

The Sacred Valley of Peru- A Meditative Trek
May 17- 28, 2012
with Susie Harrington

More Information

Overview

Our trip to Peru will introduce us to new perspectives, new routines, and different ideas. The familiar reference points that keep us moving in the same directions are gone, and with that comes the opportunity to re-define ourselves, our purpose, and our patterns. The itinerary is scheduled to unfold at a relaxed pace, allowing plenty of time to deepen your experience through practice and personal reflection, and discussion.

We will support our journey, and enrich our experiences through meditation practice, reflection and group sharing. There will be a time each day to sit, and on many days time for a dharma offering from Susie and reflection and discussion with the group. Our shared intention will be to be present to our experience, to be open and available to the people we meet and the places we visit, and use all that we experience to soften our hearts and open our minds. At times, or for partial days, we will walk, sit, or explore in silence, but this will not be a traditional silent retreat. While an established meditation practice is not required, openness and willingness to participate with the group, and a desire for spiritual exploration as a part of travel is necessary.

Peru

Peru is a rich and fascinating country, with a wide diversity of landscapes and peoples. Over 50% of the population is indigenous, carrying thousands of years of wisdom born from living closely with the land. While Spanish is the primary language, many other languages are spoken, including Quechua, the complex, unwritten language of the Incas that is the native, and often only, spoken language in the highlands we will be visiting. Harmony and *ayni*, the concept of reciprocity, and living in direct relationship with the earth are central aspects of the Quechua culture. The Quechua live a deeply spiritual life, blending Incan spirituality with the Catholic influence of the Spaniards and the earth-based rituals that are part of living in direct relationship to the earth for thousands of years.

Susie and Laura

Susie will guide practice sessions and integrate dharma teachings into the trip, and Laura will take care of logistics and provide personal support. We both carry the intention of supporting you in your outer and inner journeys, and we will provide as many options as possible to accommodate the group's interests and individual needs. We both have many years experience as outdoor guides, and will establish safety guidelines for our trekking days.

Susie Harrington has been practicing Buddhist meditation for more than 20 years, focusing on Insight Meditation since 1995. Susie began teaching the Dharma in 2005 under the direction of her teachers Guy Armstrong, Jack Kornfield, and Tory Capron. She has also been influenced by Eric Kolvig, Adyashanti and a number of Tibetan teachers. Believing nature to be a natural gateway to our true selves, Susie frequently offers retreats in the natural world. Her teaching is deeply grounded in the body, emphasizing embodiment of our practice in speech and daily life. She is a graduate of Hakomi Therapy (a somatic psychotherapy modality) She has been an outdoor professional for over 30 years, including years as a river guide, mountaineering guide, and backcountry ranger. She teaches residential and wilderness retreats throughout the Four Corners area and in California.

Laura Tyson has been leading wilderness courses, international trips, and personal retreats for over 25 years. She holds a Master's degree in Contemplative Psychotherapy, and has been practicing meditation for over 20 years, under teachers in the Tibetan and Zen traditions. She has traveled in 35 countries in Asia, North Africa, South America, Central America, Europe, and the south Pacific, including a solo bike trip across Tibet in 1985. She is the founder of The Women's Wilderness Institute, where she served as Executive Director for eleven years. Laura is the founder and director of True Nature Journeys, which combines her passions for helping people create vibrant lives, empowering women and men to move beyond their self-perceptions, and exploring the landscapes and cultures of our beautiful planet.

About The Trek

The trek will take us into remote highland areas of the Andes, where the Quechua people have been able to maintain their traditional culture of potato farming, llama and alpaca herding, and textile weaving. We will have a local guide, fluent in Quechua, so that we will be able to communicate with the people as we pass through and camp near their villages.

We will spend four days hiking at elevations ranging from 11,000' to 15,000'. Our pace will be slow and easy, so that we can be fully present to our surroundings, so endurance will be more of an asset than speed. You can expect to spend 3-5 hours per day hiking, and on two of the days most of that will be uphill. We will continue our meditation practice in the mornings. We will have most of our gear carried by horses, though you should expect to carry a day pack with extra layers of clothing, snacks and water. A 'backup' horse is available to carry a person if needed, but you should plan on being able to walk the full distance.

Our trek has been arranged as a private expedition with a local guiding company. We will have one primary guide, and a team of cooks and horse handlers. Our team will serve meals in a dining tent, set up our tents, and take care of chores so that we can relax in

camp. Foam mattresses are provided. Sleeping bags, Thermarest mattresses and trekking poles can be rented for a small fee, or you can bring your own.

Food

Peruvian food is an eclectic blend of indigenous tradition and a strong Spanish influence. In the Andean region, fresh, locally grown root vegetables, green vegetables and corn are the staples for most meals, supplemented with grilled local chicken and meats. The gastronomically adventurous can try cuy, the grilled guinea pig that the region is famous for. We will sample a variety of cuisines at local restaurants, and one night will have a chef come to prepare us a traditional Peruvian dinner. On the trek, a head cook will serve us (and do all the dishes too!), which gives us a way to support the local economy. Please let us know if you have food preferences or allergies- we will ask our outfitter to accommodate special diets if possible, but you may need to bring some supplemental food if this is not an option. Vegetarians can be accommodated, although beans and legumes are not commonly seen in Peru so you may want to consider bringing a supplementary protein source.

Weather

Weather in the Andean highlands is similar to any mountain weather- hard to predict! April through October is considered the slightly colder but drier season in the Andean highlands. The average high in Cusco in May is in the sixties, with the overnight low around 40, but during our trek we will be as much as 4,000' above Cusco, so it will be significantly colder. During the trek we can expect crisp, clear, cool days, and cold nights, down to below freezing. Pisac is 2000' lower than Cusco, and Machu Picchu is 4000' lower, so temperatures for most of our trip will likely be pleasantly warm during the day and cool at night. We'll provide you with a suggested clothing list that will give you a good range of adaptability to the mountain climate.

Logistical Details

Cost

This trip is being offered for \$2500, based on double occupancy, and based on enrollment of six to nine people. We will take a maximum of 11 people, and if the trip fills to over nine participants, we will reduce the cost to \$2270.

A non-refundable deposit of \$300 is due with registration, \$1100 due Feb. 1, and \$1100 due March 15. In the spirit of dana and the sharing of the dharma, Susie is not receiving pay for this trip. Donations for her support can be made to Sky Mind Retreats and are tax deductible. For those who wish to have their own room and their own tent, there is a single supplement of \$200. This cost does not cover airfare (see below).

What's Included

Everything that you'll need during your stay in Peru is included in the trip price, except for bottled drinking water. This includes three meals a day, lodging, all fees for the

activities, and ground transportation within the country. You will want to bring some extra money to purchase bottled drinking water, and in case you want special snacks, alcoholic drinks, gifts and souvenirs, or if you think you may get a wild idea to do something extra that's not in the plans. If you have special bars that you like to eat while hiking we suggest that you bring a few for the trek. We'll buy local snacks for the trek but the selection of high quality energy bars in Peru is slim.

Air Transportation

On the night of May 17, we will meet and spend the night in Lima at a small guesthouse in a quiet neighborhood. Most flights arrive late at night, and either one of us will meet you at the airport, or transportation will be pre-arranged to bring you to the hotel. We will then leave first thing the next morning for a two-hour's flight to Cusco. Please note that airfare to Lima and Cusco is NOT included in the trip price.

As of September, 2011, flights from Denver to Lima are around \$1100. You can expect another \$300-350 for the return flight from Lima to Cusco. Note that if you leave Cusco at the end of the trip on May 28, you will arrive in Lima in time for an overnight flight home, arriving home on May 29. Almost all return flights to the US are overnight- it is hard to avoid this. More information about how and when to book internal flights will be sent after you register.

Accommodations

Accommodations will range from mid-range hotels in Pisac and Agua Calientes to camping and tents on the trek. Accommodations are selected to be clean, comfortable, locally owned, and congruent with the down-to-earth nature of the country. For the nights that we are out on trek, we will be camping in roomy three-person tents (two to a tent).

The trip price includes shared room accommodations. For a single-supplement fee of \$200 you can have a private room and your own tent.

What to Bring

We'll put together a list of suggested clothing and gear. You will need a good pair of hiking boots, a medium-sized day pack, a very warm sleeping bag, and warm outdoor clothing and rain gear. Sleeping bags can be rented if you don't have one that will keep you warm down to around 25 degrees.

*****Remember that you will need a current passport!*****

Please feel free to contact either of us by phone or email if you have any questions!

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