

WEAVING WORDS & WOMEN Cusco and the Sacred Valley, Peru

April 14 - 27, 2023

This itinerary is designed to allow for a relaxed and flexible pace with plenty of opportunities for cultural interaction, creative facilitation, writing and rejuvenation, and for your own individual needs. Lodging is double occupancy, in clean, comfortable accommodations with private bath. Single rooms can be arranged for a single supplement fee. Please note that international travel is always subject to unforeseen circumstances and lodging locations or other details of this itinerary may change.

DAY ONE – Travel (Friday, April 14)

Peru begins to weave her way into your heart! Arrive in Lima in the evening, claim your luggage and walk to the adjacent Wyndham Costa Del Sol Airport hotel. Dinner on your own (the hotel has dining options but hours may vary). No group activities planned for this evening since most arrive late. We'll be flying to Cusco in the morning.

DAY TWO - Arrive in the Sacred Valley (Saturday, April 15)

Meet Page and the group for a morning flight together to Cusco, where we will meet up with Brenda and our driver. We'll have a light lunch near the Plaza de Armas in Cusco and exchange money to Peruvian soles before driving in our private bus to the small Andean town of Pisac, our portal into the Sacred Valley. The hour drive down into the valley will join the Urubamba River at the edge of Pisac, where mountains rise on every side. We will stay for two nights across from the main plaza at the Pisac Inn, a cozy family-run hotel in the center of the village.

DAY THREE – Pisac Archeological Site and Shamanic Ceremony (Sunday, April 16)

Breakfast is served on the quaint second-floor balcony, overlooking the famous Pisac market. If you are an early riser, you may have already explored the plaza's Thursday market, which is filled with stands of colorful produce, people from the nearby mountain villages bargaining and trading, and beautiful textiles and jewelry for sale. After breakfast, we'll take a backroad by taxi to the ancient Incan archeological site above Pisac, one of the best archeological sites in the region with sweeping views of the Sacred Valley. We'll break into two small groups, each with a local guide, to learn about the intricate Incan stonework, unique farming terraces, and the Quechua people who lived and worshipped here. After the tour, you will have a choice to hike down to town through the site, visiting the dramatic Temple of the Sun, or taxi back to town, perhaps to visit the botanical garden, explore the market, have a massage, or find a quiet place to journal, allowing the colorful sights and sounds of this Andean village to flow onto the page. Late afternoon, we'll gather for more creative inspiration and a despacho, the traditional Incan ceremony of intention and letting go, led by a local Quechuan shaman. Afterwards, we'll enjoy a relaxing dinner at a nearby restaurant.

DAY FOUR - Sol y Luna, en route to Ollantaytambo (Monday, April 17)

After breakfast, we will gather for our creative focus before embarking for Ollantaytambo following the Rio Urubamba past the fertile fields of farms tilled by oxen, enjoying the chance to take in the Sacred Valley during the hour and a half hour drive. We have a special stop at Sol y Luna in Urubamba for a culinary lunch and some entertainment with a taste of elegant Peruvian Paso horsemanship. In the afternoon, we will arrive in the town of Ollantaytambo, where we will settle in at Apu Lodge for the next four nights. Page will lead us in a creative session before dinner, helping us sprinkle our journaling with the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures of the day. Dinner will be in town, giving us a chance to explore this ancient Incan town.

DAY FIVE – Ollantaytambo Archeological Site (Tuesday, April 18)

Ollantaytambo is an intimate town, with ancient cobblestoned passageways that wind through its corridors, and an enormous archeological site that rises just at the edge of town. This was the last stronghold of the Inca leader Manco Yupanqui. In the morning, we will explore these Inca ruins and then have lunch at a local restaurant. The afternoon will allow for free time to explore or relax in Apu Lodge’s beautiful private garden before we regather for a creative session and dinner. We’ll learn a few basic phrases of Quechua to prepare us to communicate with the Quechua people in the villages we will visit.

DAY SIX – Pumamarca Archeological Site - Hike, Drive or Horseback Ride (Wed., April 19)

Today has some fun options. In the morning, we will journey up to the quiet, lesser known archeological site of Pumamarca, with splendid views overlooking the Patacancha and Yuracmayo Rivers. You may take the van or ride horseback (for a modest additional fee) on the small but sturdy Peruvian mountain horses. Once reunited at Pumamarca, our guide will share with us the history of this sacred Incan site. After time to reflect and journal, we will walk out of the ruins and gather for a picnic lunch. Then, you have a choice to either hike or take the van back to town, where we’ll have free time to journal, nap, or wander on our own. We will gather before dinner at the lodge to weave together our adventures, reflections, and tall tales.

DAY SEVEN - A Day with the Women Weavers of Patacancha (Thursday, April 20)

We will journey to the weaving center overlooking the remote village of Patacancha to immerse ourselves for a day in the lives of women who are practicing the traditional art of weaving on backstrap looms. After a morning of learning about the art and history of Andean weaving and watching the women work, we will have individual “bracelet weaving” lessons before gathering for a Pachamanca—the traditional meal of earth-cooked local potatoes and meat—which we will share with the women and their children. This will be our first, unique opportunity to buy beautiful weavings from local artisans who have raised the wool, spun and dyed the yarn, and

woven the fabrics themselves. Our second opportunity will be when we visit Chinchero on Day Ten.

DAY EIGHT - (Friday, April 21)

Midmorning, we will take the Vista Dome train along the spectacular Rio Urubamba as it thunders and crashes towards the Amazon jungle and Machu Picchu, one of the *New Seven Wonders of the World*. We'll have lunch and spend the afternoon in Aguas Calientes, also known as Machu Picchu Pueblo, where we will stay for the next two nights. We will have a creative session and options to visit the Machu Picchu Museum, explore the market, or enjoy the hot springs. We will regather for dinner nearby.

DAY NINE - Machu Picchu (Saturday, April 22)

Today is our Machu Picchu day! We will take the bus up to the archeological site and again break into two small groups. Our local guides will explain the complex culture of this Inca citadel and its intricate and ancient stonework. We will linger whenever possible to write and have the option to hike to the Sun Gate. After exploring Machu Picchu, we will have a buffet lunch and then return to our lodging in Aguas Calientes, with dinner in town.

DAY TEN – Chinchero Weaving Collective, and Cusco (Sunday, April 23)

We will take an early morning train back to Ollantaytambo and transfer to our private bus, which will take us to the mountain town of Chinchero. After a light lunch hosted by Nilda Callanaupa, renowned expert in Andean weaving, we'll spend time at Nilda's Center for Traditional Textiles. Here, we will learn about the natural dying techniques that Nilda has helped to revive, and watch demonstrations by the Quechua master weavers and the younger women learning this ancient art. After a few minutes of quiet time to journal while the experience is fresh, we'll continue to Cusco, the former heart of the Incan empire—a unique blend of Incan culture and the rich architecture of the conquering Spaniards. We'll lodge at Casa San Blas, a charming boutique hotel located in the artistic heart of the city's historic district. We'll dine nearby at one of Cusco's wonderful restaurants.

DAY ELEVEN – Exploring Cusco (Monday, April 24)

Today, after gathering for a little creative inspiration, we will explore the bustling town of Cusco, taking the morning to do a walking tour of the beautiful plazas, Incan stone foundations, and the Spanish architecture built on top of this ancient city. We will meet up for lunch with young women who are pursuing their educational dreams through the Peruvian Hearts organization. In the afternoon, we're on our own to pursue our unique interests, which may include a visit to the Incan temple of Koricancha, a visit to the many museums and galleries, journaling, a relaxing massage, aromatherapy treatment, Shiatsu, or more (fee-based pampering arranged by Casa San Blas). Dinner at another excellent Peruvian restaurant.

DAY TWELVE - Exploring Cusco (Tuesday, April 25)

A morning to unwind and follow your interests after we gather briefly for some creative focus. We will arrange for a guide if you are interested in exploring Sacsayhuaman archeological site on the hill above Cusco. Or you may choose to visit the Mercado Central, where hundreds of women crouch next to their blankets and stands filled with vegetables, potatoes, breads, and meats. Or visit the impressive cathedral on the Plaza de Armas, the Chocolate Museum, cozy up in a café to write, or schedule a massage. In the afternoon, we'll gather as a group for creative reflection, and a celebration of our time in Peru, weaving together our memories of the land, the women, and the culture. We will celebrate the cuisine of Peru at our final dinner together.

DAY THIRTEEN - Fly to Lima for your connecting flight (Wednesday, April 26)

Breakfast offers a chance for us to tie together the last threads of this amazing journey. You will already have scheduled your return flight (from Cusco to Lima) to arrive at the Lima airport with ample connection time for your flight home. Most flights to the States leave Lima in the late afternoon or evening and arrive the following morning.

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**NOTE:** *If you'd like to extend your stay in Cusco for a day or two, just let us know and we can book your room for those extra nights.*

#### **DETAILS:**

**Meals:** Breakfasts and dinners will be restaurant or catered meals. Lunches will be either restaurant meals or market/ picnic style. All non-alcoholic drinks are included with meals. Participants will provide their own drinking water, extra snacks or treats if needed, and alcoholic beverages if desired.

#### **Lodging:**

Lima: travel Day 1;

Pisac: Days 2, 3

Ollantaytambo: Days 4, 5, 6, 7

Aguas Calientes: Day 8, 9;

Cusco: Days 10, 11, 12

**Transportation:** Ground transportation is included, beginning and ending in Cusco. Ground transportation will be a combination of chartered bus, public bus, train, and taxis.

*Not included are the round-trip flights to Lima, nor the round-trip Lima/Cusco flights.*