

Machu Picchu: Before You Come, Once You Are Here, What to Expect, and What They Don't Tell You

Before You Come

Machu Picchu is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, and for good reason. The ancient Inca city is perched high in the Andes Mountains, surrounded by stunning scenery. But before you start planning your trip, there are a few things you need to know.



MOVING TO AUSTRALIA: Before You Come, Once You Are Here, What To Expect, What They Don't Tell You

by DOUG SCOTT

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1. Book your tickets in advance.

Machu Picchu is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the number of visitors is strictly limited. This means that you need to book your tickets well in advance, especially if you're planning to visit during the peak season

(May-October). You can book your tickets online through the official website of the Peruvian Ministry of Culture.

2. Get in shape.

The hike to Machu Picchu is not for the faint of heart. The Inca Trail is a 26-mile (42-kilometer) hike that takes four to five days to complete. The trail is steep and rugged, and you'll need to be in good physical condition to make it. If you're not sure if you're up for the challenge, there are other ways to get to Machu Picchu, such as by train or helicopter.

3. Pack for all types of weather.

The weather in Machu Picchu can be unpredictable, so it's important to pack for all types of weather. Be sure to bring a raincoat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat. You may also want to bring a warm jacket, as the nights can be cold.

4. Be prepared for altitude sickness.

Machu Picchu is located at an altitude of 2,430 meters (7,970 feet). This can cause altitude sickness, which can lead to symptoms such as headaches, nausea, and vomiting. To avoid altitude sickness, it's important to acclimatize to the altitude gradually. You can do this by spending a few days in Cusco, which is located at a lower altitude than Machu Picchu.

Once You Are Here

Once you've arrived in Machu Picchu, there are a few things you need to do to make the most of your experience.

1. Visit the ruins.

The ruins of Machu Picchu are the main attraction, and they're definitely worth a visit. Take some time to explore the ruins and learn about the history of the Inca Empire. You can also hire a guide to give you a more in-depth tour.

2. Hike to Huayna Picchu.

Huayna Picchu is a mountain that overlooks Machu Picchu. The hike to the top is challenging, but it's worth it for the stunning views. Be sure to book your tickets in advance, as the number of visitors is limited.

3. Visit the Sun Gate.

The Sun Gate is a ceremonial gate that was built by the Incas. It's located at the top of a steep staircase, and it offers stunning views of Machu Picchu and the surrounding mountains.

4. Take a train ride through the Sacred Valley.

The Sacred Valley is a beautiful valley that's located near Machu Picchu. You can take a train ride through the valley and see the ruins of other Inca cities, such as Ollantaytambo and Pisac.

What to Expect

Here are a few things you can expect when you visit Machu Picchu:

- **Crowds:** Machu Picchu is a popular tourist destination, so be prepared for crowds. The best time to visit is during the off-season (November-April).
- **Altitude:** Machu Picchu is located at a high altitude, so be prepared for altitude sickness. Acclimatize to the altitude gradually by spending

a few days in Cusco before visiting Machu Picchu.

- **Weather:** The weather in Machu Picchu can be unpredictable, so be prepared for all types of weather. Bring a raincoat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat.
- **Costs:** Machu Picchu is a relatively expensive destination. Be sure to budget for the cost of tickets, food, accommodation, and transportation.

What They Don't Tell You

Here are a few things that they don't tell you about Machu Picchu:

- **The hike to Machu Picchu is hard.** The Inca Trail is a challenging hike, and it's important to be in good physical condition before attempting it. Be sure to train for the hike and break in your hiking boots.
- **Machu Picchu is crowded.** Machu Picchu is a popular tourist destination, so be prepared for crowds. The best time to visit is during the off-season (November-April).
- **Machu Picchu is expensive.** Machu Picchu is a relatively expensive destination. Be sure to budget for the cost of tickets, food, accommodation, and transportation.
- **Altitude sickness can be serious.** Altitude sickness can be a serious condition, and it's important to be aware of the symptoms. Acclimatize to the altitude gradually by spending a few days in Cusco before visiting Machu Picchu.

Machu Picchu is a once-in-a-lifetime destination, and it's definitely worth the effort to get there. Just be sure to do your research and prepare for the challenges. With a little planning, you can have an amazing experience at Machu Picchu.



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