Choquequirao to Machu Picchu

Trip Code: CHQ

Version:

WALK & TREK	GUIDED GROUP	CHALLENGING 8



HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the secluded Inca fortress of Choquequirao, the quieter 'sister citadel' with just a handful of daily visitors
- Camp overnight on ancient Inca terraces beneath the snow-capped peaks of the Cordillera Vilcabamba
- Cross three high Andean passes (up to 4,660m) on trails that once linked the two great Inca cities

- Complete the trek with a guided tour of famous citadel of Machu Picchu itself
- Rated **5 out of 5** from 49+ traveller reviews with many trekkers describing it as the best way to reach Machu Picchu

AT A GLANCE

- 9 days trekking
- Max altitude - 4500 metres

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

Sitting astride a high ridge amongst the snow-capped peaks of Peru, the Inca fortress of Choquequirao is one of the most important discoveries of Inca antiquity; we invite you to discover the secrets of this abandoned city on this classic 2 week trekking holiday. Already a rival to Machu Picchu in terms of its size and splendour, more buildings and llama-decorated terraces are being exposed at Choquequirao each year. More remote and challenging to access than Machu Picchu, it is far less visited and still offers you the chance to wander freely amongst the evocative ruins and explore the terraces in relative solitude. Our fully supported trek follows the awe-inspiring canyon of the Apurimac River, involving a descent and ascent of almost 2,000 metres to reach our camp beside the citadel of Choquequirao (3,000m)! We have a full day to explore the ruins before setting off on a 5-day trek through the rugged Cordillera Vilcabamba, a region dominated by snow-capped 6,000 metre peaks including Pumasillo and Salkantay. Following a former Inca trail which once connected Choquequirao to Machu Picchu, we cross the Totora Pass (4,500m), descend through untouched Andean villages whose Quechua inhabitants still wear traditional dress, and arrive in the cloud-forest-cloaked Urubamba Valley. The trek concludes with a guided tour of Machu Picchu and a well-earned free day in Cusco. This is a fantastic holiday in Peru and a must for adventure seekers who want to follow in the footsteps of the early explorers and for those searching for a genuine 'Inca Trail' experience, but without the crowds. This could well be the best trek in Peru!

BOOK EARLY - Machu Picchu access is limited!

Entry to Machu Picchu is capped by the Peruvian government, and tickets are released on a rolling basis. During peak season (May-September – exactly when this trek departs), popular entry circuits and time slots can sell out three to six months ahead. Because your trek's finale depends on securing that entry permit, **we recommend booking at least 5-6 months before your preferred departure month** to guarantee your place at Machu Picchu.

Trekking to Choquequirao itself is unrestricted, but the government-issued Machu Picchu ticket that completes this journey is not – so early booking isn't just about securing your holiday slot, it's also to ensure you don't miss out on a visit to the most famous Inca citadels of them all. ** See **'Park Fees & Permits'** in the Essential Information for further details on permits.*

Is this holiday for you?

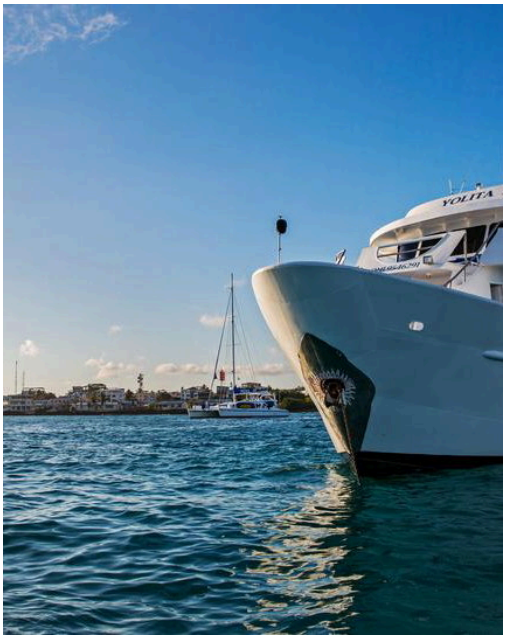
This walking holiday to Choquequirao in Peru is a classic mountain trek and on which you will cover a variety of terrain, from sections of paved Inca highways and rocky mountain passes, to river crossings and cloud forest trails. It is possible that the highest passes might have a light covering of snow! Most of the walking is on well-defined tracks and there are some steep sections of trail, especially on the descents and ascents out of the Apurimac and Rio Blanco Canyons where it can also get quite hot. There are several consecutive long trekking days and some reasonably high passes to cross and we will accumulate more than 5,000 metres of ascent and descent during the course of the holiday. This is a fully supported trek, and you will only be required to carry your day pack each day. Our friendly camp crew will take care of all the camp chores, so whe in camp you can relax, rest and enjoy the views. A good level of fitness is essential, but this is an achievable challenge for any regular hill-walker and the rewards for our trekking efforts will be quiet trails, and chance to explore the ruins of Choquequirao in relative solitude.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Galapagos Islands Cruise

Create the perfect holiday-of-a-lifetime by adding an exploratory cruise of the stunning and unique Galapagos Islands

Needing little in the way of introduction, the Galapagos Islands are one of the most pristine natural environments left on Earth. Over 600 miles separate them from mainland Ecuador, meaning they have enjoyed splendid isolation and provide a habitat for a bewildering array of birds, reptiles, mammals and sea life you simply won't find anywhere else.

We have a variety of ships and itineraries and you can choose from two levels of service - Standard and Upgraded, many of which are more affordable than you may have thought. Itineraries are typically between 7 and 10 days which is the optimum length for visiting this natural paradise. During your cruise you will visit a number of the islands, each distinct and renowned in their own right. Sometimes these will be `dry` landings where you step onto a pier and at others you will make `wet` landings where you reach the island by small inflatable boats and step directly onto the beach. Every boat has a slightly different itinerary but all are focused on seeing as much of the amazing Galapagos wildlife as possible. There is also plenty of time for relaxation and for swimming and snorkelling from the boats. All of our itineraries begin and end in Quito and include the flight out to the islands.

Please contact us for details on availability, itinerary options and pricing. *(Sample itinerary detailed below)*

You might also want to consider our 10 day **Galapagos Islands Adventure,** for a more active and immersive experience of these diverse islands. This shore based trip stays in cosy small hotels and guesthouses, allowing us to experience the beaches and wildlife in the early mornings and evenings when the main tourists have disappeared on their boats. Alternatively, if you are looking for something a more luxurious why not spoil yourself on one of our Galapagos Cruises aboard the luxury Monserrat Motor Yacht.

Book this trip as a stand alone tour or in addition to any of our Latin America holidays.

7 days from
US$3,505 per person



Lake Titicaca by Luxury Train

Travel in style on the luxurious Titicaca scenic train from Cusco to Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca.

Enjoy stunning landscapes, lively regional music and dance, and exquisite onboard cuisine. Along the route you'll make a stop at Abra La Raya, the journey's highest point at 4,300m. After an overnight in Puno we travel to the floating 'Totora' reed islands of the Uros people. Here we watch them harvesting and weaving the reeds. Travelling onto Amantani Island we overnight in a traditional village house being hosted by a local families. This gives us a great insight into the livelihood of these pre-Incan people. We return the following day by boat to Puno and then transfer to the nearby airport of Juliaca. This extension starts in Cusco and ends in Juliaca.

Train departures: Every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday

4 days from
US$860 per person



Lake Titicaca by Luxury Bus

Travel by luxury tour bus from Cusco to Puno, across the Peruvian Andes to the shores of Lake Titicaca.

Forming part of the border between Peru and Bolivia, this sacred lake of the Incas at an elevation of 3830 metres was where the god Viracocha rose and created the sun, moon, stars and the first people. It is the largest navigable lake in the world. After an overnight in Puno we travel to the floating 'Totoras' reed islands of the Uros people. Here we watch them harvesting and weaving the reeds. We continue onto Amantani Islands and stay overnight in a traditional village house hosted by local families, giving us a great insight into the livelihood of these pre-Incan people. We return the following day by boat to Puno and then transfer to the nearby airport of Juliaca. This extension starts in Cusco and ends in Juliaca.

4 days from
US$465 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Cusco Airport transfers on Day 1 and Day 13
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- When camping a full service including food and all equipment (excluding personal equipment)
- Inflatable sleeping mat while camping
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- A guided walking tour of Cusco
- All activities/excursions/entrance fees mentioned except where specified as ‘optional’

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for porters and other trek staff
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Cusco.

Airport transfers are provided for all clients.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 9 lunches and 9 dinners are included in the holiday price. On the first night in Cusco the evening meal will be included following the Trip briefing from the Tour leader. For the remaining nights in Cusco, Ollantaytambo and Aguas Calientes there is a wide range of dining options to suit all tastes and budgets so it is sensible to leave this choice to you so meals other than breakfast are not included. You will need to pay for a total of 3 lunches and 2 dinners. While trekking a full trek service including all meals is provided.

Food & Water

Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Food

On trek the food provided will be a mixture of local and worldwide favourites, with all ingredients purchased in Peru and cooked for us by highly trained staff cooks. The food our cooks are able to produce on trek will be a taste sensation! We will usually be in camp in time for lunch to be served in the mess tent, or the crew will set up the mess tent en route. Both lunches and dinners will be three courses and the menus will be flavoursome and varied. There will be no problem catering for vegetarians.

In Cusco and in Aguas Calientes there is a wide range of restaurants cafes and bars serving excellent and varied cuisine! Meals, apart from breakfast, are not included here so you are free to make your own choice of restaurant and menu. If you are looking to sample some traditional Peruvian fare we can recommend trying Ceviche, a dish of raw fished marinated in citrus juice (the acid in the citrus juice effectively 'cooks' the fish), which is the unofficial national dish of Peru! The name Ceviche actually comes from the Quechua word 'siwichi', meaning fresh fish. Guinea Pig or 'Cuy' is also a common delicacy in the Andes and has been eaten at special occasions since the time of the Incas! Usually served roasted or barbequed, Guinea Pig meat has a gamey taste. It is very high in protein and low in cholesterol.

When it comes to other drinks, before and during your trek we can recommend drinking Mate de Coca. It takes a little time to acclimatise to Cusco's 3400m elevation and one of the things that is said to help acclimatisation is supping this mildly stimulating, greenish and unusual tasting 'tea' made by steeping fresh coca leaves in boiling water. Those looking to celebrate the end of their holiday with an alcoholic beverage (best saved till post trek when you are fully acclimatised!) should seek out a 'Pisco Sour'. This classic South American cocktail, made by mixing the Peruvian liquor Pisco with lime juice, egg white and bitters, is incredibly moreish!

Accommodation

During the holiday there are a total of 3 nights in a comfortable and well located 3* hotel in Cusco, which is a beautifully converted old colonial house and just a short walk from the Plaza de Armas. We will also spend 1 night in a comfortable and well located 3* hotel in Aguas Calientes (Machu Picchu Pueblo).

Whilst trekking there will be a total of 8 nights camping where your will receive a full service from our friendly camp crew. You will sleep in roomy 2 man dome tents, with a porch, and inflatable camping mattresses are provided. All the camp equipment and luggage will be transported between camps by mules, so you need only carry your day pack each day. Our camp crew will erect and dismantle the tents for you, cook, and take care of all the camp chores.

During walking days, having stayed behind to collapse camp, it is usual for the crew and the pack animals to overtake the group during the day and you will usually arrive into camp to find it already established and the kettle on!

In camp, as well as the tents used for sleeping, there will also be a mess tent, with chairs and tables, where the group will dine (and socialise into the evening) and a toilet tent. Hot water for washing will also be provided to you in the mornings and when you arrive at the camp each day.

All accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. It may be possible to pre-book single hotel rooms and a single tent whilst on trek for an additional cost. This must be arranged ahead of departure and is subject to availability. For single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader. Whilst on trek the group will be supported by a full trek crew including camp assistants, cook, baggage animals and their handlers.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 3500 metres. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude. You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Park Fees & Permits

Machu Picchu Permits

If you are booking on one of our trips or an extension that includes a visit to the Machu Picchu Citadel please note the following.

It is important that you BOOK AS EARLY as possible in order to secure a permit. Daily visitor numbers are limited and visitors must be accompanied by a guide.

There are five designated 'circuits' that are walked in a one-way direction, with a maximum of 4 hours allowed within the site. A ticket, issued by the Peru Ministry of Culture, and included in your trip cost, needs to be purchased in advance of your visit. The ticket will stipulate an entry time and one of the 5 circuits. KE will aim to book the most comprehensive Machu Picchu tour available.

Depending on availability you may be able to purchase additional circuits for your visit to Machu Picchu, including Huayna Picchu or Machu Picchu Mountain. Please contact us to check options available if you are interested in extending your visit. Find out more about Machu Picchu Circuits

Tickets are linked to your name and passport number and usually sell out at 4 to 6 months in advance. **It is therefore important for you to supply us with your passport details at the time of booking to allow us to secure the required tickets**.

IMPORTANT: If you change passport between booking and travelling, you must bring your old passport with you, as your ticket will be linked to the passport details you booked with.

Spending Money

We estimate that $300 will be sufficient to cover your requirements including the above mentioned non-included meals, and incidental expenses such as tips for drivers, trek crew and local guides. There are a total of 3 lunches and 3 dinners which you will need to pay for directly and we recommend you budget $10 - $25 dollars per meal. There is no need to purchase local currency (Peruvian Soles) prior to travelling. It is possible to withdraw your money in local currency from ATMs in Cusco. If you are bringing your travel money with you we recommend you bring it in the form of US dollars in cash as this provides for the easiest exchange and in emergency can even be used to purchase goods. Credit cards can be used to purchase goods and to pay for meals in Cusco and in Machu Picchu Pueblo.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is common in Peru, however you must remember that it is voluntary, and how much you give depends on how you feel about the service you have received. Airport baggage carriers are the only exception and tipping is compulsory. These people are unwaged and make a living by carrying your luggage. The general rule is 1 or 2 soles per bag. For hotel staff, tipping is not expected, but is welcome. For hotel porters 1 or 2 soles per bag is reasonable. Drivers of standard taxis do not usually expect a tip. As with most countries, it is usual to tip in restaurants and 10% is expected for good service. For the support crew on trek (guides, cooks, porters etc.), it is recommended that each client contributes around £60 to £80 to a group tipping pool.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. You will be provided with a special duffel bag at the trek briefing in Cusco in which to repack for the trek. Your bag on trek will be carried by porters or pack animals and should not weigh more than 8kg (NOT including your sleeping bag and thermarest). It is possible to leave clothes and other items not required for the trek at the group hotel in Cusco.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the ‘Dates and Prices’ table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Visa Peru

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. When passing through immigration you will need to request a copy of your TAM Migration form. You will need to retain this document and keep it safe, as you will be asked to produce it before you depart Peru. Please note that a paper copy of travel insurance is required for people travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking for 8 or more hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training, and we would suggest that you try to fit in a number of long weekend walks before you depart. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina.

There is little you can do to prepare for the altitude but if you have an excellent level of fitness this can help.

Climate

The Southern Hemisphere winter season in the Andes runs roughly from April through to October and this is the optimum period for trekking in this part of Peru. At this time we can expect the days to be warm and generally sunny. The major influence on regional climate is the altitude. On this holiday you will experience a wide variation in altitide in the initial part of the trek and consequently a big range of temperatures. It will be very hot in the bottom of the Apimurac canyon although we trek most of the lower canyon in the coolest parts of the day. For the majority of ythe holiday you will be near or above 3000 metres and daytime temperatures will range between with temperatures between 12 and 20°C. Evenings can be quite chilly and it is likely that night-time temperatures will fall below freezing at our highest camps.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Books

- The last days of the Incas - Kim MacQuarrie
- The Conquest of the Incas. J. Hemming.
- The Andes are Prickly. Martin Slessor.
- Exploring Cusco. Peter Frost (available in Cusco).
- Inca Cola. Matthew Parish.

Maps

Cuzco Region & Peru South ITMB Publishing - 1:110,000 / 1:1,500,000

A detailed road map of the region around Cuzco with a clear street plan of central Cuzco. Road detail distinguishes paved and unsurfaced roads and includes dirt tracks. Elevation tinting and faint contours at 100m intervals represent the general relief, with spot heights for many peaks. Symbols mark ruins and archaeological sites, and an index has a separate list of Inca ruins. An insert shows Machu Picchu at 1:50,000 and on the reverse is an indexed road map of southern Peru at 1:1,500,000

Cusco Peru Trekking Map - 1:130,000 / 1:160,000

A topographic map from Lima-based publisher, Lima 2000, covering the Inca Trail as well as the Choquequirao trekking route. Full colour, with contours at 100m intervals and showing all main sights and major landmarks.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

YOU MUST BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- Hiking boots

- Socks & underwear
- Trekking trousers*
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Base layer shirts (short sleeve and long sleeve)*
- Casual shirts and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat including neck protection
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Lightweight thermal gloves
- Warmer gloves
- Daypack 30 **
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) - preferably wide-necked Nalgene refillable bottles (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries

- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep kit bag contents dry)
- Small padlock
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), Diamox, painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent (DEET or similar as sandflies and mosquitoes can be a problem), and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OPTIONAL:

- Trekking poles (strongly recommended)
- Trainers or similar for travelling and camp use
- Sleeping bag liner and pillow case
- Spare laces
- Thermal base layer - leggings
- Shorts
- Warm jacket (down)
- Travel clothes
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit – (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

NOTES

A Sleeping bag and Inflatable Camping Mat / Thermarest is provided whilst trekking. Whilst on trek you will be limited to 8kg (not including your sleeping bag or Thermarest) and you will be provided with a suitable duffel bag at the trek briefing in Cusco in which to repack.

You will experience a wide range of temperatures on this trip. It will hot in the Apurimac Canyon, pleasantly warm on the majority of trekking days, and cooler in the evenings with overnight temperatures possibly below freezing at the highest camps.

*We would highly recommend walking in full length trousers and packing at least one light weight long sleeved top to protect against biting insects whilst trekking and camping at lower elevations.

** Daypack - Perurail has a strict policy on hand baggage on the train to the Inca Trail and from Machu Picchu. The weight of your hand baggage on the train must not exceed 5kg and the sum of its dimensions (length + width + height) must not exceed 157 cm. If your daypack exceeds these dimensions it must be placed inside your trek bag for transportation on the train.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Cusco, Peru. A transfer is included from Cusco Airport.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Cusco. Outbound flights will depart the UK in the evening , arriving the following day (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will usually depart Cusco airport in the afternoon of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the afternoon of the following day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

KE have been running the Choquequirao trek for the last 10 years and it is now one of our signature "classic" treks. Over this time we have refined the itinerary to work perfectly, breaking up some of the longer days and using campsites that enable everyone to acclimatise to the altitude and enjoy the visit to Choquequirao and the pass crossings. We also allow a full day to explore the ruins at Choquequirao, so that everyone can explore the main site, the llama terraces and the recently uncovered terraces below the site at Paqchayoc.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 20/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change