

Backpacking Peru's Iconic Sacred Valley to Machu Picchu - Alumni

Cusco / Urubamba - Peru

Dates: May 3 - 11, 2026



***Must be signed up and full tuition paid by Dec 15, 2025 in order to secure Machu Picchu tickets. Enrollments after Dec 15, 2025 will be based on availability of Machu Picchu tickets.**

Features

- Journey through the remote and lesser-traveled Vilcabamba mountain range, northwest of Cusco—once the heart of the Inca Empire.
- Hike along original sections of the Inca Trail, part of a vast 25,000-mile network of ancient, stone-paved footpaths across the Andes.
- Conclude the adventure with a visit to Machu Picchu, one of the most iconic and awe-inspiring archaeological wonders of the world.
- 9 Days / 9 Nights
- Approximately 45 miles of hiking with 15,000 ft of elevation gain
- First and last night at Kutimuy Lodge in Urubamba. Nights 2-6 will be camping.
- Explore a range of ecosystems, from alpine highlands with llamas and Andean condors to lush cloud forests rich with orchids, tropical birds, and the occasional Andean fox.
- Learn or improve your expedition backpacking skills, including how to pack minimally but comfortably, navigate through mountainous terrain, find and set up high quality camps, cook delicious meals in the outdoors, and more.

Cost: \$4055 Price per person

Minimum Age: 18

Historic Age Range: NEW TRIP!

Max group size: 12 Participants

2 NOLS Instructors

Trip Description

The Vilcabamba route takes our group through a seldom travelled mountain range to the northwest of Cusco, the famed capital of the Inca Empire. During the expedition, we will hike on sections of the original Inca Trail, a network of ancient fortified footpaths that span over 25,000 miles throughout the Andes. We will experience the ecological transition zone between the Andes mountains and the Amazon basin traverse, traveling from chilly high mountain passes with views of 20,000 ft glaciated peaks into the cloud forests of the valleys below. Throughout the course, we will continually encounter Inca and pre-Inca archeological sites, culminating with a visit to the world-famous site of Machu Picchu.

Trip Environment

The Vilcabamba expedition traverses a diverse range of environments. Along the way, participants encounter a variety of ecosystems—from alpine grasslands to dense, moss-covered cloud forests—each offering distinct flora, fauna, and climate conditions. The route also passes numerous archaeological sites, both Inca and pre-Inca, providing a constant historical backdrop to the natural setting.

In the Peruvian Andes we really can experience four seasons in a single day. Participants should plan on utilizing a layering system that will constantly be adjusting. Weather can be unpredictable, and we should always be prepared for rain. It can be hot while under direct sunlight, but temps can drop about 10F as clouds roll in.

In Urubamba and the Sacred Valley where we start, the daytime temperatures range from 55-65F, and nighttime temperatures from 35-45F. We continue through high-altitude mountain passes where the air is thin and temperatures can drop down to 25F at night and in the early morning, and hover in the 50s during the day.

As the group descends, the terrain transitions into more humid, forested valleys rich in biodiversity, characteristic of the Andean-Amazonian interface. These days are a warmer, sweatier, and more “tropical” experience. We end in Aguascalientes/Machu Picchu with temps of 60-70F during the day and 37-45F at night.

NOLS Staff

Our staff are NOLS professionals and certified accordingly. This means they maintain certifications in wilderness medicine and are trained to NOLS’ high standards in risk management. They are senior staff at NOLS who have spent years working and teaching in backcountry environments all over the world. Additionally, our staff specialize in bringing together groups of strangers and building the group culture and camaraderie that makes NOLS trips great.

A Day in the Life



A day in the life of the

Vilcabamba expedition begins

early—often with the sun rising over misty peaks. We cook breakfast in the classic NOLS style cook groups, rotating through individuals cooking for a group of 3-5. We pack our backpacks with our food, group gear, and personal gear, and the group sets out on foot, moving steadily through landscapes that shift dramatically from high alpine passes to lush valleys. Days are spent hiking 4-8 miles on average, often gaining or losing significant elevation (the average elevation gained each day is around 2000 ft.). We rest at scenic overlooks or archaeological sites rarely seen by tourists, continually eating snacks throughout the day instead of a formal lunch. Each evening, the group settles into a new campsite—sometimes near glacial lakes, other times in quiet, forested clearings. Nights are for rest, reflection, and reconnecting, whether around a warm meal or under a sky dense

with stars. Every day brings a sense of purpose and discovery, rooted in both the physical challenge and the cultural richness of the region.

**This trip is rated ‘Difficult’ due to carrying packs at high elevation, camping and living in the back country without porters or additional support.*

Food on the Trip

There will be plenty of food provided on the trip for everyone. We are happy to ensure that folks who have dietary needs and/or preferences are well taken care of throughout the entire trip. Listing those needs on your registration paperwork will help us ensure they are met. While we will provide all meals and snacks for the trip, you are welcome to bring your own snacks or other treats. If there are certain foods that you know will keep your energy and motivation high, we encourage you to bring them.

Curriculum

This trip focuses on many traditional NOLS skills, competencies, and concepts, sometimes including map reading, hiking, and group travel. The instructors will provide all the instruction necessary for the group to comfortably travel and live outside. They will supplement this with topics as desired by participants, including natural history, local history, leadership, decision making, and group dynamics, among other things. Formal “classes” are few and mostly optional but informal discussions are plentiful. Anticipate a required base level of group management and cohesion—this is a mountain expedition.

About Peru and Cusco Region

This expedition takes place in **southern Peru**, a country known for its rich cultural heritage, dramatic landscapes, and deep ties to ancient civilizations. The journey unfolds in the **Cusco region**, once the political and spiritual center of the Inca Empire. Today, it remains a gateway to some of the most iconic and remote corners of the Andes. The Sacred Valley and the Vilcabamba mountain range—where much of the expedition takes place—offer a striking blend of natural beauty and historical depth. Towering peaks, cloud forests, and isolated rural communities define this region, where Spanish colonial influences intersect with Indigenous traditions. Despite its popularity as the access point to Machu Picchu, this particular route ventures well off the beaten path, offering participants a rare opportunity to experience the Andes in a way few travelers do: immersed in solitude, history, and an environment that remains deeply sacred to the Quechua people who still call it home.

Expectations of Participants

The alumni trip atmosphere is more relaxed than a typical NOLS expedition. However, it’s not a full-service vacation or guided experience. You’ll have to participate, carry your load, and help out as needed. These expeditions are fun, but they still require self-reliance, self awareness, risk management and sound decision making as we trek through remote areas where evacuation to modern medical facilities can take several days. Like all NOLS courses, these expeditions emphasize hands-on learning and the application of new skills in a variety of situations.

All participants need to complete and submit application materials, including a medical history form. These forms highlight the intersection of your trip's anticipated physical rigor and your current health and fitness status. Your forthright and timely completion and submission of the forms sets you and your trip up for success in the outdoors.

Alumni trips allow electronics and alcohol (for those of legal age in the country of the trip). Many participants find that these luxuries can add to the course experience and local flavor. Excessive alcohol consumption is not a part of the culture of Alumni trips.

NOLS Alumni will provide all group gear for this trip (i.e. stoves, tents, water purification, etc.--for more details, see the equipment list below). We do not have the ability to rent participants gear; however, if needed, we recommend that participants rent gear from [Tattoo Adventure Gear Cusco](#) or [Speedy Gonzalo Camping Equipment](#).

Trip Itinerary

Date	Description of day	Lodging plan
May 3	Cusco to Urubamba transfer Meet at the JW Marriot (corner of Las Ruinas 432, Cusco) at 2:00 PM to then drive as a group to Urubamba, a small town in the heart of the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Urubamba is a 1.5 hour drive from Cusco over the Maras plateau. We will meet for dinner and orientation at 7:00 PM. Accommodation for this night is included.	Kutimuy Lodge in Urubamba (or something similar based on availability) *Shuttle transfer meeting point in Cusco is at JW Marriot at 2pm. Meals: Welcome dinner in-town.
May 4	Acclimation in the Sacred Valley of the Incas Eat breakfast, pack a lunch, and set off with the group on an acclimation hike through the nearby Pumahuanca Valley. This hike is to get your body used to the high altitude before we begin backpacking. Nestled above the Sacred Valley in the Urubamba Mountain Range, we climb 640m (2100 ft) over 4.4km (2.7 miles) on this out-and-back hike until we reach a gushing waterfall. The trail will take us through a thick <i>queñual</i> forest (native Andean tree) as we follow the Pumahuanca River up and through the highland community of Sutocc Pacha. We	Kutimuy Lodge in Urubamba (or similar) Meals: Breakfast - Included with hotel Lunch - Pack lunch for the trail Dinner - Group dinner in-town

	will enjoy lunch on the trail surrounded by mountain views before heading back down to Urubamba and, if we're lucky, may run into a herd of llamas. We will come back together as a group in the evening to discuss the logistics of our trek and make any last-minute purchases in Urubamba before heading out to the Vilcabamba Mountain Range. Hike: Distance: 8.8km (5.5mi) out-and-back Ascent: (+) 640m (2,100ft) Descent: (-) 640m (2,100ft)	
May 5	Urubamba – Huancacalle, afternoon hike to Inca sites Depart Urubamba in the early morning for a scenic drive out to our expedition starting point. Highlights include driving over Abra Málaga, a high-mountain pass at 14,200 ft, at the northern end of what's called the Sacred Valley, as well as driving through the Vilcabamba Valley. We will be well off the beaten path and expected to arrive in Huancacalle by the afternoon. We will camp around the rural village of Huancacalle and take an afternoon hike to the nearby Inca sites of Vitcos and Ñusta Hispana. Vitcos was once believed to be the legendary site of "Vilcabamba," the rebel capital holdout of the Inca Empire. While this theory was proven wrong, the site still holds historical significance as a major operating center of the exiled Inca Empire during the Spanish conquest. Hike: Distance: 5.2km (3.25mi) Ascent: (+) 320m (1,050ft) Descent: (-) 320m (1,050ft)	Camp at Huancacalle, 2,790 m 9,200 ft Meals: Breakfast: Provided by hotel Lunch: Expedition food (pack lunch) Dinner: Expedition food

May 6	Huancacalle – Camp I First day on the trail! After breakfast in Huancacalle we will set out for our trek. Getting used to our packs and the altitude, we ascend towards Asuntina Pass and our first camp. Hike: Distance: 7.7 km (4.8mi) Ascent: (+) 970m (3,200ft) Descent: (-) 120m (400ft)	Camping (3,860 m 12,740 ft) Meals: Expedition food
May 7	Camp I – Asuntina Pass – Racachaca As we continue upwards into the heart of the Vilcabamba Mountain Range, we make our first pass of the trek, reaching an elevation of just over 4,000 m 13,120 ft before descending to our second camp at Racachaca, a small outpost of stone and straw huts used by local pastoralist communities. Hike: Distance: 7.9km (4.9mi) Ascent: (+) 490m (1,620ft) Descent: (-) 670m (2,200ft)	Camping (3,630 m 12,000 ft) Meals: Expedition food
May 8	Racachaca – Tullutakana – Lake Soyroccocha A steep climb takes us to the Tullutakana Pass at just over 4,500 m 14,850 ft where we'll be greeted by views of the glaciated peaks of Pumasillu and Sacsarayoc. We descend toward Lake Soyroccocha where we will make our highest camp of the trip at 4,400 m 14,520 ft. Hike: Distance: 13.7km (8.5mi) Ascent: (+) 940m (3,100ft) Descent: (-) 970m (3,200ft)	Camping (4,400m 14,520 ft) Meals: Expedition food
May 9	Soyroccocha – Mujún Pass – Brasilpampa We make a short climb to Mujún Pass	Camping (2,770 m 9,140 ft) Meals: Expedition food

	before beginning an extended descent into the Sacsara Valley. As we leave the highlands, we will notice a dramatic change in the landscape, transitioning from the chilly Andean highlands to the lush, humid cloud forests—an ecological transition zone where the Andes give way to the Amazon basin. Hike: Distance: 12.3km (7.7mi) Ascent: (+) 300m (990ft) Descent: (-) 2,000m (6,600ft)	
May 10	Brasilpampa – Yanatile Transfer: Yanatile – Hidroeléctrica Train Station – Aguascalientes Our morning hike will take us from our camp to the small town of Yanatile where a shuttle will take us ~17km (10.5 miles) to the hidroeléctrica train station, the closest any road gets to Machu Picchu. From here we will take a 45min train ride to the town of Aguascalientes where we will spend the night before heading up for a guided tour of the site the following day. For those seeking extra miles, you may also opt for hiking an additional 10km 6mi along the train tracks to reach Aguascalientes. Hike: Distance: 10.3km(6.4mi) Ascent: (+) 575m (1,900ft) Descent: (-) 1,350m (4,450ft)	Hatun Samay Hotel in Aguascalientes (or similar accommodations based on availability) Meals: Breakfast: Expedition food Lunch: Expedition food Dinner: Aguascalientes in-town
May 11	Machu Picchu Site Visit Transfer: Aguascalientes – Urubamba Today's the day! We will take a 25min bus ride up to the Machu Picchu Archeological site for a tour of the Inca citadel at 10:00am. We will explore the site with a local guide before heading back down to Aguascalientes. After a quick lunch, we will catch a train to Ollantaytambo where a shuttle will take us 25min back to	Kutimuy Lodge in Urubamba (or similar accommodations based on availability) Meals: Breakfast: Provided by hotel Lunch: Aguascalientes in-town Dinner: Group farewell dinner in Urubamba

	Urubamba to our trip start hotel. We will finish the day with a group farewell dinner in Urubamba. Hike: Distance: 1.8km (1.1mi) Ascent: 80m (265ft) Descent: 80m (265ft)	
May 12	Trip end Transfer: Urubamba – Cusco Time to say goodbye! We will be organizing a 9:00AM group shuttle back to Cusco for hotel and airport drop-offs. If you depart earlier, private transport can be arranged for an additional cost. Hike: N/A	N/A Meals: Breakfast: Provided by hotel Lunch: Not included Dinner: Not included

Trip Logistics

Getting to Cusco

The expedition begins and ends in **Cusco**. Cusco has a major international airport (CUZ). The elevation of Cusco is 11,152 ft; therefore we recommend flying in a day or two in advance to acclimatize.

The airport is about 15 minutes from Cusco's historic town center where most hotel accommodations are located. Most participants should be able to coordinate an airport pickup through their pre-trip hotel/accommodation. If this isn't available, taxis are the best way to reach the town center from the airport. The fare generally costs about S/30. It's a good idea to verify the price before you agree to a taxi.

Cusco Lodging Options

[JW Marriott El Convento Cusco](#) - Our meeting place on Day 1

Esquina de la, Ruinas 432

Cusco 08002, Peru

+5184582200

[La Bo'm](#) - Backpacker Hostel/ budget option

C. Carmen Alto 283

Cusco 08000, Peru

+51977783333

[Casa Andina Standard San Blas](#) - Mid range option. 3 minutes from meeting point

Chihuampata 278

Cusco 08003, Peru

+5113916500

Day 1 Pick Up

Participants should meet at the [JW Marriott El Convento Cusco](#) at 2:00 PM with all of their luggage. If you need to rent backpacking gear, you should do so before the meet up time. NOLS Alumni will transport participants to Urubamba, a small town nestled in Peru's Sacred Valley that's approximately 1.5 hours from Cusco.

Urubamba Lodging

Lodging for Day 1 is included at a comfortable, locally-run hotel in Urubamba called the [Kutimuy Lodge](#). This lodge is a 10-minute walk from the Urubamba town center where you can explore the local open-air market, enjoy a coffee, or pick up any last-minute items for the expedition portion of the trip. The property has 14 "casitas" that sleep up to five people and include two bathrooms and a fully equipped kitchen. Once the trek begins, **accommodations shift to remote, backcountry campsites** where participants will sleep in the tents we carry.

Participants can expect well-coordinated logistics throughout, including **private transport to the trailhead** and a seamless transition from the mountains to the town of Aguascalientes before visiting **Machu Picchu**. The trip concludes back in Urubamba with a final night at our hotel and an organized group transfer to Cusco on the last day. All major in-country transportation, lodging during the trip, and meals are included in the program cost.

Storage of Personal Belongings

Personal baggage that doesn't go on the trek can be stored at Kutimuy Lodge in Urubamba. This is reasonably secure storage, but nothing is 100 percent guaranteed. NOLS assumes no responsibility for your stored baggage.

Currency

Peru uses the Soles as its only currency. You might want cash soles for miscellaneous purchases throughout the trip such as showers, alcohol, or souvenirs. You'll receive the best exchange by simply taking money out of ATMs in Peru, but your bank might charge you additional fees for this. U.S. credit cards will work in most urban locations, but won't work in rural towns in Peru. It's a good idea to give your credit card company a heads up that you're traveling internationally. About 400 - 600 Soles per person will be plenty of cash for the field portion of the trip for incidental purchases. We additionally recommend that each person bring 300 soles for tipping.

Travel Insurance

We recommend making travel plans as soon as possible to avoid complications. It may also be beneficial to purchase tickets that are refundable or changeable. Travel insurance is worth exploring in case unforeseen events cause you to change your plans or if NOLS has to cancel a trip for any reason. Check with your personal insurance carrier to discuss options, or see [travelguard.com](#).

Tipping

While tipping is not common in local Peruvian culture, it is common and much appreciated in the Peruvian tourism industry. 10% is considered a "good" tip in Peru. If you travel on your own, services that should be tipped include restaurants, transportation, local guides, housekeeping, and any additional services such as massages, etc. The fee for this NOLS Alumni expedition includes tips for restaurants, transportation, and housekeeping, but not for local guides. On top of any cash you are bringing, we suggest that each person bring 300 soles for tipping the local guides. In most situations, instructors will collect it and give it to our local guides as one lump sum.

While tipping is common in the outdoor guiding culture, your NOLS Instructors are not driven to excellence by tips, but rather by a love for taking people outdoors. You are welcome to tip the Instructors if you choose, but many instructors are honored by a donation in their name to the NOLS Annual Fund which supports scholarships for future NOLS students.

Immunizations / Vaccinations / Travel medications

International travel poses special health considerations. NOLS strongly advises that all participants traveling to international locations carefully consider what vaccinations or inoculations are required, recommended, or suggested for their specific travel itinerary. Consulting with a physician, travel medicine specialist, or other healthcare professional is strongly advised.

Visa/Passport

As a U.S. citizen, all you need to enter into Peru is a U.S. Passport that is valid for more than six months after your entry date. Please **check the expiration date** of your current passport and update it as necessary. You are entitled to a stay of up to 90 days as a tourist. Participants from outside the United States will need to check on their specific visa requirements.

Electricity

Voltage: 220V

Frequency: 60Hz

Plug Types: A & C

- **Type A:** Flat parallel prongs (same as in the U.S.)
- **Type C:** Two round prongs (common in Europe and South America)

Many hotels and lodges in Peru—especially in tourist areas like **Cusco, Urubamba, and Aguascalientes**—offer **Type A sockets**, so U.S. plugs may often work without an adapter. However, this is not guaranteed, and **carrying a universal travel adapter is strongly recommended**, particularly for those bringing electronics such as cameras, phones, power banks, or laptops.

While on the Trek:

There will be **no electricity** for charging devices during the **backcountry trekking portion** (Days 3–6). Participants should plan accordingly:

- Bring **power banks or solar chargers** for essential electronics.
- Keep devices in **airplane mode** and dim the screen to conserve battery.
- If you use a camera, consider carrying **extra batteries or an external charger**.

Registration and Payment

The best way to register is through the trip information page on the nols.edu website. A non-refundable \$500 deposit secures your spot on the trip. Your enrollment is complete with receipt of your full tuition and your completed application forms; these are **due on or before Dec 15, 2025**. ***This trip requires payment and commitment in advance, so that we can guarantee Machu Picchu tickets.***

All participants are required to submit registration materials, including a medical form. These forms highlight the intersection of your trip's anticipated physical rigor and your current health and fitness status while also providing NOLS information about things like your dietary needs.

NOLS is not responsible for additional costs incurred by late arrivals or evacuations. Those expenses are the responsibility of trip participants and we recommend purchasing travel insurance to mitigate the impact of unforeseen circumstances.

Do not book travel greater than 60 days before the start of the trip unless you have confirmed with NOLS that the trip will run. On rare occasions, we do cancel trips due to low enrollment.

Cancellation and Transfer Policy

For your reference, here is the [Alumni Trips Cancellation and Transfer Policy](#). When enrolling on a trip, you will need to agree to this policy.

Things to Do in Urubamba

(Great for pre- or post-trek downtime in the Sacred Valley)

Visit Local Artisan Markets & Workshops

- Explore **Cerámica Seminario**, a renowned ceramics studio blending traditional pre-Incan techniques with modern design.
- Visit **Pukamuqu Artisans Market** for textiles, jewelry, and handwoven alpaca goods.

Eat at a Farm-to-Table Restaurant

- **Migas del Valle**: A hidden gem of a café with artisanal breads and dishes utilizing organic produce from local farms.
- **Kaia**: Cozy, health-forward café with fresh juices and vegetarian options.

Relax and Recharge

- Book a **massage or spa session** at one of the boutique hotels (Tambo del Inka, Aranwa).
- Enjoy a gentle **walk along the Urubamba River**, especially at sunrise or sunset.

Local Cuisine + Ceviche

- Try fresh ceviche or trout from the Andes—**Mil by Virgilio Martínez** (if budget allows) is a fine-dining experience near Moray.

Things to Do in Cusco

(For those spending time in the city before or after the expedition)

Historical + Cultural Highlights

- **Plaza de Armas:** The colonial heart of Cusco—perfect for a stroll and people-watching.
- **Qorikancha (Temple of the Sun):** A striking example of Incan stonework underneath a Spanish convent.
- **Sacsayhuamán:** A short hike or taxi ride above the city to see colossal Incan stone walls and panoramic views.

Chocolate, Coffee & Culture

- Take a **chocolate-making workshop** at the ChocoMuseo.
- Sample **Peruvian coffee and pastries** at local cafés like Laggart Café or Three Monkeys Coffee.

Active Explorations

- **San Blas neighborhood:** Wander cobblestone streets, art galleries, and bohemian cafés.
- Hike to the **Cristo Blanco statue** for a quick dose of altitude and a wide view of the city.

Markets & Souvenirs

- **San Pedro Market:** A lively place for snacks, local goods, and people-watching.
- **Centro de Textiles Tradicionales:** Learn about weaving traditions and purchase directly from indigenous artisans.

Accommodation in Cusco

Cusco offers a wide range of accommodations to suit all budgets—from luxurious 5-star hotels to affordable backpacker hostels. Below are a few comfortable, centrally located mid-range options:

- **Casa Andina** – With multiple locations throughout Cusco, Casa Andina offers a range of prices and amenities to fit different budgets.
- **Novotel Cusco** – Just three blocks from the Plaza de Armas, this hotel is set in a beautifully restored 16th-century mansion and blends colonial charm with modern comforts.
- **Motto by Hilton Cusco** – Situated in the heart of the Historic Center, this boutique hotel features locally inspired design, flexible room layouts, and welcoming communal spaces.
- **Airbnb** – A popular and often cost-effective choice in Cusco, with many high-quality options. For a quieter, more charming stay, we recommend searching in the neighborhoods of San Blas or Lucrepata.

Gear Rental in Cusco

There are several locations in Cusco where participants can rent personal gear for the trip. We recommend:

- [Tattoo Adventure Gear Cusco](#)
- [Speedy Gonzalo Camping Equipment](#)

Suggested Readings:

Books on Inca and Andean History & Culture

1. **"The Last Days of the Incas" by Kim MacQuarrie**
A compelling narrative about the downfall of the Inca Empire, focusing on the Spanish conquest, and shedding light on the incredible resilience of the Inca people.
2. **"Turn Right at Machu Picchu" by Mark Adams**
Mark Adams' *Turn Right at Machu Picchu* follows his humorous and eye-opening journey retracing Hiram Bingham's expedition to the Incan citadel. Blending history with adventure, it's a lively introduction to Peru's trails, culture, and mysteries.
3. **"Forgotten Vilcabamba: Final Stronghold of the Incas" by Vincent R. Lee** Combining architectural expertise with exploration, Lee provides a detailed narrative of his expeditions and studies of Vilcabamba's ruins

4. **"The Conquest of the Incas" by John Hemming**

This monumental work offers an exhaustive and engaging account of the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire, shedding light on the key figures, events, and strategies that led to the fall of one of the most powerful civilizations in the Americas. A must-read for anyone traveling to the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu.

5. **"The Inca Empire: The Formation and Disintegration of a Pre-Columbian State" by Izumi Shimada**

This book offers an in-depth exploration of the rise and fall of the Inca Empire, providing historical context for the places participants will visit.

6. **"The Sacred Valley of the Incas" by David B. McCafferty**

This beautifully illustrated guidebook explores the Sacred Valley, its history, and its significance to the Inca civilization, with a particular focus on the region's sacred sites.

Equipment List

Gear provided by NOLS

Cooking Gear/ Spice Kits/water treatment	First Aid kits	Stoves, Fuel, Fuel Bottles	Emergency Communication
Reference Books	Maps & Compass	Food and Bear Canisters	Tents or Shelters

Note: NOLS Alumni does not have any of the items listed below available for rent in Peru. However, we recommend renting needed gear (particularly backpacks and sleeping bags) from [Tattoo Adventure Gear Cusco](#) or [Speedy Gonzalo Camping Equipment](#). Leave yourself enough time before the group meets to drive to Urubamba on Day 0 to rent gear from this shop, and to return it at the end of the trip.

Upper Body Clothing

Equipment	Notes
Base layer (light or midweight)	Synthetic or wool
Top layer (fleece or puffy)	Heavy weight fleece or a medium-weight puffy layer
Long sleeve shirt	Important for sun protection, synthetic or wool
Wind shirt (optional)	A lightweight, breathable, durable nylon wind shell, in either pullover or parka style
Rain jacket	A sturdy, waterproof jacket with a hood— coated nylon and breathable fabrics such as Gore-Tex® are acceptable
T-shirt (1-2)	A lightweight synthetic or merino wool t-shirt
Sports Bra or Tank (2-3)	Synthetic sports bra or a synthetic sports tank are recommended

Warm hat	Synthetic or wool
Sun hat	Baseball cap or full brim
Gloves or mittens	Medium weight, windproof/waterproof can be nice
Lower Body Clothing	
Equipment	Notes
Light/midweight base layer	Optional: Synthetic or wool
Wind/hiking pants	Breathable nylon wind pants or lightweight hiking pant
Hiking shorts	Nylon, quick-dry shorts
Underwear (2-3 pairs)	Wear what's comfortable; cotton, silk, or synthetics are fine
Footwear	
Equipment	Notes
Approach/hiking shoes or boots	A sturdy pair of shoes for hiking. Consider trail hiking shoes or approach shoes for something lighter than traditional boots (or go with a traditional boot if that is what you are comfortable in)
Gaiters	Short gaiters to keep rocks and debris out of your shoes—tall gaiters are not needed for this hike
Sneakers or non-hiking shoe	Something to wear around camp
Socks (2-3 pairs)	½ crew to crew length wool socks—cotton socks are not advised
Miscellaneous Personal Gear	
Equipment	Notes
Medium backpack	Must be big enough to carry personal items (e.g., water, food, clothing layers) and group lunch supplies—40-55 Liters
Sleep sack	Hut beds come with a pillow and quilt. Please bring a sleep sack to protect the bedding and up the hygiene. The best sleep sacks are light, compact and have a large top or top/side opening.
Plastic trash bags (1-2)	Heavy-duty compactor bags (33 gallon) waterproof items in your pack
Water bottles/hydration bladder	2-4 Liters capacity, bladders with 3+ Liters are preferred. If you only bring 2 hard-side water bottles, also bring a collapsable 1-2 Liter bottle for supplemental capacity.
Lip balm (1-2)	SPF 15 or greater
Sunscreen	SPF 30 or greater
Sunglasses	Good-quality sunglasses with 100-percent UV protection
Headlamp	Might be useful on occasion
Toiletries	Toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, skin lotion, tampons, etc. (travel or trial sizes are enough), ear plugs and eye covers can be nice

Optional Items	
Trekking poles	Most participants enjoy hiking with 2 poles
Hydration system	Very handy and popular
Book or e-reader	Bring something fun to read
Camera	We would love to see your photos post-trip!
Casual clothes	Shirt/pants/skirt for dinner or hanging out around the rifugio
Pack cover	Heavy weight and attachable to your pack
Rain pants	Some folks enjoy having rain pants for wet days!
Bicycle gloves	Great for the time when we are using cables to assist out walking