

100th Anniversary Historical Andean Train Journey

It was September 24th in the year 1908, when a steam train arrived in Huancayo for the first time, taking almost 40 years to get from the side of the sea in Lima, the City of Kings, over the Andes to Huancayo, the capital of crafts and markets in the Central Andes.

The railway has a long history and features real heroic people and fascinating facts that make this journey the one and only Highest Historical Train Journey in the World.

On September 24th 2008 it will be 100 years since that very first train made the journey up into the mountains. Let us celebrate together, traveling Peru by the amazing railway over and through the Andes to share the pleasure of being in this unique commemorative adventure.

I am proud and very pleased to be personally involved with this train trip as I was born in the train station of Huancayo and now as a tour leader and travel agent I am organizing this centenary railway journey.

Here is the special itinerary that I have designed for train lovers of the world with my best knowledge and desire to provide an extraordinary historical train journey in my country of Peru.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Wednesday 24 September

Activity: Welcome dinner at Hotel Bolivar Lima

Lodging: Hotel Bolivar

Meals Included: Dinner

This is a special dinner to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Highest Historical Railroad in the world.

Also it is the occasion to get together all the members of the **Golden Train Trip Journey** and to share the information related to our special train adventure.

Day 2: Thursday 25 September

Activities: Visit to Desamparados and Monserrate Train Stations.

Lunch at El Cordano Traditional old restaurant

Lima City Tour

Lodging: Hotel Bolivar

Meals Included: Breakfast and lunch

At 9am. We will visit the old Train Stations of Desamparados and Monserrate. After our visit to Desamparados we will enjoy a delicious lunch at El Cordano, one of the old classic restaurants that witnessed many welcomes and farewells.

We go back to the Hotel for a little rest and a recharge of energy, then we meet again at 5pm to enjoy our special City Tour. Lima is full of incredible surprises.

Our dinner will be at an old pair of coaches turned in a beautiful restaurant in Barranco.

Day 3: Friday 26 September

Activities: Train Trip Lima – Huancayo

Lodging: Hotel Turismo

Meals included: Breakfast and lunch

We have breakfast at 6am then leave to the train station at 6:30am. We start early as we have to catch the train to Huancayo at 7am.

The trip starts at almost sea level and climbs to an altitude of over 4,782 metres!

This is the most interesting part of the journey. You will marvel at the engineering achievements, the rugged landscape and the challenge to make it possible.

Also we can admire the courage that took our people together with Chinese and Chileans to work together for one objective and they did it!

This railroad begins in the Port of Callao and is standard gauge (1.435 m) and 535 km long.

We will pass through 69 tunnels, over 58 bridges and 6 switch-backs with a very steep gradient, to climb the Andean mountains in approximately five hours.

You will be provided with maps and relevant information to enjoy every minute of this enthralling trip.

At Galera Station we will stop for a gasp of oxygen (there is not much at this height) and then we will continue our journey “down hill” to La Oroya, on to Jauja and finally to Huancayo.

Day 4: Saturday 27 September

Activities: Train Trip to Huancavelica

Visit to Santa Barbara mine

Lodging: Hotel Presidente

Meals included: Breakfast and lunch

We enjoy another early breakfast at 5:30am then we go to the Huancavelica Train Station to take our train at 6:30am.

This railroad is 148 km long and 0.914m gauge. It was begun in 1908 and opened to traffic in 1926.

This is the only remaining train that has not been privatized in the country. It is used by many locals and is known as Tren Macho. Before privatization all trains in the Andes used to be like this train trip, chaotic and unreliable but full of character.

This is your chance to experience a trip to the past in a very close encounter with local life. Inside the coaches you will see singers, musicians, food sellers with all the colors and flavors that your eyes will not believe! It is 5 hours of traveling experience to Huancavelica, a historical city that once was a very wealthy city due to the mercury mine called Santa Barbara.

On arrival we rest for a while and after lunch we will take our time to visit Santa Barbara Mines Known as the mine of death.

Day 5: Sunday 28 September

Activities: Rail car trip to Huancayo

Visit to La Maestranza in Chilca Huancayo

Visit to Huancayo traditional Sunday Market

Lodging: Hotel Turismo

Meals included: Breakfast and lunch

We will have a special chance to take the Sunday train activities and enjoy a ride on the railcars. The trip this time is shorter but is full of interesting features. We will have the railcars exclusively for our group and will be able to take pictures of the trains coming and going from Huancayo and Huancavelica and the friendly local people waving to us.

On arrival at Huancayo we will visit La Maestranza, the old workshop still operating with tools and machinery normally available only in train museums. Here some old train workers will welcome us and will share a special lunch with us: Pachamanca. After our special lunch we will have an opportunity to visit the traditional Sunday Market or just to go to our hotel to rest.

Day 6: Monday 29 September

Activities: Historical Bus trip to Lima

Lodging: Hotel Bolivar

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

We will take a bus to Lima at 9am. Our trip will have some stops at Jauja Train Station then on to La Oroya where we will also visit the Train Station and the old coaches

On arrival at La Cima (The Top) near Ticlio we will stop at the Ernest Malinowsky Monument where we will place our flowers and pay acknowledgment to the Polish Engineer who made this amazing railroad possible.

We will also stop at some of the bridges, tunnels and amazing switch-backs to take photographs and review facts about the construction of the railway. We will arrive in Lima in daylight to get to our Hotel, have a rest and then enjoy a special dinner.

Day 7: Tuesday 30 September

Activities: Flight to Cusco

Cusco City Tour

Lodging: Casa Andina Classic

Meals included: Breakfast and lunch

At 9am we depart from Lima for Cusco, the old capital of the Inca Empire. On arrival we will be transferred to our hotel in the quiet area of San Blas. After settling in we go to a welcome lunch.

During the afternoon we will enjoy a visit to the most amazing buildings in Cusco and around the region, including the Temple of the Sun Koricancha, the Cathedral and of course an Inca super special just before sunset: Saccayhuaman.

We can also visit a special area to learn about how silver is made into jewelry and Alpaca and Vicuña wools into the amazing art of textiles.

Day 8: Wednesday 1 October

Activities: Visit to Cusco train Stations

Afternoon free to explore Cusco

Lodging: Casa Andina Classic

Meals included: Breakfast

After breakfast we visit the Wanchaq Train Station and also the famous San Pedro train Station. We will have the time to enjoy and explore around our favorite coaches and operating locomotives.

After lunch we will have free time to enjoy Cusco. A map and useful information will be provided for you to enjoy the capital of the Inca Empire.

Day 9: Thursday 2 October**Activities: Train Trip to Machu Picchu****Visit to Machu Picchu****Lodging: Casa Andina Classic****Meals included: Breakfast lunch and dinner!**

After a delicious breakfast we go to Poroy Train Station to embark on the most luxurious train adventure - The Hiram Bingham special train service.

Let us read the operator words about their service:

Departing from Poroy Station (20 mins from Cusco centre) at 9.00am the Hiram Bingham gives a more leisurely start to the day than traditional departures. Brunch is served on board and guides are present to explain points of interest on route, as well as on arrival at the ancient citadel of Machu Picchu

An afternoon tea is served in the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge located just steps from the entrance to the ruins, and once back on board for the 6.15pm departure, pre-dinner cocktails are served, accompanied by live entertainment, and afterwards a 4 course, a la carte dinner is presented in the dining cars.

Among the many superb design features of the coaches are the large, comfortable seats and extra wide tables. Nearly 3 metres longer and 30 cm wider than others on the same route, these coaches are among the most spacious and comfortable in the world.

We will visit Machu Picchu and enjoy the beauty of this fascinating place with local guides that will explain the history and facts, of one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Back on our train we will enjoy some drinks and a superb dinner on board.

Day 10: Friday 3 October**Activities: Free day in Cusco****Lodging: Casa Andina Classic****Meals included: Breakfast**

We take a free day to relax and enjoy Cusco at our own pace. There are many galleries and markets to visit and enjoy some of the Andean cuisine.

If you need to have a companion to help you we will be glad to organize a bilingual assistant for you. Please let us know in advance if you would like this service.

Day 11: Saturday 4 October

Activities: Train Trip to Puno (departure: 9:00am)

Lodging: Casa Andina Classic - Puno Plaza

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Another spectacular rail journey begins at Cusco and runs south to the historic city of Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca.

The gentle climb is breathtaking. The magnificent Andean mountains that tower over the deep valleys of the meandering Huatanay River dominate the first half of the journey. The railway then reaches the gentler, rolling Andean Plains, where vicuña and alpaca are often seen. Sightseeing while on board the train is now easier than ever, thanks to the new glass-walled observation car.

Excellent food is available which includes a three-course lunch, followed by coffee served in the observation car.

The journey is broken by a scenic stop at La Raya, which is also the highest point on the route. A small exhibition of local crafts has been arranged by PeruRail at this juncture.

Here is a more detailed description of this journey:

JOURNEY Cusco - Puno

Cusco - from Cusco, the train heads south-east, following the Huatanay River through green fields dotted with willow trees and eucalyptus groves, and passing outlying communities gathered around colonial churches.

25 km from Cusco - the train passes through Oropesa, an early-rising community whose forty-seven bakeries have provided Cusco with its daily bread for generations.

32 km - before reaching Lake Muina, the train turns to the left, crossing the valley road, to join the Vilcanota River at Huambutio as it plunges sharply into its gorge before widening into the great Urubamba canyon.

40 km - at Rumicolca, we are close to the great stone gateway of the same name, which for the Incas, silently guarded the southern approach to Cusco. For the much earlier Wari culture it served as an aqueduct, channeling water from the picturesque Laguna de Lucre to their walled city at Pikillacta.

45 km - the church at Andahuaylillas is one of the jewels in Cusco's colonial crown and boasts a magnificent series of murals and superb colonial-era paintings, all on diverse religious themes.

59 km - at Urcos lies the lake which gives the village its name. Urcos is both a popular spot for weekenders from Cusco and as local legend suggests, the repository of Inca gold hidden there forever by local chieftains, anxious to prevent the Spanish from melting down their sacred objects.

80 km - the two villages of Cusipata and Checacupe (at 99 km) hide unexpected treasures of both pre-Columbian and colonial origin, from fine Inca and pre-Inca remains, to yet another ornately decorated 17th century church.

120 km - at Raqchi, just before the San Pedro railway station, the remains of the great temple of Viracocha, the creator god, can just be seen to the left of the train. John Hemming described Raqchi as "probably the largest roofed building ever built by the Incas". Seventeen km beyond San Pedro, the train stops at Sicuani, a bustling island of commerce amid a barren landscape. Aymara women ferry their goods around this important market town on nimbly chauffeured taxi-tricycles, or sit impassively before their wares awaiting a buyer.

186 km - at Marangani, where an English-style manor house built in the last century is still home to the descendents of the wool barons who established the region's only textile factory more than one hundred years ago, Cuzco's fertile hills give way to the high plain known as the Altiplano.

The train continues to climb for another 27 km, past the thermal baths at Aguas Calientes to La Raya, 210 km from Puno. At 4321 metres above sea level this is the highest point on the journey, a cold, remote place whose surrounding snow-draped peaks are often shrouded by mist or fine rain, and whose eerie silence is at least partly attributable to eardrums blocked by the dizzying altitude. Crossing this great watershed, the train travels across a sea of seemingly-endless coarse grassland through villages lost to time for all but the Coca Cola company and local breweries.

281 km - the train reaches Juliaca, a commercial railway-junction town of around 150,000 inhabitants, whose rampant buying and selling seems at times to virtually spill onto the tracks and force the train to pick its way through their stalls.

Juliaca is the last stop on this journey through Andean highland culture before reaching Puno (3855 metres), an expanding, low-roofed university town spread around an austere cathedral, which, since its foundation in 1668, has strengthened its tenuous grip on the shores of Lake Titicaca by gradually scaling the surrounding hills.

We arrive in Puno at 4 pm. and go to our hotel then get together for dinner.

Day 12: Sunday 5 October

Activities: Titicaca Lake Tour

Lodging: Casa Andina Classic - Puno Plaza

Meals included: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

A full day visit to Lake Titicaca includes the floating Islands of the Uros and also the incredible Taquile people in their hand-made homes of stone and mud. We will take our private boat and enjoy a memorable time with the people of the highest navigable lake in the world.

We will have lunch at Taquile Island where also we will see a demonstration about weaving and ancient ways that the locals still use to produce their crops.

After lunch and a walk we will go back to our boat to take our trip back to Puno, where we will arrive before sunset.

Day 13: Monday 6 October

Activities: Trip to Sillustani, visit local homes at the altiplano.

Flight to Lima from Juliaca

Lodging: Casa Andina Classic - Miraflores

We get moving after breakfast to an important location: Sillustani 32 km. from Puno, to see old pre-Inca funerary towers on the side of Lake Umayo. Then we will visit homes of the people on the altiplano to learn about their traditional way of living.

When we arrive at Juliaca airport it will be time to board our plane to Lima. On arrival we will go to the Casa Andina Hotel in a different area of Lima closer to our next activities.

Day 14: Tuesday 7 October

Activities: Early visit to Callao Train Workshop

Visit Parque de la Amistad Steam Train

Visit to Barranco Electric Tram

Lodging: Casa Andina Classic – Miraflores

After breakfast we will take our transport to Callao Seaport to visit a very special workshop which still is the most important place to repair the trains from Ferrovias.

This visit will be a memorable one, for not many train lovers in the world get the privilege to enjoy a place like this.

After our visit we will enjoy a lunch with a view on the seaside at famous La Rosa Nautica Restaurant.

For a dessert we will go to Barranco to visit a restored tram that used to be part of the old Lima Electric Tram operating a long time ago to link Barranco with Miraflores.

Then we go to Santiago de Surco to visit a Steam Train brought from an old Hacienda in the far north to keep motivating and informing little and big children about the beauty of trains.

Day 15: Wednesday 8 October

Activities: Visit the Lima METRO Atocongo / Villa El Salvador

Visit the Industrial area at Villa El Salvador

Lodging: Casa Andina Classic – Miraflores

The history of trains in Peru started a long time ago and still goes on!

Today is the last day in our special **Historical Andean Train Journey**

Adventure so we will witness the huge effort undertaken to restore a train, the many difficulties faced and the long process involved.

The train, Atocongo to Villa El Salvador is a special opportunity to witness a project that has already taken 20 years!

The visit to Villa El Salvador is also an eye opener for the experiences on this trip where we can understand a country not only from the perspective of the tourist but from the traveler inside the real country.

After lunch we have a rest and meet again to for our special farewell dinner at a spectacular place: La Huaca Puccllana Restaurant