

# AN INTRO GUIDE TO THE INCA TRAIL



Global Basecamps  
Authentic Travel



# WHY LISTEN TO US?

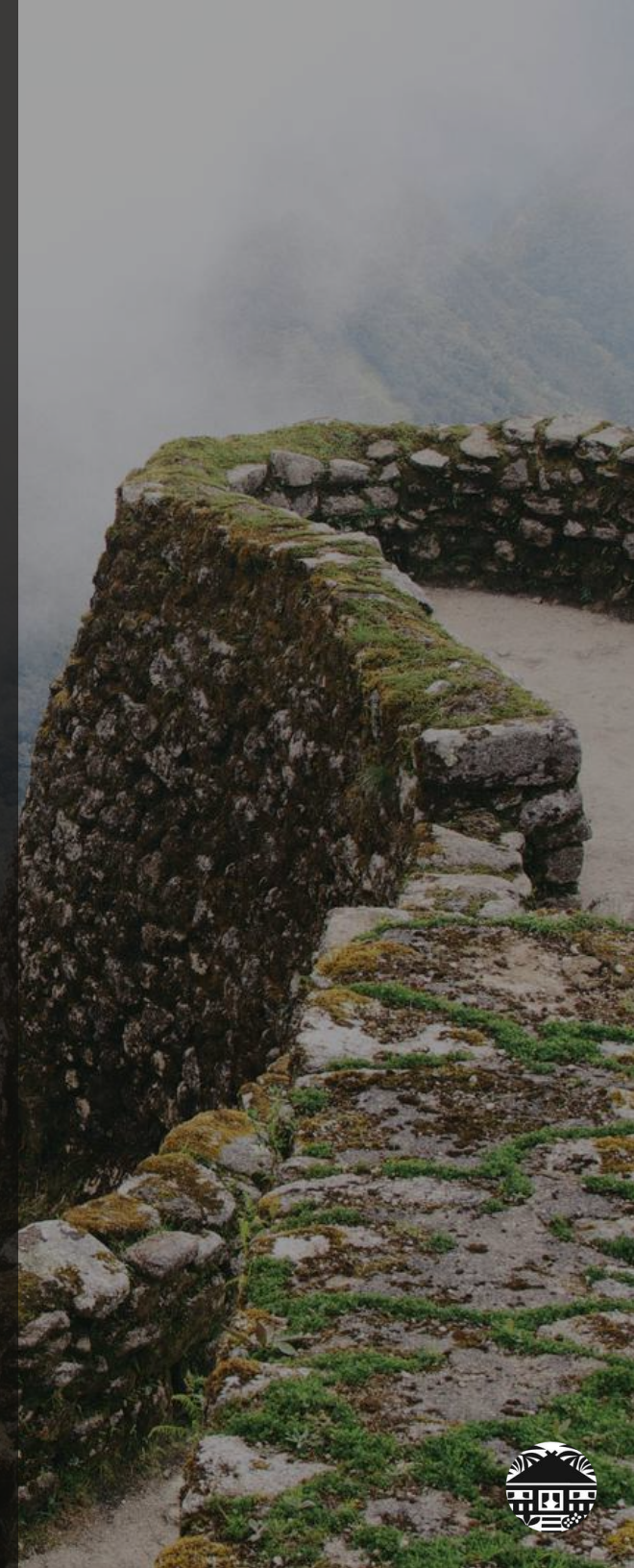
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At Global Basecamps, we have years of experience planning the perfect Peru adventure for groups, families, couples, and solo-backpackers. Peru has been one of our most popular destinations from the beginning, and it's no wonder!

From its culture to its food, to its history, to its natural beauty, there is no other country like it in the world. Even while millions of travelers have traversed its landscapes, Peru feels new every time. Stories drift back to us of wilderness untouched, of Inca sites stumbled upon, and people ready to welcome travelers with open arms.

By far, the most popular activity in Peru is hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. We realize not everyone has the years of experience necessary to whip up the perfect, tailor-made Peru trip ending with the famous four-day trek. So we've created this handy guide to walk you through the planning process through pre-departure prep.

This is the accumulated knowledge of our Peru specialists! As well as their years of experience planning and booking the Inca Trail. Please enjoy!







## INCA TRAIL PERMITS

The Inca Trail is hugely popular and receives a metric ton of demand from travelers from all over the world every year. In the '80s and '90s, what began as a small number of companies offering guides to hike this four-day trek quickly turned into an avalanche of tourism that ultimately threatened the health of the environment, and the priceless Inca ruins along the route.

Today, Peru's Ministry of Culture caps the number of people allowed to hike the trail at 500 per day. Of that number, only 200 are actual tourist hikers, the rest being accompanying guides and porters. Predictably, snagging a permit to hike the trail is a hectic affair. Only a select number of companies are allowed to buy them directly. They are assigned to a specific hiker's name to prevent a black market of permits and sell out quickly.

**If you  
want to  
hike the  
Inca Trail,  
make  
plans in  
advance!**

## ASK THESE QUESTIONS FIRST

- . When am I going?
- . What can I afford? My budget must include hotels before and after the trek. As well as international and domestic flights.
- . Whom am I traveling with? Trail Permits are reserved by name and are non-refundable & non-transferable.
- . How happy/excited will I be to see an alpaca? (Scale; 1-10)
- . Am I physically prepared to hike for four days at high altitude? (If not, can I get prepared?)
- . Is hiking the actual Inca Trail a top priority? Or is Machu Picchu itself the goal. Alternate hikes, as well as train tickets, can be planned more last minute. However, the Inca Trail must be planned months in advance.
- . What else do I want to see in Peru? The Inca Trail is only four days long, and every day needs to count!



# WHEN AM I GOING?

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## DRY SEASON:

The Inca Trail experiences two main seasons, dry and wet. The best and driest time to hike the Inca Trail is between May and September.

Keep in mind that the months of June, July, and August experience temperature drops. While you'll have to dress warmer, these are still great months to go!

This is the first question every traveler must ask themselves when planning their trip. Of course, if you're limited to traveling in the summer or during the holidays, your choices might be limited. If you have a bit more flexibility, here are some guidelines for the best times to hike the Inca Trail.

## Recommendation:

June, July, and August are the most popular times to hike the Trail for a reason. The weather is as good as it gets, but prices are at a premium for hotels throughout the country. If you have a choice, we recommend the shoulder seasons of May and September. The weather is still good and hotel availability is easier to come by.



## WET SEASON:

October through January still see a sold-out Inca Trail every year, though they are the last to fill up. Rains are the norm during this time. But, they make a perfect extra challenge!

### FEBRUARY:

If you're thinking of hiking the Trail in February, think again! Peru's Ministry of Culture closes the Trail annually due to heavy rain. Meanwhile, they also work on preservation projects throughout the Trail's heavily trafficked Inca stone paths.





# WHAT CAN I AFFORD?



## Non-Trek, Big Ticket Items:

- Train ticket back to Cusco
- 2-3 acclimatization days in Cusco prior to the trek
- Roundtrip flights to Cusco from Lima

So naturally, you're wondering: What should my budget be? Below, we've listed some baseline budgets to follow according to your needs. These budgets don't include international or domestic flights, which vary wildly but should be between \$1,000 - \$2,000 total per person.

Budget	Mid	Lux
\$2,000 per person	\$3,000 per person	\$4,000 per person (and up)
Your accommodations pre and post-trek will be basic 3*. Airport transfers included. Trek will be on a set date group departure. No overnight in Machu Picchu Pueblo.	Nicer accommodation options, guided tours in Cusco and the Sacred Valley. Trek will be on shared group basis and also include an overnight stay in Machu Picchu Pueblo.	Private guided tours and luxury hotel options in Cusco, the Sacred Valley, and Machu Picchu Pueblo. Private trek departure allowing for timing flexibility and a more intimate trekking experience.



There's plenty to consider when budgeting your Inca Trail trek. International flights, hotel costs before and after the trek, tipping your guides, porters and other staff. It can quickly add up! If you're backpacking, and not planning with the help of a Global Basecamps Travel Specialist, there are some big-ticket items you'll need to remember.



# SUSTAINABILITY

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**“THE GREATEST  
THREAT TO OUR  
PLANET IS THE BELIEF  
THAT SOMEONE ELSE  
WILL SAVE IT.”**

**-ROBERT SWAN**

Global Basecamps is dedicated to keeping travel sustainable. Sustainable for both the environment and for the local communities that depend on tourism for economic survival.

To this end, there are guidelines we follow every time we plan an Inca Trail trek and ask that if you do not use our services, that you follow them as well.



Make sure your tour operator pays their porters and guides a good living wage. During the trek, these locals should be fed well, and treated well throughout. If you find a particularly good (cheap) deal somewhere, this is likely where that operator is skimping.



Book locally owned hotels, rather than international chains. Local business owners are more likely to re-invest in their communities and build up critical tourism infrastructure.



Don't be messy! Keep refuse and trash to yourself while on the trail, or dispose of it ethically. One of the biggest issues the Inca Trail faces is human waste left behind.



Conserve Inca sites to the best of your ability. These sites are composed of hundreds-year-old stones placed perfectly and carefully by the Inca. Please do not remove, modify, or destroy anything you find on the Trail.





## BEFORE YOU GO

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- Physically prepare! Hike some local trails. Start small and work your way up. Your goal should be to complete a 6+ hour hike in a day with no problems.

- \* Cardio
- \* Stretching
- \* Endurance

- Read up! Get to know where you're going and why the Inca Trail is historically significant. There's plenty of cultural exploration to do before your actual trip!

## PREPARATION

### Easy Reference Packing Guide

- Clothing that is layered: Base layer, mid layer, outer layer
- Sturdy boots with ankle support
- Socks (liner socks) wool socks, protect your feet!
- Trekking poles (bring your own or rent)
- Sleeping bag (Bring your own or rent)
- Day Pack: 15-30L to carry extra layer, camera, water
- Bottle, snacks, etc.
- Water bottle/Hydration Bladder: 2-3L capacity (will be refilled at camp every morning)
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- You will be given a duffel bag to store your belongings for what you'll need on the trek. Your main luggage will be stored in Cusco or the Sacred Valley.
- The weight limit when doing a trek is 7kg per person which is strictly enforced.







## ABOUT US

Global Basecamps is a specialized tour operator that provides unique access to destinations worldwide.

Unlike traditional travel providers, Global Basecamps offers a combination of unprecedented planning and extraordinary service to create the perfect journey while ensuring a positive impact on the environment, culture and economy of your destination.

We hope this guide was helpful, and that you have a better idea of what goes into independently planning your Inca Trail adventure. Keep in mind, however, that regardless of how much you independently plan, only licensed operators are allowed to book your Inca Trail.

"BECAUSE IN THE END,  
YOU WON'T REMEMBER  
THE TIME YOU SPENT  
WORKING IN THE OFFICE  
OR MOWING YOUR LAWN.  
CLIMB THAT MOUNTAIN"

-Jack Kerouac

