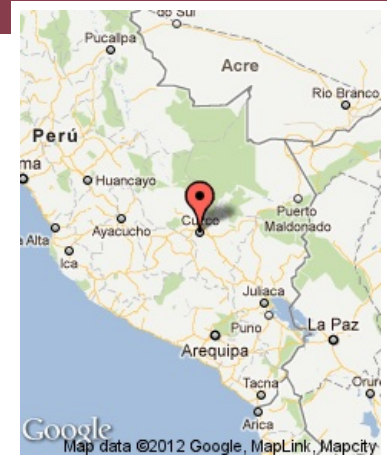


# Choquequirao trek (alternative to the Inca Trail)



## Highlights

**A stunning four-day guided Choquequirao trek to the hidden and more inaccessible sister-site of Machu Picchu, through the stunning mountain landscape and cloud forests of the Andes' Inca valleys in Peru.**

Cusco was the historic capital of the Inca Empire and is both a World Heritage site and one of South America's most popular destinations. One of the nearby Inca sites is the ruined city of Choquequirao, a grand and less-frequented gem than its sister-city Machu Picchu, which can be reached by train or bus. The site is set above a river valley and encompasses 1,800 hectares of grand, well-preserved Inca terraces, temples, aqueducts, administrative buildings and living quarters around a central square; all redolent of a vibrant, mysterious culture.

The region is home to high peaks, snow-capped mountains, agricultural terraces, foaming waterfalls, deep jungle, cloud forests, lush meadows and fast-running rivers. Wildlife reserves protect a great selection of animal life including the condor and spectacled bear. Other well-preserved Inca fortresses and religious sites lie on the Inca Trail and the other valleys of Cusco region.

Starting out at the ancient Inca capital, Cusco, you will head into the surrounding Inca valleys and impressive gorges whose cloud forests are home to a rich variety of birdlife and animals including the reclusive spectacled bear. You will visit other ruined Inca sites on your Choquequirao trek as well as settlements still inhabited by the indigenous Quechua community who still speak the Inca language. Your guide will give insight into the unique culture and heritage of the people of this fascinating region.

With camping in well-appointed sites along the trail with spectacular views you will be right in the midst of the sounds and smells of the mysterious Inca forest. On day two you will reach the ruined city of Choquequirao and its temples, palace and well-preserved terraces and buildings that will evoke the ghosts of a one flourishing empire.

## Is it for me?

This is a fantastic alternative to the busy Machu Picchu trail with a site that rivals Machu Picchu's majesty. Inaccessible by bus and train, this site is quieter and lacks the crowds of the other sites on the Inca Trail and would make an excellent choice for a Cusco Inca trek.

Campsites along the trails are basic and good for those who enjoy social interaction with other travelers, expect comfort not luxury. The walking is fairly demanding so a fair standard of fitness is required though porters will carry most heavy baggage. All told, this tour would suit student travellers, small groups and young and middle-aged couples.

## Accommodation

You will be camping for the duration of the trip in tents and sleeping bags at established campsites. All of the camping equipment and luggage (7kgs worth) will be carried from campsite to campsite by horses. There is a horseman in charge of this. Your cook usually goes ahead of the group to have your meals ready when you reach each campsite and he and your horseman will set up camp for you!

Prices from

**426** GBP (4 days) per person

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In addition to a guide you will also have a chef, who will be preparing filling and energy-releasing food so you will never go hungry on the trek. They will also be able to feed vegetarians and others who have specific dietary needs.

## Itinerary

**Day 1: Cusco (3,350m) – Cachora (2,850m) - Chiquisca (6,332)**

**Pick Up Time: 5am – from your hotel/hostel**

An early start for a 5 hour drive to the town of Cachora, which offers you wonderful views of the snow mountains of Salcantay, Humantay, Pitusiray, Chicon and Veronica. Cachora is surrounded by mountains, one of which is the snow-covered Padreyoc (5,570m). Here you will meet with the horsemen and their mules who will be carrying all the camping equipment during the trek. The beginning of the walk will have some ecological differences and you will pass the mystic Padreyoc going through the pass of apuliyoc (2800m / 9186f). From Capuliyoc you will have a spectacular view on the canyon of the Apurimac and a part of the archeological complex of Choquequirao, and you will have a short rest there to observe the way you came which looks like a stream on the edge of the mountain up to your camping place called Chiquisca (1930m / 6332f).

**Hiking time: 7 hours in a warm climate**

**Day 2: Chiquisca - Playa Rosalina (1,550m) – Marampata (2,850m) - Choquequirao (3,033m)**

After having enjoyed your breakfast, you will descend for about one hour to La Playa Rosalina. From here you will go up in the canyon, in a warm climate, to the town of Marampata from where you will have a beautiful view of the archeological complex of Choquequirao. Along your hike today you will observe a variety of orchids and wild flowers as well as many species of birds. You arrive in Choquequirao in time to enjoy the sunset and maybe an opportunity to see condors flying nearby. You set up camp just outside of the ruins in the cloud forest.

**Hiking time: 7 hours in both cool and warm climates**

**Day 3: Choquequirao - San Ignacio (1,500m) - Carmen Huerto (2,000m)**

You will see the sunrise over Choquequirao, whilst your guide will tell you about history and the recently found excavations. At the moment Choquequirao holds many ancestral secrets yet to be discovered. The exact function of this site remains a mystery, but each year that goes by archeologists discover more of the "Cradle of Gold" and its significance. After this visit you will leave the site and go down a pretty route over a pass where you will have some impressive views of the Apurimac Canyon. You will also see an abundance of flora and fauna. You drop in altitude today from 3,033m to 1,500m (San Ignacio). From here you ascend to your camping place known as Carmen Huerto.

**Hiking time: 5 hours in a moderate climate**

**Day 4: Carmen Huerto - Hacienda Tambobamba (2,500m) - Huanipaca (3,150m)**

The Carmen Orchard, which is next to the Tambobamba property, was ruled by landowners in the years of the colonization. They had slaves who cultivated many acres. They were very rich in cultivating their agricultural products, cattle ranches etc. Tambó bamba offers natural wealth in different areas, from agriculture and cattle ranching, hereby preserving the tradition and knowledge of the region's Andean past. On the route you will be visiting communities like Pacobamba and Huanipaca. From Huanipaca you will have the most impressive view of the glacier chain 'Sacsarayoc', located in the region of Vilcabamba 'The last shelter of the Incas'. Sadly this is the end of your trek and time to head back to the city of Cusco.

**Hiking time: 5 hours in a moderate warm climate**

## Details

### Getting there

Fly 55 minutes from Lima or, if you have plenty of time on your hands, you could take the bus which takes around 20 hours.

### Price includes

Price includes transfer from your hotel to the start of trek, an English speaking guide, waterproof duffles to put your luggage in, 7kg luggage allowance to be ported by the horses, hot water for washing and boiled water for drinking, meals except breakfast on day one and meals on day four, entrance fees for trails and Machu Picchu, tents and hotel in Aguas Calientes.

### Price details

Price is per person based on two people joining other travellers on the same trek. Prices vary according to the number of people joining:

Three people - \$450 per person

Four people - \$420 per person

Five people or more - \$400

Prices vary for private group departures. Please contact us if you would like this option.

### Available

Mar—Dec

### Typical Duration

4 days

### Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

**Experience required**

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed