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# Nina Garcia's Insider Guide to Cusco

BY [NINA GARCIA](#) PUBLISHED: FEB 10, 2026

SAVE ARTICLE



Courtesy of Nina Garcia

*You're reading Nina Garcia's Insider Guide newsletter, exclusively available to ELLE All Access members. This edition was originally published in January 2026.*

There's truly no more magical place to visit than Cusco. Witnessing nearby Machu Picchu is a spectacular moment, but I've found that the Peruvian city itself—and the surrounding area—offer a diverse set of experiences, as well. You can see Incan ruins, the Andean cloud forests, and incredible mountain views from an elevation of more than 11,000 feet. When you're not going on outdoor adventures, the city offers historic hotels, world-class restaurants serving meals made from ingredients often grown on-site, and one-of-a-kind shopping opportunities. Peru is the absolute best place to buy alpaca everything, from throws to sweaters, silver homewares, and antiques.

The last time I visited Cusco was for the wedding of family friends in the Sacred Valley, home of many ancient Incan sites in the Andes, including Machu Picchu. I always choose a hotel in this area for my first night, taking a few hours to lie down and making sure to eat a light, nourishing meal as I adjust to the altitude. The most fun way to get to Machu Picchu is on the famous Belmond Hiram Bingham luxury train. The ride winds through the Sacred Valley, and from the observation car, passengers get unparalleled views of mountains, the jungle, and the Urubamba River. Lunch and drinks are offered on the trip, and it turns into a party.

## BEST TIME TO GO:

The weather is ideal during the dry season, which lasts from May to September, while the shoulder seasons, late April and October, are similarly temperate, with the bonus of having fewer crowds. Try to avoid traveling during the November to March rainy season. LATAM Airlines offers one of the most robust schedules of daily flights to Cusco, connecting through Lima. The airport is roughly a 10-to-20-minute cab ride from the city center of Cusco.

## Sleep



Courtesy of Nina Garcia + Design Leah Romero

### *Also try:*

- [Las Qolqas Eco-Lodge](#)
  - [JW Marriott El Convento Cusco](#)
  - [Tambo del Inka Resort & Spa](#)
  - [\*\*Inkaterra La Casona\*\*](#)
  - [Mountain View Experience](#)
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