

selling **TRAVEL**

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DIVE INTO A GOLDEN AGE

*Agents need to know that the over 50s
are as adventurous and savvy as they
are time and cash rich*

how to sell...

South Pacific

Florida

Cyprus

Peru

and more...



heady Heights

Peru's tourism appeal is evolving, says Sarah Gilbert, who explains how to sell Peru as a rail and cruise holiday, a luxury escape or an adventure tour

My breath is ragged, my heart is pounding and I feel on top of the world. A distant glacier glitters in the sunlight, its jagged peaks reflected in the mirror-flat surface of a sapphire-blue lake. And save for our small group and some docile llamas there isn't another living thing in sight.

I am taking the Inca road less travelled on Mountain Lodges of Peru's Sacred Valley and Lares Adventure; innovative five- and seven-day programmes that mix high-end lodges, hiking and culture with sustainable practices that directly benefit local communities.

Daily activities are divided into 'easy', 'moderate' and 'challenging'. One morning I climb up to the Chailwaccasa Pass, then

down to the small farming community of Viacha that sits among fields of red quinoa and purple lupin, high above Pisac's 15th-century fortress.

My reward is pachamanca, a traditional Inca feast where meat and vegetables are layered into a hole in the ground and slow-cooked for hours. I am also given the opportunity to buy vibrant weavings, far removed from the tourist groups.

In the Andean village of Huachahuasi, giggling children in red hats and ponchos scamper past on their way to school and women, their cheeks fat with coca leaves, sit spinning wool outside adobe homes.

My contemporary lodge's floor-to-ceiling windows frame the stunning landscapes and rooms come with alfresco hot tubs to sooth those post-hike muscles.

My journey ends at the magnificent Machu Picchu and although I marvel at the Inca's architectural prowess, I realise that the highlight had been getting an off-the-beaten-track glimpse into their descendants' everyday lives.

Sell it: Journey Latin America offers the 11-day Peru: Beyond the Sacred Valley with the Lares Adventure, including the five-day Lares trek, mid-range hotels, domestic flights, excursions including Machu Picchu, transfers and most meals. International flights are extra journeylatinamerica.co.uk

The full package

Peru packs in everything from colonial cities to ancient ruins, glacier-tipped peaks to the Amazon rainforest.

New flights have boosted connectivity from the UK and within the country, accommodation options and tourism infrastructure have improved, and luxury trains, world-class expedition cruises and gourmet restaurants are now all adding to its appeal.

"Peru welcomed 74,124 UK visitors last year, a 7% increase on 2017," says Elisabeth Hakim, UK & North America Market Coordinator at PromPeru.

"International tourism arrivals reached a record-breaking 4,419,430 in 2018."

Between now and 2021, investments in the tourism sector will exceed \$790 million, with 22 new four- and five-star hotel projects currently under construction – 17 in Lima alone.

While Lima, Cusco and Machu Picchu

still dominate itineraries, northern Peru is becoming increasingly popular.

"The Kuelap Cable Car has made this pre-Inca mountaintop city more accessible" says Isabelle Mazille, Product Manager at Journey Latin America.

"And the gentle coastal city of Mancora is ideal for a post-sightseeing beach break, with high-end accommodation and humpback whale-watching from July to October."

An increased train schedule means that it's easy to visit Machu Picchu on a day trip from the Sacred Valley, but Peru's home to a host of less-visited archaeological gems, including Choquequirao in the south and Chan Chan in the northwest.

Adventure travellers can tackle high-altitude hikes beyond the Inca Trail, such as the Salkantay Trek and Ausangate.

Gastronomy is another major draw, with Lima featured in the 2018 series finale of BBC's *MasterChef* and Peruvian restaurants now regularly topping many of the world's best lists.

Cruise & train

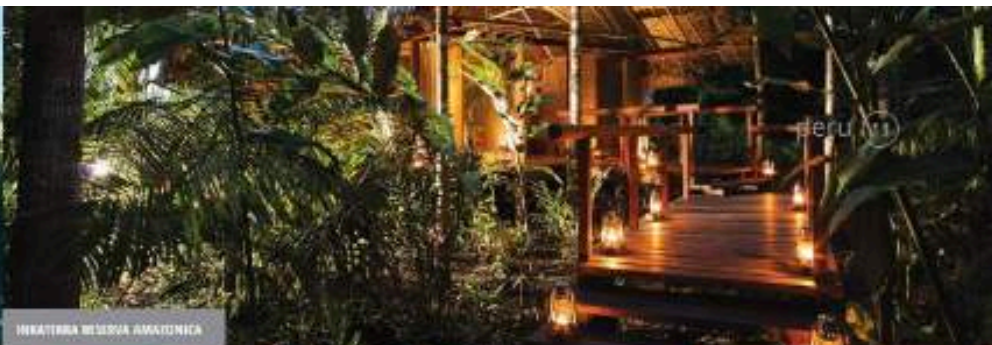
Departing from the jungle town of Iquitos, Aqua Expeditions offers three-, four- and seven-night itineraries on its ship *Aria Amazon*, exploring the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve in northeast Peru.

Spread over two decks, 16 stylish river-facing suites come with picture windows and expert naturalist guides take guests to spot sloth, calman, monkeys and more. Gastronomy is also high on the agenda. Launching in August 2020, the 20-suite *Aqua Nera* will follow the same model. ▶



THE AMAZON

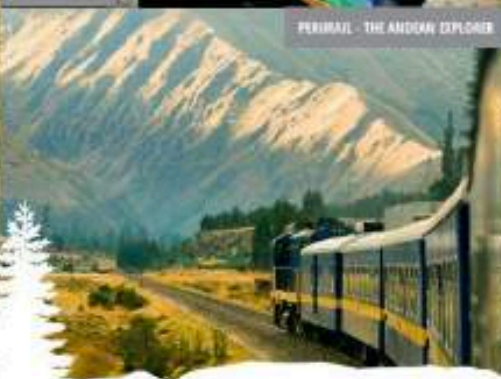
Hiking, Andes



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COLCA CANYON



PERURAIL - THE ANDEAN EXPLORER



PERUVIAN ENTERTAINMENT

► Also offering luxury on the Amazon is Delfin, the first Relais & Châteaux cruise, with three options: *Delfin III* with 22 suites, *Delfin II* with 14, and *Delfin I* with just four.

La Perla's three boats and three-, four- and seven-night cruises are a mid-range option.

Cruise lines including Princess, Celebrity, Oceania, Norwegian and P&O have the port of Callao near Lima on their South American itineraries, and Regent Seven Seas sails from Miami to Lima on its 15-night Paradise to Peru cruise, with the option for a three-night land extension.

Getting to Machu Picchu by train has never been easier. PeruRail and IncaRail both have various options from Cusco or Ollantaytambo, depending on the season.

The *Belmond Hiram Bingham* train – Latin America's Orient Express – throws in old-world glamour, cocktails and fine dining. South America's first luxury sleeper train, while the 24 ensuite-cabin *Belmond Andean Explorer*, is an opulent hotel-on-wheels that whisks guests on a two-night journey from Cusco to Lake Titicaca and on to Arequipa.

Sell it: Kuoni offers a 21-night Paradise to Peru Stay & Cruise holiday, including British Airways flights from Heathrow and transfers. The price for departure on October 31, based on two adults sharing, is from £9,995pp. kuoni.co.uk

Staying in luxury lodges

Inkaterra has been blazing the ecotourism trail for more than 40 years, with seven properties, including its sprawling cloud-forest sanctuary, Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, and three rustic-luxe Amazon lodges next to the wildlife-rich Tambopata National Reserve in southeast Peru. They all help to support conservation projects, including rainforest reforestation and a spectacled bear rescue centre.

As well as trains, Belmond operates six hotels in Peru, including the historic Hotel Monasterio and Palacio Nazarenas in Cusco, Las Casitas in the majestic Colca Canyon and Sanctuary Lodge, the only hotel at the entrance to Machu Picchu.

Luxury lodging includes the art-filled Hotel B in Barranco, Lima's buzziest barrio, Titilaka on the shores of Lake Titicaca, both Relais & Châteaux, and the landmark Country Club Lima Hotel. Hotels due to be unveiled by 2021 include six Hiltons in Lima and a Sheraton in Cusco.

Sell it: Rainbow Tours has a 12-night Luxury Peru with Belmond itinerary with stays at Belmond's properties in Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley, plus tickets for the Belmond Andean Explorer sleeper train, from £5,490pp including flights and transfers. rainbowtours.co.uk

Adventure all the way

Peru offers plenty for adventurers, from high-altitude hiking to mountain biking and horse riding through remote villages.

As well as the Lares Adventure and the challenging seven-day lodge-to-lodge Salkantay Trek, Mountain Lodges of Peru is offering three nights in the Sacred Valley with an optional excursion to Machu Picchu. Other new programmes focus on yoga and wellness, archi-astronomy and Andean festivals. With the new X.O Art House, it has three boutique hotels in Cusco.

Tucked into a quiet corner of the Sacred Valley and surrounded by Inca terraces, Explora's first lodge outside Chile – the all-inclusive Explora Valle Sagrado – is less hotel, more luxe base camp and offers 30 different 'explorations', most on two feet or two wheels, that take guests to deserted Inca ruins and up snow-capped peaks for the ultimate mix of action and leisure.

Sell it: National Geographic Expeditions offers a 10-day Peru: Machu Picchu Inn to Inn Trek itinerary, including hiking the Cordillera de Vilcabamba. Prices start from £5270pp, including accommodation, meals, transfers and an expert adventure guide. Group sizes are restricted to 12 and tours depart between April and October 2020. nationalgeographicexpeditions.co.uk

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