological ruins there for another hour and a half. From Chincheros we will drive an area with great views to have an energizing picnic lunch. We will then drive to Quillarumiyoc, also known as the Temple of the Moon. From there we will hike to Zurite where you will have a picturesque stay in a house that is full of history from the Colonial period. In the house we will enjoy a nice dinner of traditional or contemporary food and you can experience the lifestyle of the locals.

*Meals provided: Morning snack, lunch, dinner*

*Approximate walking time: 4hrs*

*Distance: 8km*



## **DAY 2: Zurite to Amaruwatana**

After a hearty breakfast we leave Zurite and head towards Amaruwatana camp. Following the ancient path all the way to the top of our first pass at 4,500 metres, where we will have a dramatic view of both mountain ranges, Vilcabamba and Vilcanota. From here we start walking down on the way to our first camp in the Sambor valley where we will spend the night.

*Meals provided: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

*Approximate walking time: 8hrs*

*Distance: 13km*

## **DAY 3: Amaruwatana to Ancascocha**

Early in the morning after breakfast we trek for 2 hours to get to our second pass at 4,700 metres; from there we have fantastic views of the rock formations below us. Sometimes it is possible to see Andean ibis, herons, torrent ducks, caracaras, eagles and foxes. After another 2 hours we arrive to a nice highland valley, a place named Kenqo Mayu, or zig-zag river, where glacier water flows through the valley. Our lunch will be at the end of the river, and after lunch we will continue downhill and follow the ancient trail, which goes on a little uphill section which leads us to our campsite close to a community called Ancascocha. We will arrive to our campsite in the late afternoon near to a large glacier mountain and glacier stream. If we arrive on time there is an optional hike to the lake, a one hour round trip.

*Meals provided: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

*Approximate walking time: 6½hrs*

*Distance: 10km*

## **DAY 4: Ancascocha to Ollantaytambo**

After eating breakfast and breaking camp we start hiking down the Silque Canyon. We will descend by way of the narrow canyon, following a stream that will gradually get bigger. We can observe tall granite walls on the sides of the canyon, populated by a large variety of orchids and bromeliads, filling the environment with magnificent colours when they bloom. We continue on the trail making zig-zags. After crossing many little bridges we will reach the community of Camicancha, where we stop in a nice volcanic rock area, with magnificent views of mount Veronica, a snow capped mountain. From here we are very close to the Chilca community where we finish our trek. A vehicle will transfer us to Ollantaytambo and our hotel. After showers and a little rest, we get ready for the cultural tour of this incredible archaeological site, which is very well known as the Temple of the Sun.

*Meals provided: Breakfast, lunch*

*Approximate walking time: 5hrs*

*Distance: 12km*

## **DAY 5: Ollantaytambo - Machu Picchu - Cuzco**

Early morning after breakfast, we catch the train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes where a short bus ride takes us to the 15th-century Inca site of Machu Picchu where we have a full day to walk around the ruins with our guide. We arrive back in Cuzco late evening after the return train and bus journey via Ollantaytambo. We spend the night in Cuzco.

*Meals provided: Breakfast*

## **Community Trek inclusions**

- Guided tour of Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo & Machu Picchu with a professional, bilingual tour guide
- All transport to and from Cuzco
- Return train ticket Ollantaytambo – Aguas Calientes
- Return bus ticket Aguas Calientes – Machu Picchu

- 1 night in Ollantaytambo hotel
- Entrance fee to Machu Picchu
- High quality double-occupancy tents and camping equipment
- Sleeping mat
- Duffle bag
- Hot water in the morning for washing
- Drinking water throughout the trek
- Dining tent, kitchen tent, and latrine tent
- First aid kit and oxygen bottle
- Professional, bilingual guide
- Team of camp staff including cooks, porters and wranglers
- Llamas and horses to carry camping equipment and passenger bags
- Emergency horse for riding in case of illness or injury
- All camping meals with plentiful and nutritious food (vegetarian option available) and snacks

## **Communities Supported**

The communities that we support are remote Andean farming communities with traditions dating back to the Incas. They are primarily Quechua speaking, with some Spanish, and little contact with the general population. Their daily lives consist of potato cultivation, weaving, and the herding of llamas, alpacas, and sheep. Considered by the Peruvian government to be living in extreme poverty, they often face malnutrition, severely cold weather, poor hygienic conditions, and little medical or health assistance. These communities typically have small schools that often need support with construction, furniture, materials and teachers. Villagers live in thatched-roof stone huts and cook with firewood. Because of the disproportionate supply and demand of native trees and bush, there is a great need for an effective reforestation project in the area. Since 2006, Dragoman has worked with Ecoam (who helps us with our reforestation project) and thanks to the support from Dragoman and our passengers, the area we used to visit around Quishuarani, Cuncani and part of the mountain range of Lares has been declared a Private Landscape Reserve.

The fairly recent introduction of tourism to the region has brought some needed assistance and economic development to the communities, but there is still much more to do. Our local trekking operator working within the guidelines of sustainable tourism has met with the communities and discussed the pros and cons of tourism in the area. Together they have established still un-official guidelines for trekking and tourism through the Cordillera such as: established campsites to avoid contamination of community areas, use of community animals and personnel on treks, training of community members through workshops on camp maintenance, hygiene, client service to enhance their economic viability, maintenance of camp trails, camp sites, and environmental conservation. Many agencies respect these guidelines, but because making things official often brings on unwanted government intervention, they are now a pact between the communities, agencies, and tourists.

## **Option 2: Classic Inca Trail**

This original King's route still remains popular and it is a 4-day trek, which passes through cloud forest and dramatic mountain scenery. It ends at sunrise on the last day as you trek to the Sun Gate for your first views of magnificent Machu Picchu. If you would prefer to trek the Classic Inca Trail then you must advise Dragoman at the time of booking. Dragoman will then apply for your permit but please note that these can never be guaranteed and if unavailable we will automatically book you onto the Community Inca Trail.

To be able to apply for your Inca Trail permit, it is vital that you provide the following information at the time of booking:

- Full Name (EXACTLY as it appears in the passport you are travelling on)
- Date of Birth
- Passport Number
- Passport Expiry Date

Any inconsistency between the information provided and the passport you travel with **may result in you not being granted access to the Inca Trail.**

### **DAY 1**

This morning we go for a guided tour of the Sacred Valley and enjoy lunch at Pisac. We then head to Ollantaytambo to view more Inca ruins and we stay in a nice hotel for the night.

*Meals provided: Lunch, Dinner, Snacks*

### **DAY 2**

The following morning after breakfast, we catch a bus to the 82 km marker and are joined by a crew of local porters, cook, etc. As we hike from high plateau to dense forest, you will see some remains of ancient villages and temples, the first of which is Llactapata. The starting point of the trek (the 82 km marker) is located at 2,850 m above sea level. The trek includes some uphill trekking to the campsite (over 3,000m above sea level). Take advantage during the 4 days of the trek to get to know your porters. You will realise they work the hardest on the team and are gentle people willing to share with you their culture, language and trek experiences.

*Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks*

### **DAY 3**

This is the most challenging of the trek as we ascend a long steep path (approx 4 hrs) to reach the highest point of our trek, Warmiwañusca, or Dead Woman's Pass, at a height of 4,200 m (13,779 ft), before descending to the Pacaymayo Valley (3,650 m above sea level - 2 hrs downhill). Depending upon local conditions, you might camp here today, or may need to continue further up and down. We might cross the first and second passes on this day. From the second pass, Runkuracay (3,980 m above sea level - 90 min uphill) we can enjoy views of the snow-capped Cordillera Vilcabamba before descending to the ruins of Sayacmarca (2 hours downhill). From here it is only a few more minutes to the Chaquicocha campsite (3,620 m above sea level).

*Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks*

### **DAY 4**

Today we continue over the third pass and soon reach the beautiful ruins of Phuyupatamarca, the 'Town above the Clouds' (3,850 m above sea level - 90 min uphill). Start descending real Inca Steps (2 hrs) to reach our final night's camp by the Wiñay Wayna, or 'Forever Young' ruins (2,750 m above sea level), with panoramic views of the valley below.

*Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks*

### **DAY 5**

Today is only a short final hike (90 min) to Machu Picchu and we climb the steps to the Sun Gate to watch the ruins emerge from the mist below. As with the community trek our guide will show us the most important constructions as well as explain the history and the mythology of this magnificent place. There is some free time to explore the ruins further at your own pace or maybe if you haven't experienced enough steps and trekking, why not visit the Inca Bridge. Or you can just chill out and

watch the hummingbirds or vizcachua. Late afternoon we head back down to Aguas Calientes and take the train back to Ollantaytambo and return to Cuzco for a well-deserved rest.

*Meals provided: Breakfast, Lunch, Snacks*

### **Option 3: Non Trekking Package**

If you do not wish to trek but want to take part in the Sacred Valley Tour and guided tour of Machu Picchu, then this is the package for you. You will receive a refund from kitty for the unused part of the excursion as your kitty amount has been calculated for the trekking options. Please note that in order to obtain a refund you **MUST** inform us that you would like the non trekking package at the time of booking. Please also note that there is a possibility that you may be the only person booked on to the non trekking package.

To be able to buy your train ticket between Ollantaytambo and Aguas Calientes, it is vital that you provide the following information at the time of booking:

- Full name (EXACTLY as it appears in the passport you are travelling on)
- Date of Birth
- Passport Number
- Passport Expiry Date

Any inconsistency between the information provided and the passport you travel on **may result in you not being allowed to board the train.**

#### **DAY 1**

You will leave Cuzco with your fellow passengers who will be trekking the Community Trek of the Classic Inca Trail. You will visit the fortress of Sacsaywaman, followed by a beautiful scenic drive over mountains and through valleys, via the ancient city of Pisac and on to the Sacred Valley of the Incas. After lunch you will head back to Cuzco where you will stay at our nice, centrally located hotel for a further 3 nights. These hotel nights will be booked for you by your tour leader.

#### **DAYS 2 & 3**

There are no activities booked or organised for you during these two days. There will be plenty of free time for you to go out and enjoy the many beautiful restaurants and shops that this wonderful town has to offer.

#### **DAY 4**

After being picked up from your hotel in the morning you will be driven to the fortress city of Ollantaytambo and our hotel for the night, the Tunupa Lodge. Here you will rejoin the Community Inca Trekkers and your tour leader who will be arriving from their trek this afternoon.

#### **DAY 5**

After an early breakfast and a 10 minute walk to the train station, your stunning 2 hour train ride to Aguas Calientes begins. The journey takes you through several different micro-climates, past Inca terraces, lookout posts, ancient river bank reinforcements and small towns. You will get a glimpse of different temples and the beautiful Mount Veronica (18,800 ft. / 5,750 m). Passing through 8 tunnels, the train journey finally comes to an end in the busy pueblo, Aguas Calientes. From here you take a local bus that winds up the mountainside for about 30 minutes until you arrive at the entrance to Machu Picchu (7,800 ft / 2,400 m), the awe inspiring 'Lost City of the Incas'. The guide will take you around the immense, mystical ruins for about 2 to 2 ½ hours, explaining the rich history of the ancient site. Afterwards, you will have time to explore on your own before returning down the mountain to Aguas Calientes. In the afternoon you will catch a train from Aguas Calientes to Ollantaytambo and a private transfer will take you back to your hotel in Cuzco.

### **Non Trekking Package inclusions**

- Transport from Cuzco to Ollantaytambo via the Sacred Valley.
- Return train ticket Ollantaytambo - Aguas Calientes
- 3 night stay at our hotel in Cuzco (Nights 1, 2, & 3)
- 1 night stay at a hotel in Ollantaytambo (Night 4)
- Return bus ticket Aguas Calientes - Machu Picchu
- Guided tour of Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo & Machu Picchu with a professional, bilingual tour guide
- Entrance fee to Machu Picchu
- Transfer Ollantaytambo to Cuzco

### **Still Unsure of Which Trail?**

Dragoman's Community Inca Trek is a unique trekking route that not only involves trekking through pristine unspoiled mountains along ancient Inca Trails, but also allows the trekkers to stay within local communities and get involved with our pioneering community-based tourism project, Tarpuy Yachay. This trek is all about getting away from the overcrowded thoroughfares of the Classic Inca Trail and instead getting out into the real Andes. Not to mention being part of a project which provides a genuine, direct benefit to the host communities we travel through, by supporting education, income generation and environmental sustainability projects.

The Classic Inca Trail is the trek which you will see in every tour operator's brochure and website that features Peru as a destination. It is the most common trekking route taken to get to Machu Picchu.

### **Benefits of the Community Inca Trek over the Classic Inca Trail**

- Unspoilt and absolutely spectacular mountain scenery.
- A proportion of the costs are going back into the local community and the guides, pack animals and trekking staff are all from the local community. The community really benefits from your trekking.
- Virtually deserted routes, used only by locals and Dragoman. Most groups see no other tourists while trekking.
- Llamas, mules and horses are used instead of porters to carry equipment. The local communities we stay in provide the animals making this an example of Responsible Tourism in action.
- Horses and mules provide safety if people suffer from altitude or exhaustion... you can always swallow your pride and hitch a ride.
- Altitude Sickness - although we will trek higher than the Classic Inca Trail (4,700 m), we can always get you down to a lower altitude and into a local community if necessary. This is not possible on the Classic Trail.
- Arriving to Machu Picchu well rested and refreshed after a comfortable night in a hotel - ready to get the most out of the visit to this unforgettable site.

### **Points against the Community Inca Trek**

- The Sun Gate & Machu Picchu - yes, we certainly will visit Machu Picchu after the trek, but we will not trek through to the Sun Gate as you will on the Classic Inca Trail. However, many group members chose to trek up from Machu Picchu to the Sun Gate to see the famous view. This is always possible and we do allow time during your visit to Machu Picchu for this. The Inca Roads that the Classic Trail takes are the King's roads and therefore are better preserved than the Inca trails across the valley. The ruins along the way on the Classic Inca Trail are more numerous,

however you will still see Machu Picchu, Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo and other remote Inca sites on the Community Trail.

## **The Classic Inca Trail**

- This "original" route is still the most popular route because of its history.
- The Classic Trail is not quite as challenging as the Inca Community Trail and the passes are not quite as high. That said, it is still a pretty tough and you will need to be reasonably fit.
- The Classic Inca Trail finishes at the Sun Gate to Machu Picchu on the final morning of the trek, and you arrive at Machu Picchu by foot. On the Community Trek you will finish your trek the day before visiting Machu Picchu - and whilst we still arrive very early in the morning before the crowds, this is not a trekking day.
- The crowds - unfortunately often as many as 500 people a day start the Classic Trail and it has become very overcrowded, especially during the peak months. Rubbish, dirt, sanitation and over crowding are a real issue now. The hordes of people trekking this route is unsustainable and the Peruvian Government are being forced to limit numbers. This has now meant that at certain times of the year, not only is the trail overcrowded but also it is hard to even get permits to trek.

However this is still the Classic Inca Trail and for some no other route will do, and we therefore offer it as an alternative. The Community Trek is included in our trips, but if you would prefer to take the Classic then you will need to let our sales team know at time of booking.

## **Trail fitness**

Trekking at altitude should not be undertaken lightly. Regardless of which trek you choose, you need to be in good health with good physical fitness to enjoy the experience. It is not about speed; trekking slowly is far better at altitude but you do need to have the stamina to keep going and altitude can have a negative impact on your general condition and physical performance. For your own safety you must accept that it is at the complete discretion of the professional trekking guides to decide if you are not fit enough to trek, whether it be before or during the trek. The Community Inca Trek reaches 4,700 m in altitude when we cross one of the passes. The trail can be steep and rocky but has few steps. The Classic Inca Trail has lots of steps and the highest pass is Dead Woman's Pass at 4,200 m. If you are in any doubt about your suitability to trek please consult your local doctor.

## **Trekking - what to bring**

Tents, sleeping mats and all food and drinking water during the trek are provided, as well as duffle bags for your personal gear that you don't need to access during the trekking hours (such as sleeping bags and extra clothes). On the Community Trek your duffle bag will be carried by pack animals and on the Classic Trail your duffle bag will be carried by porters. Please note that for the Classic Inca Trail there is therefore a strict weight limit of 10 kgs per bag, no exceptions. You will have to carry your own daypack with any items you need during the day.

You will need to be prepared for 4 seasons' weather in one day. Basically it will be cold after dark and in the mornings. During the night you will need to layer up with thermals and warm socks. In the morning when you've walked for a little while you will warm up and gradually strip off. Think layers! Community trekkers, you should also bring a set of clean clothes for night 4, which you will

spend in Ollantaytambo where you have hot showers and the evening meal out in a restaurant.

Some very useful things to bring:

- Daypack (less than 30 litres)
- Waterproof bag(s) to keep you stuff dry (bin liners or similar are fine)
- Warm sleeping bag (also available to rent from our local supplier)
- Sleeping bag liner (for extra insulation)
- Sleeping mat (only if you want extra insulation/padding as a mat will be provided)
- Walking stick (basic wooden sticks will be available to buy)
- Water bottle(s) with a total capacity of at least 2 litres
- Head torch or normal torch
- Small towel
- Camera (also charger, extra batteries and memory cards)
- Walking boots
- Light shoes or sandals (to allow your feet to relax and breathe during the evenings)
- Waterproofs
- Thermal underwear
- Warm socks
- Fleece or other warm sweater
- Woolly hat & gloves
- Sunglasses
- Sun hat
- Basic toiletries (lip salve, sun block, insect repellent, wet wipes, hand sanitizer, etc)
- Toilet paper + plastic bags to carry your used toilet paper with you (only needed during the trekking hours, at night a dug toilet with toilet paper will be provided)
- Basic medical kit (any personal medication, plasters, painkillers, etc)
- Pack of cards / book / game for evenings
- Money (for souvenirs, snacks, drinks, food, etc + tip for the guides and porters)
- PASSPORT + passport photocopy
- Cuzco Visitor's Ticket (this will be arranged for you by your tour leader)

We recommend a tip of US\$20 for your guide and perhaps US\$30 for all the rest of the staff.

## **Responsible Trekking**

Frostbite, altitude sickness and even death can be the cost for the guides and trekking staff. Tourism Concern has a campaign aimed to put a stop to the abuse of trekking staff's human rights. Equally pack animals suffer abuse and mistreatment. Mountain trekking is exhilarating and challenging, but how could many of us do it without the assistance of trekking staff. Once they have started a trek, trekkers are often horrified by the reality of the working conditions for the staff. The prices that tour operators charge for trekking does vary enormously, mainly due to the rates of pay and conditions that the trekking crew receive. It is easy to book a trip based purely on price, but in the case of trips involving Inca trails, this will probably be because the tour operator is using local suppliers without regard to the treatment of porters and guides. In keeping with our Responsible Tourism Policies, Dragoman has a strict Suppliers Policy, which also covers our trekking partners. We follow Tourism Concern's policies on trekking companies and the way that guides, porters or animals are looked after. We therefore use a local Cuzco based trekking company called Andina Travel to run all our Inca trails trekking trips. They have an excellent trekking record and good, knowledgeable guides. They have been at the cutting edge of developing codes of responsible tourism practice and involving the local Quechuan communities in the development of their various treks. They supply us



with evidence of their code of practice concerning their guides, staff and pack animals. Please bear this in mind when deciding which travel company you will travel with. Remember many of the trekking organisations, as well as many overseas tour operators who use these suppliers, are happy to promote low cost trips, even if it is at the expense of the welfare of the guides and porters that they use.

## **Physical Preparation**

South America is diverse continent from high altitude, to the steamy Amazon, to baking deserts. You should therefore be prepared for the full gambit of climates. There will be time for hiking and other activities such as horse riding and you will need to be reasonably fit. Overland travel can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions can be challenging to some. You will need to be fit enough to help every day with the camp chores (cooking, washing up, general camp set up) as well as putting up and taking down your own tent. There are some long driving days and some early morning starts. The step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down the step at least 8-10 times a day. By and large the South America trips have a good range of hotel accommodation mixed up with camping so that life is not too rough.

## **Altitude**

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE).

Because of this it is very important that you make yourself aware of the cause and effects of travelling at altitude and monitor your health during this trip.

For further information please [click here](#) to download our AMS information sheet or check out the following website [www.high-altitude-medicine.com](http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com)

Your leader will also hand you a copy of the AMS information sheet during your trip as well as holding a short meeting prior to travelling to altitudes above 2800m/9200ft for the first time.

If you are starting your trip in a destination above 2800m/9200ft we strongly advise reading this information prior to arrival.

## **Visa Information**

Many countries that we visit on our travels will require visas to enter. Some are best obtained before you leave home, and others can be obtained en-route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining

visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible.

The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. The information provided is given in good faith and we do try to keep the visa information as up to date as possible. Please be aware though that rules do change, often without prior warning, which is why it is important that you check for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance, you can choose to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy or consulate. However, our recommendation is that you use a visa agent to assist you with your applications. While this does increase the cost, it will make the process much easier for you. Dragoman have teamed up with 'The Visa Machine' to create a safe, secure, hassle-free way of obtaining visas and visa advice. Our unique link within their website is designed to make the visa process as straightforward as possible. Simply go to <https://dragoman.thevisamachine.com> and click on your region of travel followed by your trip route and 'The Visa Machine' will advise you about not only the required visas but also the dates by which you should apply. 'The Visa Machine' can then assist you in the actual visa application, thus taking all the worry and hassle out of the process. This should apply for ALL nationalities and countries of residence.

As you will often need to submit your passport together with your applications, we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure. However if you do need to travel in this period please let us know as soon as possible so that we can help you work out the options for your visa application process.

## **Peru**

Nationals of most countries including Australia, the EU, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK do not need a visa for tourist visits of limited duration to Peru

### **Flying to Central or South America via the USA**

If your flight to central or South America is via the USA then you MUST obtain an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before travel.

An ESTA can be obtained online via the following link and paying the appropriate fee - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

## **Personal Spending**

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on trips in South America, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US\$15 and a maximum of US\$30 per day. This amount is usually lower in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru but slightly higher elsewhere.

This will cover expenses such as your drinks, meals when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

# What else you need to know

## Currencies & Cash

It is not really worth trying to buy local currencies before you travel. Bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated!

For obvious security reasons we hesitate to recommend you bring lots of cash with you, a sensible mix of cash and ATM cards is best. Most of our past passengers have said they wished they had been told to bring more cash. Apart from the convenience of being able to change money in many more places, you will sometimes get a much better exchange rate for cash.

More and more people are choosing to travel with cash passports such as TravelEx cards (you can visit [www.cashpassport.com](http://www.cashpassport.com) for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change in South America with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. However due to a recent counterfeit scam central banks in several South American countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile) have temporarily banned the circulation of \$100 notes bearing a series 2001 production date and a serial number starting with the letters CB or CF and ending in B2. The serial number is printed in green on the emblem. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are dated from 2003 or later. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Cash machines are readily available in most areas but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. If you are taking traveller's cheques, we recommend that you should only take those issued by American Express. Please note that Thomas Cook traveller's cheques may be used in some places, but are becoming more difficult to change. Brazil can be difficult for changing forex, it's handy to have a cash card as backup. Please bring a mixture of small and large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over \$50. Kitty contributions should be at least half in cash and be in the same denominations and currencies as suggested above. Any proportion of kitty contributions paid in travellers cheques should be increased to cover the commission charge incurred in exchanging them.

## Overland Lifestyle and Trip Suitability

Dragoman has 32 years experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose built iconic expedition vehicles on an off the beaten track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up close. Your journey will be overland across vast distances so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity. On an overland journey you are

more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores etc.

Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out!

We are looking forward to welcoming you on one of our overland journeys but before we do there are a few things we would like to draw to your attention:

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## **Who Travels with Dragoman?**

Our groups are made up of people from around the world and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18 (or 7 on our Family Trips), as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the beauties of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

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## **Group Size**

The maximum group size we take on our overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location; however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Zanzibar. This means a group starting a trip in Nairobi, for example, will visit Zanzibar at the same time as group starting a trip in Dar es Salaam. In practical terms this means there could be up to 44 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

Please also note that on some departures there may be more than one truck doing the same route. This means that you will be in the same hotel or campsite as another Dragoman group on some days. To ensure that you are not always at the same place at the same time as another group, your itinerary will most likely be slightly altered from the itinerary advertised in these trip notes.

## **Our Crew and Guides**

Our crew are passionate about travel and are always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all the overland companies, spending 10 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK, and then up to six months on the road as a trainee. On all Dragoman overlanding trips, we usually have 2 western crew. The crew are responsible for the group and the overall organisation of the trip. On our trips in East and Southern Africa we either have 2 western crew or 1 western crew and 1 local driver. While not being guides in the traditional sense, you can expect them to have a broad knowledge of the places visited and for them to offer suggestions of things to do and see.

On trips south of Nairobi in East and Southern Africa we will also have an African camp master/cook who is in charge of running the camp and organising all of the meals. Their knowledge of the local produce makes shopping at the markets great fun and you will learn how to prepare and cook some unusual dishes.

In the rest of Africa, South America and the majority of Central Asia and China we use local guides who may stay with us for just a few hours or will actually travel with us for some or the entire journey. In these cases they become a third crew member and are able to offer their local knowledge as well as a real insight into the lives of the local people.

Dragoman endeavours to provide the services of experienced crew, however, due to the seasonality of travel, situations may arise where your crew is new to a particular region or training other crew. Your crew have a duty of care to all members of the group and therefore they have the authority to ask you to leave the trip if you require serious medical assistance, you are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

## **Accommodation on Tour**

Dragoman's overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying hotels, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip and whilst our crew will do their best to accommodate couples travelling together in twin rooms, all our travellers should expect to stay in multi-share accommodation from time to time.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary depending on what options are available in each of the areas we travel through and the nightstops on our routes; The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses.

Equally, the type and standard of hotel accommodation will vary greatly depending on what is available in the area; hotels can vary from very basic multi-share rooms without electricity or running water all the way to high standard hotels with good facilities!

One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will wild camp; this allows us to get far away from the tourist crowds to some beautiful, secluded spots. Occasionally on some of our trips we are able to stay in villages or local homestays, this allows us to get close to indigenous populations and ensures our money stays within local communities.

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## **The Kitty**

In addition to the trip price on our overlanding trips, you will also be required to pay a kitty specified for your trip (please note that there is no kitty on our Family Trips). The kitty is payable in installments at the start of each section of the trip for combination trips, and in full at the start of the trip for individual trips. Each customer joining a trip pays their kitty into a central fund. The fund is managed by the Dragoman crew and the kitty accounts can be viewed by all throughout the trip.

The kitty covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park entrances, excursions and local guides).

The kitty system is very unique to overlanding and we believe it allows us to have flexibility and

transparency on our trips. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally. It also helps to keep the costs competitive and save on administration costs so that we can pass the saving on to you. Dragoman makes NO PROFIT on kitties, as they are the group's fund. We constantly update the kitty prices on our website and the kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Prices can go up or down with no notice, and exchange rate fluctuations will affect costs. If there is money left in the kitty at the end of your trip, then this is divided between the group and you receive a refund.

Once you book your trip it is very important that you check our website on a regular basis and just before departure for any changes to the kitty amount.

The kitty is payable in full at the start of your trip (in installments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips) or via our new scheme where you can pay in advance 3-4 weeks before the start of your trip (please see [http://www.dragoman.com/files/Kitty\\_doc\\_v1.pdf](http://www.dragoman.com/files/Kitty_doc_v1.pdf) for more details - this letter will also be sent in your final documents upon booking a trip).

If you are bringing the kitty out in cash, please try to pay in the specified currency on the website (US Dollars, or Euros in West Africa). Your tour leader will be able to accept some of the kitty in local currency if needed, and they will let you know the exchange rate locally - in most destinations you can withdraw local currencies from ATM machines, using either a cash passport or a credit/debit card. Please bear in mind that most cards have a maximum withdrawal amount per day, local ATMs may run out of cash, and your bank could block the card despite you warning them of your travel plans, so it could be impractical to try to get the entire kitty out from an ATM.

Traveller's cheques are becoming increasingly difficult to change around the world with passengers and our leaders are experiencing frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept TCs on our trips. As an alternative, in most destinations you can withdraw local currencies from ATM machines and use either a cash passport or a debit card.

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## **Meals and Group Participation**

On an overland journey you are more than just an individual passenger - you're part of the team. You are expected to pitch in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. As part of your trip you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting water and firewood, sweeping out the truck, loading the back locker, etc. While camping on overland journeys, all meals are included in the kitty. This means that you will have to work together to cook for everyone in your group. You will be divided into smaller units of 3-4 people and take it in turns to cook for the whole group according to a rota system. When it is your turn to cook you will have to plan the meal, shop for the ingredients in local markets or supermarkets and then prepare the meal for the whole group. The secret to cooking for 20+ people in a basic camping kitchen is to keep it simple! (On trips south of Nairobi we have a cook on board the truck; however you will still be required to help prepare meals).

An example of a typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, fruit and cereal as well as tea and coffee. When time allows it will also be possible to serve something hot such as eggs or pancakes. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto or pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

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## **Dietary Requirements**

If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your crew at your welcome meeting. Our crew will try to cater for any particular dietary requirement or food intolerance whenever possible. However, it must be remembered that it may not always be possible and the variety of dishes may be severely limited in comparison to those available to others. If there is anything in particular you require in your diet, or would miss from home, or because of an allergy would miss out on, it would be best to bring these with you. Depending on your particular requirements, you may need to allow yourself some extra spending money to allow you to purchase extra food items.

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## **Itineraries**

Our itineraries are our intention but travel in more remote areas of the world is unpredictable - borders can close, there can be extreme adverse weather, strikes or maybe mechanical issues that affect the running of your trip but equally due to the nature of our trips we can often spontaneously include a local festival or event into the itinerary. This being said, the safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a priority for Dragoman. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. Dragoman makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources:

- The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice
- Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers
- Leaders reports from off the road
- Local contacts we have built up over 33 years of experience

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## **British Foreign Office Travel Advice and Warnings**

Dragoman follows the British Foreign Office Travel advise when deciding where and where we are unable to travel. We will base our decisions on itineraries and alterations to published routes based on their advise rather than the advise of other governments.

However we recommend you check the latest travel advisories from your own government for the country you are travelling to before you book and prior to departure. Check to ensure that no travel warning is invalidating your travel insurance Here are a few useful addresses:

UK [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

Australia. <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

New Zealand. <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>

United States. [http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_1744.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html)



Canada. [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries\\_pays/menu-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp)

Dragoman has also teamed up with the UK Foreign and commonwealth office (FCO) in their 'Know before you go campaign' [www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo](http://www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo). This website offers straightforward travel advice, top tips, and up to date country information to help you plan a safe trip. We recommend you check this out before you travel. We will advise you of any significant changes in advice before travel or whilst you are overseas.

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## **Health**

You need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in our trips. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assessed your ability to cope with our style of travel. To help you assess if this trip is suitable, please refer to the physical rating. The ratings for each trip are a good indication of how challenging they are and in some cases you should be prepared for some long driving days and possibly limited facilities. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns. Please note that if, in the opinion of our leader, you are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to yourself and/or the rest of the group, Dragoman reserves the right to exclude you from all or part of the trip without a refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information prior to travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. We also advise you to declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase.

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## **Altitude**

Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatising to high altitude; please discuss these options with your doctor. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude, the tour leader will issue you with a self assessment altitude questionnaire which allows you to monitor how you are coping with the altitude and informs you of danger signals so that you can reports these as soon as possible, either to the tour leader or a medical professional.

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## **Yellow Fever**

A valid international certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever is required in many countries. You may need to present this on arrival at the airport or border crossing. Some countries will refuse entry if you are unable to present your certificate. It's also quite common for your home country to request a Yellow Fever certificate on your arrival back home.

It is your responsibility to check with your doctor well in advance of leaving home about the Yellow Fever requirements for the countries you'll be visiting.

## **Malaria & other mosquito-borne diseases**

Get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed.

Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your GP / travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as Dengue Fever and Chikungunya are continuing to spread and becoming a bigger problem around the world. Bite prevention is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available.

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists, can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, tent doors or, if sleeping outside, use a mosquito net. Use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing.

Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permetherin solution provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights and in hotel rooms but cannot be used inside the tents.

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## **Vaccinations**

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection vary according to different regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel.

We also recommend you check out any specific health advice for the country you are travelling to either via your GP or the following websites: [www.nathnac.org](http://www.nathnac.org) or [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

In the UK, we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive, up-to-date vaccination and health information. You will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

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## **Safety & Security**

At Dragoman your safety is of paramount importance and we will do our best to ensure that your travel with us is safe and trouble-free but we do ask that you take that little bit of extra care whilst you are away and to understand about the nature of this style of travel.

We want you to have an enjoyable time but you must also remember that part of the enjoyment of travel is experiencing a different way of life and cultures. This may also mean experiencing different safety and hygiene standards than those you are normally used to.

Therefore, please take note of the following safety tips and follow any local safety advice or briefings delivered by our crew or any third party suppliers we use during your trip.

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## **Transport Safety**

- Our own vehicles have fully fitted seat belts; make sure you always belt up.

- If you find a safety belt inoperable or missing on one of our vehicles, please inform the crew immediately.
- Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that other vehicles we may use or recommend in some countries will be fitted with seat belts on every seat as it is not a legal requirement in much of the world.
- Please remain seated on board vehicles at all times when the vehicle is in motion
- Never place luggage in the aisles or foot wells
- Ensure you know where your nearest Emergency exit is; this may be a designated emergency exit, a window or a roof hatch.
- Check the location of the fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- Follow any safety instructions provided by the crew/driver
- Our vehicles are fitted with roof seats which can be used in certain conditions, such as when driving at low speeds, off main tarmac roads, etc. They can only be used with the express permission of the crew and you must never sit in them without seat belts.

### **Road Safety**

- Traffic in some countries travels on the opposite side of the road to what you may be used to, so ensure you look both ways before crossing the road.
- In many countries vehicles do not automatically stop at crossings.
- Crash Helmets are often not provided with mopeds and motorbikes overseas - we do not recommend you hire these vehicles.

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### **Fire & Other Safety - Hostels/Hotels/Homestays**

- Ensure you know where your nearest fire exit is and check to ensure that it is operative.
- Check the location of the nearest fire extinguisher.
- Study the fire instructions in your room if available.
- Identify how to raise the alarm if a fire occurs.
- If a fire occurs, leave immediately; do not stop to collect your effects.
- Proceed to an assembly point well away from the building.
- Electrics in hotels in many of the places that we visit will not be up to the same standards as at home. Please ensure that you check rooms, especially bathrooms and are aware of any issues that look unsafe. If in doubt inform the crew who will endeavour to sort the situation out.
- Staircases and stairwells are often built to a very different design than under Western building standards. There may be no guard rails, be excessively steep, etc. At all times be aware and take

appropriate and prudent care.

- We often stay in homestays and farmstays. These may range from a traditional yurt through to a tree house or a town house. As these are traditional homes they may well not adhere to our western standards of safety and so it is important that you make yourself aware of potential risks.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with the hotels/hostels or homestays

### **Fire Safety - Campsites**

- Ensure you know where the nearest source of water or fire extinguisher is.
- Know how to raise the alarm.
- Extinguish all camping fires fully before retiring to bed.
- Observe any regulations regarding fires and bushfires in dry conditions.
- Proceed to an assembly point away from the tented accommodation/affected campsite.

### **Other Campsite Safety & Security**

- Familiarise yourself with the campsite and any known hazards.
- Group tents around our vehicle wherever possible.
- No open flames, smoking or flammable liquids in or near the tents.
- Ensure cooking area is well away from the tents.
- Ensure all water for cooking and drinking is purified first.
- Ensure any soil toilets are min 50m away from tents & cooking area.
- All food waste should be burnt or buried - min 100m away from the site.
- Ensure local advice is followed concerning any wildlife.
- Keep valuables locked in the vehicle.
- Be aware of any local security issues that might be important.
- Do not set out tents close to perimeter fences which may be a security risk.
- Be aware of the security arrangements and local guards for campsite and if in doubt ask them where and where not to pitch tents.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with campsite.
- When wild camping, ensure that you do not wander away from the camp alone. If you do leave camp ensure that you have notified the leader or other members of the group. Food Safety We prepare many meals during the tour and our crew are hygiene trained; however, some general tips can help in order to avoid the possibility of stomach upsets;
- Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked.

- Hot food should be hot, cold food should be cold.
- Avoid any uncooked food, except fruit and vegetables, (notably those you can peel or shell yourself).
- In many countries you should only drink bottled water or purified water and ensure any seal is intact when purchasing bottles.
- On the Dragoman vehicles we have a tank of drinking water that is kept purified by the crew.
- Avoid ice in drinks as this can cause upset stomachs in hot climates.
- Make sure you wash your hands in antibacterial product when preparing and/or eating food.
- Restaurant Food: This is grassroots travel and many of the restaurants that you will eat in, either as a group or as individuals, will NOT have the same standards of food hygiene as we have in the Western World. Unfortunately this is part of travel in these regions. Therefore think carefully about what food you order and be aware of the risks.

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## **Personal Safety**

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise you to leave any valuable jewellery, watches, etc, at home. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice. We have come up with a few pointers that we recommend you follow:

- Follow the crew's specific safety advice in each destination.
- Be aware, stay away from situations where you do not feel comfortable.
- Avoid carrying too much money.
- Use of a money belt / neck wallet or is encouraged at all times while travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items.
- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas.
- Ensure your valuables are left secure when you go out.
- In any hostels/hotels, place all valuables in a safety deposit box, where available or with reception or locked away by the crew.
- Do not take any valuable jewellery/watches etc. away with you.
- If possible avoid walking around on your own; it is always safer to explore with others.

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## **Activity Safety & Optional Activities**

You will have the opportunity to take part in many exciting activities and excursions, some of which are included, whilst others are optional (i.e. hiking The Inca Trail, trekking to see Mountain Gorillas). These require a certain level of fitness, so it's important that you read through the trip notes thoroughly and make your own conclusions as to whether you feel that you are fit and healthy enough to enjoy this trip to its fullest.

Some activities may have higher risks than you are used to and you must judge whether or not you wish to, or have the physical ability to take part.

Optional activities mentioned by Dragoman are not included in the trip price or kitty and do not form part of your contract with Dragoman. As such you accept that any assistance given by Dragoman crew members or local representatives in arranging optional activities does not render us liable for them in any way. The Dragoman crew are assisting you in arranging these activities for your added enjoyment whilst on your trip. The operators of these services and optional extras are local suppliers who contract directly with the Client 'on the road' subject to and in accordance with their own terms and conditions. Dragoman accepts no liability for any action or activity undertaken by the Client which is arranged independently of Dragoman while on tour. Crew may take part in an optional activity but do so as private individuals and not as company representatives.

Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time.

Ensure that you use the appropriate equipment on optional activities, including life jackets, helmets, etc. This is especially important on activities such as horse riding, white-water rafting, etc.

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## **Included Activities**

Included activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary, all other activities are optional and at your own expense. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not necessarily be refunded; this is something you will need to check with your leader.

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## **Optional Activities**

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only. Prices are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. Optional activities are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Dragoman nor included in the price of this trip. If you do any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities.

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## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

We recommend that any policy has a minimum medical (including repatriation) cover of £5,000,000. We recommend that any policy also has a minimum level of cover for Personal Liability of £5,000,000 and for Cancellation and Curtailment of £5,000. Cover for loss of baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice although please bear in mind that personal effects are more likely to go missing whilst travelling and you should ensure that your policy is adequate to cover the value of your personal effects e.g. cameras, I pads, phones etc. Please note that Dragoman is not responsible for your personal effects and is not insured for their loss.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel and make sure it covers any activity you intend to undertake. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries - for example, that they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. On activities or side trips that are not recommended by us please ensure you are happy with the safety of the activity before participating.

Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas.

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## **Our Liability Insurance**

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger vehicle liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £5,000,000 and £10,000,000 per incident respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

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## **Emergency Contact**

We have a dedicated 24 hour telephone number which should only be used once you have left the UK and in the event of a real emergency. Should you need to call the number, we will do what we can to help but please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please let us know and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in these trip notes. If you cannot get through leave a message and a contact number as these will be regularly checked and the crew informed if necessary.

**Emergency Number: +44 (0) 7985106564**

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## **Luggage & Kit List**

Although you will not have to carry your main bag long distances, you will need to help load and unload them onto the truck. For this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip your main luggage will be kept in the back locker, so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use. Please be aware that due to the constant dust and vibrations your luggage bag will be subject to extreme wear and tear.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. Different trucks have different-sized lockers, however to be safe we recommend that your bag be no larger than 66cm deep, 30cm wide, and 30cm high. The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is a maximum of 20kg. Backpacks should not have an external frame unless it can be easily removed and stored separately to avoid damaging other people's luggage.

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in. On overland trips, Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats (except on routes between Nairobi and Cape Town where ground mats are provided).

The clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats\*, so you'll need to bring those with you. Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to- there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag if it's likely to get cold. And remember that even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

**IMPORTANT:** Ground mats are provided on all of our overland trips that run in South and East Africa, between Nairobi and Cape Town. This includes our Family trips between Nairobi and Cape Town.

For a general idea of what you need this list provides a guide:

- Sleeping bag\* - Check the expected climate en route. Nights in desert and mountain regions can be very cold in winter months.
- Sleeping bag liner\* (or sheet folded and sewn up on 2 sides). It will help keep your sleeping bag clean, and can be used on its own on warm nights.
- Ground mat or compressed foam\*
- A day pack is useful for short hikes in the countryside, wandering around cities, etc and also for keeping inside the vehicle for items used during the day
- 2 sets of comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable cotton clothes are best)
- 1 set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out. Women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf for visiting places of worship
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Sun hat or warm hat if trekking
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Warm sweater/fleeces
- 1 waterproof jacket with hood
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots (or ankle height canvas jungle boots)
- 1 pair of sandals or flip-flops



- Underwear and socks (thermals are also a good idea if you are travelling to altitude or to the desert as it can get very cold at night)
- Swimwear
- 2 small towels
- Washing kit, including a small mirror
- Clothes washing detergent, small scrubbing brush & washing line (just a length of cord)
- Head torch/flashlight with spare batteries & bulbs (only the 3 standard sizes of round 1.5v batteries are widely available en route)
- Passport photos (average of 2 per country for which visas will be applied for en route)
- Good water bottle at least 1 litre
- A pouch or money belt worn inside your clothing, or unobtrusive pocket sewn into the inside of a pair of loose fitting trousers, is a must.
- Alarm clock
- Pocket calculator (useful when exchanging money)
- Writing materials & notebook/diary
- Multi purpose knife.
- Mosquito net - The tents supplied by us have mosquito netting and you will only need a net if you think you will sleep out under the stars a lot of the time.
- "Wet Ones" (moistened tissues) and hand gel
- Toilet paper - this can be purchased almost everywhere en-route but one roll is worth packing
- Assorted sized plastic bags - protects clothing and equipment from dust and damp
- Extra batteries for your camera / phone etc as there are only limited opportunities to recharge. For a comprehensive kit list take a look at the Dragoman kit list that Nomad Travel has created. You will receive a 10% discount on all equipment purchased either online or in store. Click to see the kit lists [www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list)

\*For trips with camping nights

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## **Personal Medical Kit**

All of our trucks have a fully stocked medical kit onboard for use in emergency situations only. Therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit. In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce the Dragoman Travel

Medical Kit. It has been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contains everything you would need for any minor accidents. For more details please visit their website:

[www.nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit)

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## **Passports**

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or "visitor's" passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for your trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

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## **Pre and Post Trip Accommodation and Connecting Flights**

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of the joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay? Dragoman can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While Dragoman is happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand that you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet. Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk-in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival; however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer, as not all hotels offer this service.

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## **Continuing Your Trip**

Having an amazing trip and met a great group of people? Having too much fun to go home yet? If on your trip you decide that you would like to continue, then why not speak to your trip leader who can advise you of the cost and availability of continuing your journey.

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## **Contingency Emergency Fund**

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond Dragoman's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although Dragoman will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside Dragoman's control you will be required to

contribute the additional costs involved and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

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## **Responsible Tourism**

Dragoman is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. Dragoman recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners, so that they benefit directly from our visit. You can find full details of Dragoman's responsible tourism policy linked from the home page.

[www.dragoman.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/our-commitment](http://www.dragoman.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/our-commitment)

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## **Water**

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 litres of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilised water stored in the purpose-built storage tank or in water jerry cans in your overland vehicle. You are free to refill your bottle as many times a day as you like. You are helping the environment and your pocket!

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## **Electrical Equipment**

Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket, so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12 volt adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

For mobile phones, please note that most countries in the Americas operate at 850MHz and 1900 MHz which is not the same frequencies used in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. Most modern tri-band and quad-band mobile phones will be able to operate on these frequencies but please check your mobile phone specifications before travelling to ensure that you'll be able to use your phone in the Americas.

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## A Few Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs is not only against the law, but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for Dragoman groups. It is one of our core values to treat all people we encounter with respect which of course includes all the local people who make our destinations so special. The exploitation of prostitutes or children is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes or abuse children. Equally Dragoman will not tolerate any violence or threat of violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession, if they use prostitutes, abuse children, use violence or threaten violence, without a refund of the trip price.

We expect you to obey all the laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs (as above), firearms, antiquities and ivory. Any customer found contravening such laws or customs will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

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## Issues on the Trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on

[customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk](mailto:customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk).

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

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## Tipping

Tipping is entirely voluntary. The Dragoman crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it.

On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own Dragoman crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD \$1 to USD \$4 per person per day, but check with your crew for an appropriate amount.

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## **Our Community**

At any time before or after you book, you can join our community - Dragoland. This is a great place to ask questions before you travel and to catch up with your fellow travellers once your trip has finished. You can share photos, videos and stories and you can also download a selection of free travel apps. See the home page to sign in - it's free and easy. We also have a Facebook page where travellers regularly swap info with each other

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## **Feedback**

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us to understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better, and it allows us to make improvements for future travellers.

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These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey, once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these Trip Notes

These trip notes were printed on 29/01/2015