



Machu Picchu (with a baby) - everything you need to know

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by Hasmita Nair • Travel, Uncategorized • 0 Comments

It feels so good to blog again! The only reason I'm able to do it is because I've just flown back from South America and I'm still jetlagged, hence able to stay up a bit. I miss blogging and sharing so much, I just wish there was a way to get the posts from my head onto the blog instantly. I'm still on maternity leave and have my hands full with Arin, so have very little free time to blog.

I really wanted to get this post out because when I was deliberating taking my 9 month old baby to Peru and to Machu Picchu, I found a total of 2 blog posts and a few TripAdvisor threads and really struggled to make up my mind. I read up on the worst case scenarios of altitude sickness which are super scary.. more so because the baby can't really tell you what's wrong if there is an issue. I went to see a travel doctor, researched a ton and no one could give me conclusive advice about altitude sickness and babies. The advice I went on was "if he gets sick, is moody, doesn't eat, or is extra sleepy, assume it's altitude sickness and descend 500m."

When looking at the altitudes, MP actually isn't high. Our hotel there was 2000m above sea level. JHB is 1700m above sea level! Most ski resorts would be way higher. Now I'm not a medical professional and please don't take what I did as gospel, but so far with the baby I've tried to be sensible and practical and not be paranoid or over cocoon him. I've taken him on the tube, to public playgroups, and generally all over the place from when he was 2 weeks old. He hasn't been sick once in 9 months and is perfectly healthy otherwise so I figured I could trust my judgement. I also feel like I know my baby and I'd know if he was fussing because he's tired vs. if something was seriously wrong. We already postponed our South America trip last year because I was pregnant and was worried about Zika, and this year we had a wedding in Sao Paulo so it was perfect timing to add on Peru. I'm so glad we decided to go ahead and do the trip with him because it's not as rough as people make it out to be, and it's completely doable. You just need to go slow and be flexible. He threw up once on the first day (likely car sickness which he's prone to), but otherwise he experienced no altitude sickness. I also designed the trip such that we were constantly descending in altitude so that incase he did experience symptoms, we could resolve them the next day.

So – what do you need to know about planning a trip to Machu Picchu?

Firstly. It's a hack to get to. Your journey will look something like this.

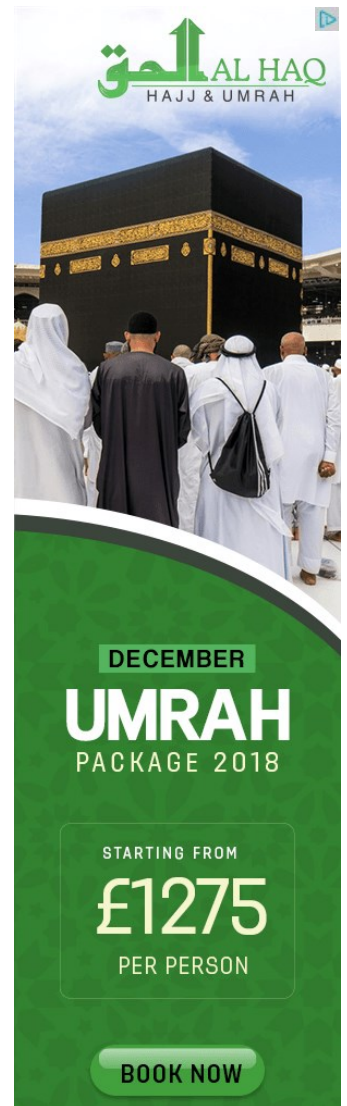
- Arrive in Cusco, likely via Lima. Cusco is the "city" closest to MP with an airport.
- Cusco – Ollaytaytambo (main train station) by car (around an hour)
- Ollaytaytambo – MP by train (around 2 hours)
- Shuttle bus to the actual MP site (30 mins)

Now, it's probably possible to do this and see MP in 2 days, but we wanted to rest quite a bit in between and have

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flex with the baby so we did it in 4 days, with private drivers. This was quite costly. Tours, transfers and tickets came to about GBP700 for the both of us – not including hotel rooms or flights. We booked the entire trip – hotels, tours and transfers through [Inkaterra](#), a luxury group of hotels in the area, and it was all excellent. The rooms are cosy, with fireplaces and lounge areas, and all the hotels are set in beautiful locations with beautiful public areas where you can chill. The food throughout at all the hotels was amazing. It was great having our tours depart right from our hotel, and to have one point of contact to discuss everything with. I even had a contact on Whatsapp ready to answer all my questions. They were also very organised with baby stuff – all the restaurants had high chairs and cots. They prepared special food for Arin each day which was really helpful.

Day 1: Cusco. Land and leave.

You need to start your trip to MP by finding your way to Cusco, and probably will need to fly via Lima to get there. Lima is a hole with nothing going for it except restaurants, so we opted to fly to Cusco from London with one stopover in Bogota.

When I researched about altitude acclimatization I found conflicting recommendations. Some people recommend you stay in Cusco to acclimatize to the altitude, while others recommend you immediately leave to a lower altitude area like Ollaytayambo or Urubamba and then acclimatize slowly. We did the latter and after speaking to locals and our guides there, this was definitely the right decision. We all felt awful when landing in Cusco, but once we started driving to lower altitudes, we felt better. We spent time in Cusco on the last day and didn't feel the altitude at all.



So right after landing in Cusco, we drove around 1.5 hours and spent the night at [Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba](#) – a spectacular property in the middle of the sacred valley.



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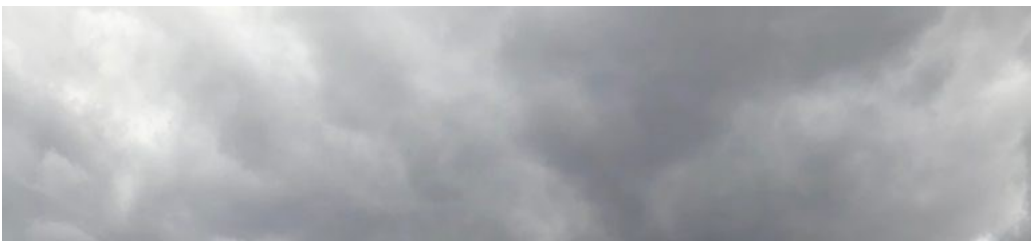


Padkos we picked up en route



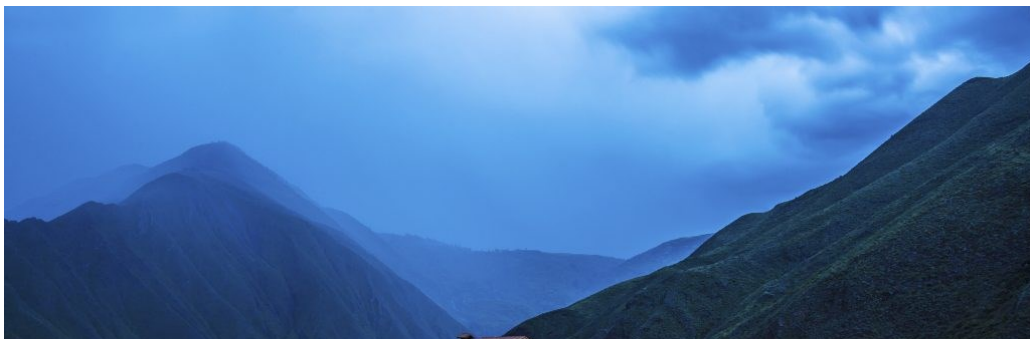
And padkos we elected to skip – guinea pig!

It's situated in remote farmland so there's nothing to do except admire the views and relax – perfect when you've just landed from a long flight.





There, I had the best spa treatment of my life – in their stunning treatment rooms overlooking their farm, and we got some much needed R&R in the luxe rooms. Thankfully breakfast opened at 05:30am and we were the first ones there!

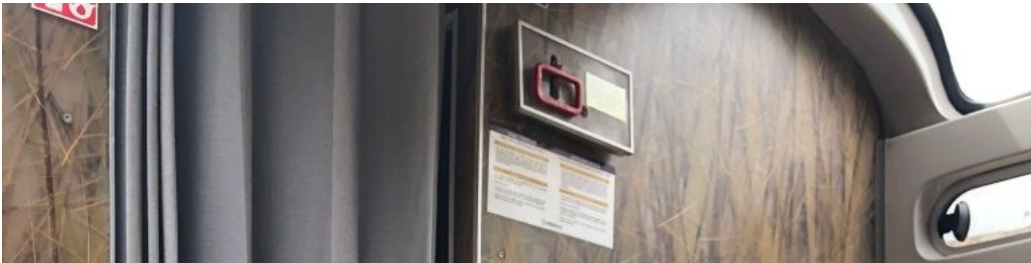




Day 2: Ollaytaytambo – MP and overnight

On day 2, we drove about 45 mins to Ollaytaytambo, walked around a bit in the cute city square, and then boarded our train to MP.

I booked train tickets on the [PeruRail Vistadome](#) and it was great – we even got served tea and brownies! The train has huge windows and the view was spectacular. On the way back we tried the other train company, [Inca Rail](#), and I found PeruRail to be more spacious and overall nicer. The views en route were spectacular. The train tickets cost around \$170 return. Pricey, right!





Rishav was super excited about the brownies!







We arrived in MP mid afternoon and checked into [Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#), where we spent two nights. The hotel is walking distance from the train station and the bus stop to get to the MP site. Arin's jetlag was pretty bad on this day, and it was the only day of the trip where he had a meltdown. He fell asleep on my lap in the train (which was his bedtime UK time) and when we had to wake him to walk to the hotel he was not happy. We managed to get him to sleep again, but this was at 5pm – so we were confined to our room and had to order room service. Good thing the room looked like this! I loved the fireplace and the outdoor terrace. I would say that was the toughest part about travelling with a baby – we were quite restricted in the evenings.

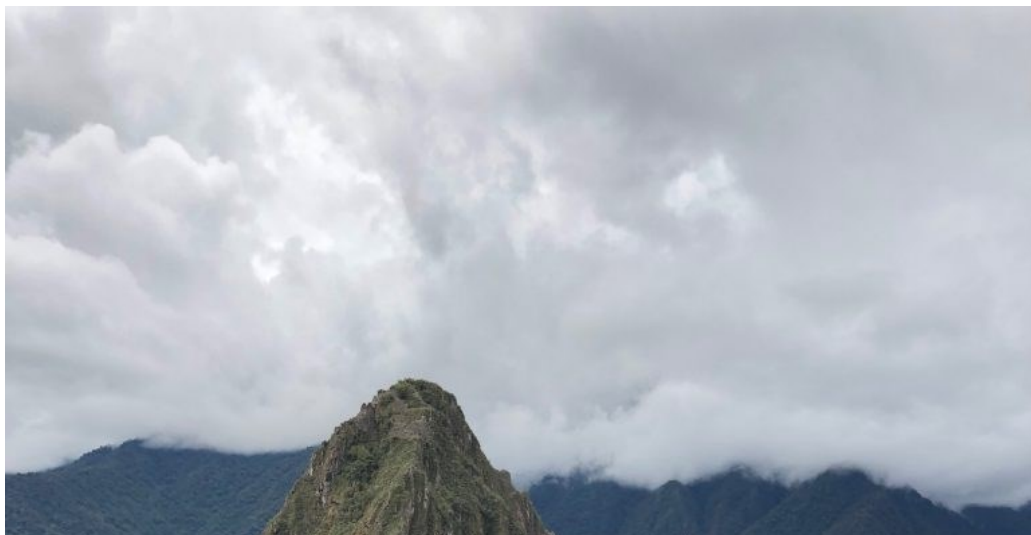




Day 3: MP!

We woke up super hyped and ready for our MP adventure. We went around midday, which is a quieter time to go. I bought our tickets in advance from [this site](#) (the official one) at US\$40 pp, and asked our hotel to organise shuttle bus tickets for us (US\$24 pp). The good thing about having a baby is that we were able to skip all queues! New rules state that you have to have a tour guide when entering the site. I had read online that you can find one at the entrance, but I didn't want that faff so I booked one from Inkaterra. This worked really well as we had an escort from practically our hotel room to the site. I usually don't travel with tour guides and prefer to explore myself, but in the case of MP it was really helpful in order to fully appreciate the grandeur of the site and also learn about the history behind specific features.

The experience of getting to MP is WOW. You drive up a windy mountain until you are almost in the clouds. The scenery and setting is already incredible... then when you see MP in that setting it just blows you away. The pictures don't do justice. It definitely deserves to be on the 7 wonders of the world list. Arin managed fine – we did a good 2 hours of walking before he started to get cranky. The carrier worked fine as well. There were quite a lot of stairs at the start but Rishav and I took turns on those, and the rest was flat.





Without the baby we probably would have got on a train back to Cusco, but we stayed an extra night in MP.

Day 4: Cusco

Early the next day we left for Cusco. Our hotel, [Inkaterra La Casona](#) was beautiful, and we were excited to be in a city and do some exploring. However, it didn't quite meet expectations.



We went to check out the main square, where we got harassed by people trying to sell us stuff. We then had our sites set on a sunset bar, but trying to navigate a pram through all the cobblestones and STAIRS was a nightmare. We kept thinking, Google maps says just 300m more... we can do it. But just when you thought you climbed the last flight of stairs, there were more. We eventually gave up and did a quick dinner close to the hotel. We also struggled a bit with food for Arin when eating at restaurants because we had to order off the main menu and there weren't always baby friendly options. I think I can presume he lost some weight on this trip because he wouldn't eat that well in the day and ended up skipping dinner because of jetlag 😞

From here, we flew to Lima the next day where we pretty much just ate for 3 days.

Here are some resources I used to plan my trip:

Machu Picchu Guide 2019 exclusive insider tips written by PERU HOP experts

Below we have compiled a 2019 up-to-date guide to Machu Picchu, one of the most inspiring archaeological sites ever discovered. People from all over the world gather in Peru to revel in its beauty and grandeur. Machu Picchu is only accessible from Cusco. Cusco is accessible via air or land. If travelling by land, Peru ... Continue reading



<https://www.famileetravel.com/blog/2018/10/19/bringing-a-baby-and-toddler-to-machu-picchu>



MACHU PICCHU WITH KIDS

Visiting Machu Picchu with a baby and a toddler seems like a far flung idea to most. The altitude, the hiking, the water and food, how did we manage? These are some of the hundreds of questions I got asked on social media when we visited. It seems there is a lot of confusion about ... Continue reading



Travel mad mum

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A big thank you to Inkaterra for hosting us for this part of the trip – check out www.inkaterra.com for more inspo

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