

search _____
🔍

HOME

ABOUT

DESTINATIONS

ROAM

THRIVE

CONTACT

PRINTS



PUGLIA MAP

roam & thrive.



Roam & Thrive

WELCOME

Roam & Thrive is designed to help you wander slowly and consciously. We're all about slow and mindful travel, conscious luxury, nature and holistic wellness. Jump right in and get inspired!

MEET ALEX



[PERU](#) [SOUTH AMERICA](#) [TRAVEL TIPS & TRICKS](#)

How to Get to Machu Picchu, Peru's World Wonder

Perched high in the misty Andes Mountains, Machu Picchu is more than just a destination—it's a journey into the heart of ancient Incan civilization and one of the world's most iconic wonders.

The allure of this UNESCO World Heritage Site lies not only in its breathtaking ruins and dramatic landscapes but also in the adventure of reaching it. From the vibrant city of Cusco, through winding mountain passes, to the cloud-kissed peaks, every step toward Machu Picchu is steeped in history, natural beauty, and a sense of awe.

Whether you choose to trek the legendary Inca Trail or opt for a more leisurely approach by train, getting to Machu Picchu is as unforgettable as the site itself.

In this guide, we'll explore the luxurious and adventurous ways to embark on this once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage, ensuring that your journey is as magnificent as the destination.



*This 'how to get to Machu picchu' post contains affiliate links meaning I might make a small profit if you choose to book at no extra cost to you. This helps me to keep providing you with top-quality content for free.

Before departing for Machu Picchu make sure you have your entrance ticket and your passport. Be aware that at the time of booking your entrance ticket, you would have selected an entrance time so make sure to plan all your transport accordingly.

Train times vary depending on the service and from Aguas Calientes, it's another 40 minutes minimum to the ruins themselves.

Different Ways to Travel to Machu Picchu

Trekking

One of the many ever-popular ways to get to Machu Picchu is by doing a trek. There are many multi-day treks to choose from but there are two that prove most popular; The Inca Trail and the Salkantay trek.

Both hikes to Machu Picchu are legendary, and weave through stunning mountain scenery, ancient Incan ruins, and lush cloud forests. Known for their challenging yet rewarding paths, the multi-day hikes offers a deep connection to the region's history and culminates in the awe-inspiring sight of Machu Picchu at sunrise—a moment that makes every step worth the effort.



Instagram



[FOLLOW @ROAMANDTHRIVE ON INSTAGRAM](#)

SEARCH R&T

SEARCH



AFFILIATE DISCLAIMER

Roam and Thrive is a member of several affiliate programs. Throughout this site, you might find

Many agencies in Cusco offer the treks- some tend to be better than others. Make sure to go with a reliable and recommended agency. **This 4 Day Inca Trail hike** is what we recommend.



Taking the Train to Machu Picchu

If you're not up for trekking or simply don't have the time for a multi-day trek the only option left into Machu Picchu is by train. The closest town and station to the ruins is Aguas Calientes, which is sometimes called Machu Picchu Pueblo (town).

Aguas Calientes isn't accessible by road so you cannot get a bus here from anywhere in the Sacred Valley.

There are two companies that run services to Machu Picchu; **Peru Rail** and **Inca Rail**. Peru Rail offers trains between Machu Picchu and Cusco (Poroy) with options to get on/off at Urubamba and Ollantaytambo. Inca Rail runs services from Ollantaytambo, which include the transfer from Cusco to Ollantaytambo by bus.

Both companies have a variety of different trains at very different price brackets to choose from.

Note that while still being labeled as Cusco, some services will depart from Poroy, a small town in the Cusco region that is 20 minutes away by car or taxi from the center of Cusco.

Machu Picchu train times:

affiliate links from which I may make a small commission if you choose to click or purchase something, at no extra cost to you. This small income allows me to continue providing you with quality, insightful and most importantly, free content.

FIND THE PERFECT STAY

Booking.com

Search hotels

From cozy country homes to funky ci...

Destination name

Tulum

Check-in date

30 Sep, Mo



Check-out date

5 Oct, Sa



Search

Powered by **travelpayou**

RECENT POSTS



7 Top Spa Resorts and Wellness Retreats in Oregon

SEPTEMBER 23, 2024



Planning the Perfect Oregon Coast Day Trip from Portland

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024



15 Wonderful Things to Do in Cannon Beach, Oregon

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024



Understanding Functional Wellness: The Ultimate Guide

AUGUST 29, 2024



Winter in Portland: Top Activities, Weather & Tips

AUGUST 20, 2024

Cusco (San Pedro) – Aguas Calientes (Inca Rail): 4.5 hours

Cusco (Poroy) – Aguas Calientes (Peru Rail): 3.5 hours (including transfer to Poroy station)

Urubamba (Tambo del Inka) – Aguas Calientes (Peru Rail): 2.5 hours

Ollantaytambo – Aguas Calientes (Peru Rail & Inca Rail): 1.5 hours

Peru Rail Trains and Services

Peru Rail has four different trains serving Machu Picchu and depending on the level of service and luxury you're after, prices vary accordingly. The most spectacular train journey which we recommend is the **Hiram Bingham, A Belmond Train** if your Peru budget can stretch that far.

The Vistadome Observatory has exceptionally large windows; the sides and also half of the roof are glass, meaning you have a better view of your surroundings during the journey, and trust me, you'll want to be looking out of the window.

The views on the way to Machu Picchu are spectacular- steep, jagged peaks surrounded by lush, wild jungle.

You'll want a window seat and this is one train journey you're not going to want to fall asleep on. Both the Hiram Bingham and the Vistadome Observatory Service include food and drinks as well as live music and other entertainment.

Inca Rail Trains and Services

Inca Rail runs trains from Ollantaytambo with bimodal buses taking passengers to Ollantaytambo from Cusco. Inca Rail's best service is The First Class and also the 360 which is all about the views, similar to Peru Rail's Vistadome Observatory.

All trains take 3 hours and 50 minutes from Cusco, about 3 hours from Urubamba, and 1 hour and 40 minutes from Ollantaytambo.

When it came down to choosing which train company to use over the other, for most it's about the train times and making sure they line up with your Machu Picchu ticket entrance time.

As both rail companies are extremely competitive with one another, prices tend to be similar and most people end up choosing the service that best fits their ticket's entry time and their schedule.

It's a good idea to check both companies' websites for schedules before booking even your Machu Picchu entrance ticket so you can see what you might be



Current Location

PUGLIA, ITALY

Shop My Current Faves



Onyx + Rose Pure Bloom Mint
Broad Spectrum CBD Oil



LARQ Insulated Self-Cleaning
Water Bottle

dealing with and be able to book your train of preference and entry time accordingly.

It is possible to reserve your trip to Machu Picchu with one company and come back with another.

Check **Peru Rail train schedules here**, and **Inca Rail train times here**.

Make sure to book your train ticket in advance and not on the day of travel as chances are it will be sold out. This is especially the case during high season when I would recommend booking at least a couple of months in advance.



How to Get to Machu Picchu from Cusco

Getting to Machu Picchu from Cusco offers several routes, each with its own unique charm and level of adventure. The most popular option is to take a scenic train ride from Cusco or the nearby town of Ollantaytambo, which winds through the Sacred Valley, offering breathtaking views of the Andes before arriving in Aguas Calientes, the gateway to Machu Picchu.

If you're looking to take a train directly to Machu Picchu from Cusco, generally Peru Rail is best.

For those seeking an active approach, the Inca Trail offers an unforgettable trekking experience, taking four days to traverse ancient paths, high mountain passes, and dense forests, culminating in a dramatic arrival at Machu Picchu through the Sun Gate.

Alternatively, there are shorter treks like the Salkantay or Lares trails, which also lead to Machu Picchu through less crowded routes.

Whichever path you choose, the journey from Cusco to Machu Picchu is an adventure that promises both luxury and a deep connection to the Andean landscape.

How to Get to Machu Picchu from Lima

Traveling to Machu Picchu from Lima typically begins with a flight from Peru's bustling capital to the historic city of Cusco, nestled in the heart of the Andes.

From Cusco, you can continue your journey by train or embark on a trek, as Cusco is the main gateway to Machu Picchu.

Note that Cusco sits at a much higher altitude than Machu Picchu so it's wise heading to Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley first in order to acclimatise before going back to **explore the city of Cusco** itself.

How to Get to Machu Picchu from Ollantaytambo and the Sacred Valley

Traveling to Machu Picchu from Ollantaytambo and the Sacred Valley is one of the most scenic and convenient routes available. Ollantaytambo, a charming town known for its well-preserved Inca ruins and cobblestone streets, serves as a major departure point for trains heading to Machu Picchu.

From here, the journey continues by train, winding through the breathtaking landscapes of the Sacred Valley along the banks of the Urubamba River. The train ride, which takes about 1.5 to 2 hours, offers stunning views of terraced fields, steep cliffs, and dense forests, gradually leading to Aguas Calientes, the base town for Machu Picchu.

This route allows travelers to fully immerse themselves in the beauty and history of the Sacred Valley, making the approach to Machu Picchu both relaxing and awe-inspiring.

Boarding a train from Urubamba is also an option with Peru Rail. For those planning to explore the towns of the Sacred Valley before or after Machu Picchu this is an ideal option.

How to Get to Machu Picchu from Aguas Calientes

Once you arrive on the train in Aguas Calientes, you have two options; hike or take the shuttle bus. Bus tickets can be bought just over the bridge as you exit the train station

and you'll need your passport to do so.

They depart every few minutes when full from the main road. It's about a 40-minute trip on what feels like a never-ending, bendy road.

If you missed out on the Inca Trail then why not hike to the ruins from Aguas Calientes? It takes about 1 hour 30 minutes to complete, involving many stairs and breathtaking views.

Where to Stay Before and After Visiting Machu Picchu

Depending on your journey, the type of train you take and train times and schedules you'll need to spend the night somewhere, whether that's Cusco, Ollantaytambo, Urubamba or even Aguas Calientes (ideal for sunrise entrance times for Machu Picchu).

Did you know you can actually sleep at Machu Picchu? **Sanctuary Lodge, A Belmond Hotel** is the only hotel located right by the ruins where you can wake up and enjoy a coffee in the Andes mountains with views of the Inca ruins from your private terrace.

Book a stay here.

Ollantaytambo

If you are exploring the Sacred Valley then I recommend staying in Ollantaytambo before or after your trip to Machu Picchu.

It's the nearest proper town to Machu Picchu (by proper, I mean with roads and services) and will only take you 1h 40 mins to get to the Incan Citadel giving you a full morning at the ruins.

Ollantaytambo also has its own fascinating ruins which make for a great side trip. I'd recommend seeing them before Machu Picchu however, as once you've seen this Wonder of the World nothing will compare. There are some great hotels and restaurants here too.

Las Qolqas EcoResort Ollantaytambo – The perfect place to stay in Ollantaytambo, this spot features large, safari-style tents amid beautiful gardens. **Book a stay here.**



Urubamba

Urubamba, while not quite as scenic as Pisac and Ollantaytambo is still a lovely little Sacred Valley town where you'll get to feel a more local vibe.

It's not very touristy like some of the other Sacred Valley towns and it's also at a lower elevation to Cusco, so if you are feeling the altitude, Urubamba might be a great place to stay and acclimatise.

On the downside train services from Urubamba are limited compared to from Cusco or Ollantaytambo but on the upside Urubamba has some of the nicest properties in the Sacred Valley. Check **Peru Rail** for the exact train schedules from Urubamba.

Stay at **Rio Sagrado, A Belmond Hotel**, for the finest stays in the Sacred Valley. Otherwise **Tambo del Inka** and **Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba** are also spectacular properties we recommend.



Cusco

No doubt you will find yourself in Cusco at some point before or after Machu Picchu. If you're not planning to explore the Sacred Valley then getting a train from Cusco

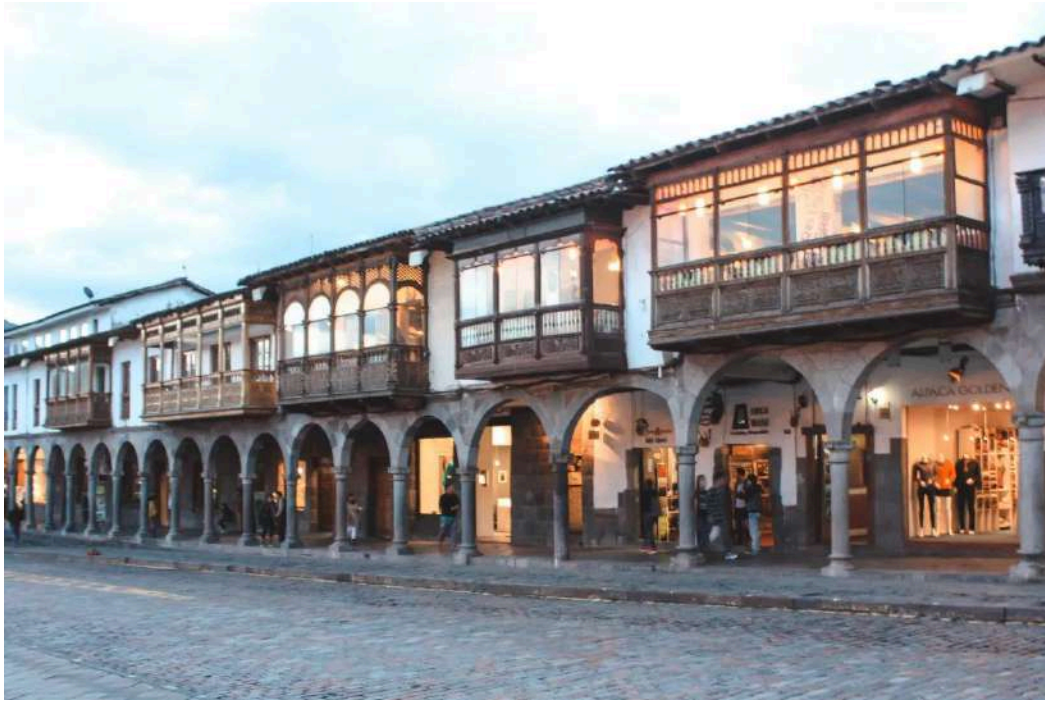
becomes very convenient however the journey times are long.

If you are visiting Machu Picchu for a day from Cusco and returning to Cusco prepare for a very long day. With travel times from Cusco being just under 4 hours one way, your time at Machu Picchu will be limited.

If you are short on time, I would recommend leaving Cusco early, seeing Machu Picchu and then spending the night in Ollantaytambo before returning to Cusco the next day. This will give you much more time at Machu Picchu itself and the chance to explore the Ollantaytambo ruins too.

Some of our favorite, design-focused stays in Cusco are **Inkaterra La Casona**, and the Belmond Hotels, **Palacio Nazarenas** and **Monasterio**, housed in an incredible historical palace and former monastery.





Subscribe for Insider Travel Intel

Subscribe for updates on the latest posts, curated travel intel, news and travel deals straight to your inbox.

Your Email...

SUBSCRIBE

I consent to receiving emails and personalized ads.

Aguas Calientes

Many people like to take the train the day before, stay in Aguas Calientes hike up to the ruins for sunrise and beat the crowds, which to be honest, is one of the best ways to get to Machu Picchu.

Aguas Calientes offers lots of different accommodation, although at a lower standard than elsewhere in the Sacred Valley and at a higher price. It's a get in and get out kind of place. However, the proximity to Machu Picchu and the opportunity to see it at sunrise is priceless and you'll only need to be there for one night.

Some of our favorite properties are **Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo** and **Sumaq Machu Picchu**

Looking for some top tips? **Read 10 Things I Wish I Knew Before Visiting Peru**



Top Tips for Getting to Machu Picchu

→ Just outside the entrance to the ruins, there's a little desk where you can get your passport stamped with a Machu Picchu stamp. It makes for a fun souvenir.

→ The busiest times at the ruins are from 9 am- 1 pm. Try to get there as early as possible to avoid the crowds. If your ticket allows it try to come in the afternoon from

12 pm onwards or first thing in the morning.

→ If you do get there for sunrise, the best place to watch it from is the Sun Gate.

→ Due to the mass tourism, the Inca Citadel is now controlled quite strictly by the Peruvian government. It's been said that you will now need a certified guide with which to enter the ruins which you can hire on the spot.



Subscribe for Insider Travel Intel

Subscribe for updates on the latest posts, curated travel intel, news and travel deals straight to your inbox.

Your Email...

SUBSCRIBE

I consent to receiving emails and personalized ads.

This still needs some clarification, as when I went I didn't have to hire one. There are some routes that you do have to follow around the site, so it's difficult to just walk and explore where you like.

The justification for this is trying to conserve the site from the masses.





Haven't bought your **Machu Picchu entrance ticket** yet and don't know which one to go for? Check out **How to Get Tickets for Machu Picchu**.

Any comments or questions about how to get to Machu Picchu? Leave them below- I'd love to hear from you

Make sure not to leave home without travel insurance. For the last few years, I've been using **Safetywing Nomad Insurance** for all my individual trips and digital nomad lifestyle and there's no better company for all my insurance needs. Cover starts from as little as \$42 per month. **Get your quote below now.**

Planning a trip right now? These are just some of my favourite websites I use to book everything from hotels to rental cars!

Rentalcars.com for quick and easy car rentals worldwide

Booking.com for great deals on hotels

Agoda also for great deals on hotels

Get Your Guide and **Viator** for tours and adventures around the world

Related posts you might like:

How to Get Tickets for Machu Picchu