

Frequently Asked Questions About the Inca Trail

1. Can you hike the Inca Trail without a tour operator?

A1. No. Since January 1, 2001, it has been prohibited to hike the trail independently. However, the rules were not strictly enforced until early 2002. You must contact a tour operator to obtain permits. Tickets for the Inca Trail MUST be purchased in advance in Cusco and only through an authorized Inca Trail operator. Tickets cannot be purchased at the entrance to the Inca Trail.

2. Should I make a reservation for the Inca Trail in advance or wait until I arrive in Cusco?

A2. Since the number of people allowed per day has been significantly reduced, it is advisable to make a reservation at least 90 days in advance. This is especially important if you plan to arrive in Cusco during the high season (June to October).

3. What is the best time of year to hike the Inca Trail?

A3. The "dry" season, from April to October, seems to be the best time to hike the Inca Trail, at least in terms of weather. It is generally dry, but it can rain at any time. Be aware of the wide variation in temperatures. At high altitude, the weather is sunny during the day and cold and windy at night.

4. How difficult is the Inca Trail?

A4. The hike is physically demanding, but does not require any technical skills. The difficulty comes mainly from the repeated ascents and descents and the altitude. The climb to the first pass takes you from approximately 6,500 feet to over 12,500 feet in a relatively short distance, followed by a descent of approximately 4,900 feet. After the second pass (11,500 feet), the hike generally becomes easier.

5. Is there an age limit for doing the Inca Trail?

A5. No. Although there is no age limit for doing the 4-day Inca Trail, it is best to be between 8 and 65 years old. It is good to be in good physical condition and, if applicable, to have your doctor's approval.

6. Can I do the Inca Trail with children?

A6. Yes, if you want to enjoy the Inca Trail with your children, it is possible. We recommend that they be at least 8 years old and in excellent physical condition. We do not recommend traveling with children if they are not used to regular hiking and strenuous physical activity.

7. Is it dangerous to hike the Inca Trail?

A7. The Inca Trail is a demanding route, but it is not inherently dangerous if you take precautions and follow the guides' instructions.

8. How do I get water?

A8. MAVA TRAVEL provides boiled water to fill your bottles at mealtimes. Although the water is always clean, don't forget to always use your water purification tablets and follow the instructions. Micropur water purification tablets can be purchased at most pharmacies in Cusco. With these tablets, you must wait 40 minutes before drinking. We recommend bringing a water bottle with a minimum capacity of 1.5 liters. You can bring bottled water from Cusco, buy it at km 82 before reaching Wayllabamba, in Wiñaywayna, and in Machu Picchu. If you hire the services of a personal porter, they will likely be able to provide you with several bottles of water.

In addition, along the way you will find streams approximately every hour and a half of walking from which you can refill your water bottle. Don't forget your water purification tablets.

9. Are all meals included?

A9. Yes, most tours include all meals during the trek, with options for vegetarians and other special dietary needs.

10. What are the bathrooms like?

A10. The bathrooms have improved considerably in the last 2 years, and you will find flush toilets at all camps. They are generally kept clean. We carry portable toilets that are used along the way, with biodegradable bags. There are showers in Wiñaywayna (day 3), although they are not always clean and there is an additional charge to use them.

11. Should I hire a personal porter? When?

A11. Our services include porters to carry food, tents, and cooking equipment. However, during the Inca Trail, you will have to carry your personal belongings (backpack, camera, water, etc.) and your sleeping mat. Hiring a personal porter can make the hike more enjoyable, as you will be walking without all the extra weight. Each porter can carry a maximum of 18 kilos and must be booked at the same time as the Inca Trail. Additional cost (PLEASE INQUIRE).