

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

### Trip Itinerary

*This itinerary has been designed to allow for a relaxed pace, with plenty of time for flexibility and individual needs. We will first spend several days in Pisac, allowing our bodies to gradually adjust to the high altitude before beginning the trek in the highlands. We will integrate our dharma practice into our travel by practicing sitting meditation every morning, and by practicing in action during the day. On most evenings we will practice and/or have check-ins and discussions in the evening. Keep in mind that we are entering a more relaxed and spontaneous culture, and some elements of this itinerary may change. Part of our practice will be in allowing things to unfold as they do, rather than as they are planned!*

#### **DAY ONE- Friday, May 17**

Leave home on Friday. Arrive in Lima in the late evening or night, and take pre-arranged transport to a small guesthouse in a quiet neighborhood of Lima.

#### **DAY TWO**

Fly to Cusco. We'll have lunch at a local restaurant, and spend an hour or two exploring the twisted streets and alleys of this ancient Incan city before the hour's drive to Pisac, located in the Sacred Valley beside the Urubamba river. We will stay at the Paz y Luz Bed and Breakfast, a quiet, peaceful spot just outside of the village. We'll walk into town for dinner. Massages and traditional healing treatments are available at Paz y Luz. [www.pazyluzperu.com](http://www.pazyluzperu.com)

#### **DAY THREE**

A visit to the traditional Sunday morning market of Pisac will fully immerse us in the local culture. For centuries, locals from the surrounding Andean villages have made the trek to Pisac to barter and display their produce, livestock, weavings, jewelry, and clothing in a feast for the senses. In the afternoon we'll return to the round, open-air meeting space at Paz y Luz for practice and reflection. A home-cooked Peruvian dinner at Paz y Luz will complete the day.

#### **DAY FOUR**

In the morning we'll hike up a hillside of Incan terraces to visit the ruins above Pisac, for our introduction to the ancient Incan empire. A dramatic Temple of the Sun, intricate stonework, and sweeping views of the Sacred Valley make this one of the best ruins in the region. In the afternoon we will return to Paz y Luz for practice and discussion, and in the evening we will join a local Quechuan shaman for a despacho, a traditional ceremony of setting intention and letting go.

#### **DAY FIVE**

After morning practice and breakfast we will pack our trekking gear and begin our journey into the highlands with a several hour drive to the remote village of Quisharani, at 12,000', where we will spend the afternoon doing a local service project and visiting the small school, where the children will teach us some basic phrases in Quechua. We'll camp on the village soccer field, and have our first dinner in the dining tent where we will get to know our trekking guides and porters.

#### **DAY SIX**

Our first day of trekking. After morning practice we'll climb up and over Huillquicasa Pass (13,800'), dropping down past turquoise lakes to the backcountry village of Cancuni (12,300'). The remoteness of this region has allowed the people to maintain their traditional potato farming, llama and alpaca herding, and weaving. Along the way we'll pass spectacular views of the Vilcanota range, and the stone huts of small communities. After 5-6 hours of trekking, we'll camp outside the village of Cancuni.

#### **DAY SEVEN**

A shorter hiking day of about three hours. After our morning meditation practice we will trek over a much smaller pass to the village of Huacahuasi (12,000'), which is known for its traditional weavings. We will have time in the afternoon to explore the village, and visit some local weavers.

#### **DAY EIGHT**

Today we will hike slowly up and over a 15,000' pass, dropping down to camp beside a beautiful lake at 13,500', below the glacier of Mount Montanay. This hike will take five to six hours, and will traverse spectacular, high alpine scenery.

#### **DAY NINE**

Today we hike downhill, through forests of the native 'weeping' Quenal tree. We have lunch outside the village of Yanahuara, and then take a bus to Ollantaytambo, where we catch the afternoon VistaDome train, for an incredible three hour train ride through the Sacred Valley, following the huge whitewater of the Rio Urubamba river, below snow capped mountains rising more than two miles above us. We will spend the night at a hotel in the town of Agua Calientes, our last stop before the ruins of Machu Picchu.

#### **DAY TEN**

We will rise very early in the morning for a quiet sunrise introduction to Machu Picchu. We'll find a quiet corner in which to practice in silence, and then our guide will explain the amazing culture behind the intricate stonework. Afterwards, you will have time to wander on your own through the magical ruins, or climb Huayna Picchu, the spire that towers over the Machu Picchu ruins. In the late afternoon we will return by train to Ollantaytambo, an ancient town on the banks of the Rio Urubamba with Incan ruins rising above.

#### **DAY ELEVEN**

We find ourselves in Ollantaytambo on the first day of the festival of the Pentecost- the biggest festival of the year for the town. This is a full-blown event that displays the unusual blending of Spanish Catholicism with the pantheistic indigenous traditions. We'll witness costumed dancing in the street, and any other festivities that spontaneously emerge. We'll also spend time in practice, and reflect on teachings that came from our experiences in Peru. We'll also leave time for you to wind down your trip in your own way- with a massage, journaling, a walk up the Urubamba River, or exploring the town.

#### **DAY TWELVE**

After a final breakfast in Ollantaytambo, a two hour van ride to Cusco will take you to the airport for your flight to Lima, in time to catch an evening flight home. Depending on when you schedule your flight, you may have time on your own to either explore Cusco in the morning, or explore Lima in the afternoon.

#### **DAY THIRTEEN**

Arrive home on May 29.

#### **On-Your-Own Option**

To explore the city of Cusco, plan on spending a day or two on your own at the end of the trip. Cusco is the oldest continuously inhabited city in South America, and the only city in the world intentionally laid out in the shape of a puma. It is the heart of the Incan empire, and is a unique blend of Incan culture and the rich architecture of the conquering Spaniards, built on top of exposed Incan stonework. If you want to book your return flight for a later date just let us know and we can book a good place to stay for you.