



PhotoXpeditions

## PERU: THE SACRED VALLEY OF THE INCAS AND MACHU PICCHU WITH ESSDRAS M SUAREZ

At one time Peru was one of the largest and most powerful empires the world had ever known and the ancient Incan Empire was one of grandeur and greatness. One that simply far exceeds the preeminence of Machu Picchu.

Explore the southern part of this exciting country with Pulitzer prizewinner photographer Essdras M Suarez – whose hands-on approach will help you become a better photographer. Learn from an experienced professional how to document a place and its people in the best possible way and when it matters the most: when things are happening right in front of your lens.

As you make your images, Essdras will be right there look at them and offer pointers, this allowing you to immediately improve the overall quality and impact of your visuals and take those “one of a kind shots” while still at the site.

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**TRIP DURATION:**

10 days, 9 nights

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Costa del Sol Hotel, Aranwa Sacred Valle Hotel, local guest house, Sumac Hotel, and Palacio del Inka Hotel

**DATES:**

August 22-31, 2017

**PRICE:** 4,395 USD per Person/Double Occupancy. For single occupation add 995 USD.

Includes: Photographic Instruction by Pulitzer Prize Winning Photojournalist Essdras M Suarez, Accommodations: 10 Days / 9 nights, internal transportation, entrance fees where required per itinerary, meals as noted in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner).

Does not include: Tips and gratuities, air transportation (International flight and flight Lima - Cuzco - Lima are not included in the price), alcoholic beverages, purchases of personal nature



## ITINERARY

A photographer's delight, with awe-inspiring landscapes serving as a backdrop to a truly compelling and complex culture, Peru fuses both Incan and colonial elements. Although its astounding stone relics still cover the chiseled peaks of the Andes and throughout the Sacred Valley, this vast empire all began in the towering highlands in the ancient city of Cusco, the capital of the Incas and today the beating heart of historical and cultural Peru.

This 10-day trip offers you an opportunity to experience and photographically capture the:

- Sacred Valley where you will discover the wonders and ruins of Pisac and the marvelous Ollantaytambo.
- Culture and daily life of the Mullak'as Misminay and the Maras Salt mines.
- Explore the magnificent and world-famous Machu Picchu
- Historic and artistically infused city of Cusco.

## DAY 1. LIMA

Arrive by air into Peru's capital, Lima, where you will be met and transported to the nearby Costa del Sol hotel. You will be welcomed to the trip with a reception and dinner, where you can get to know your leaders, fellow photographers and prepare for the upcoming adventure.

Lodging: Costa del Sol (D)

## DAY 2. CUSCO - SACRED VALLEY (PISAC AND VILLAGE OF MARAS)

After a hearty breakfast, we will head back to the airport for the 1.5-hour flight to Cuzco. Look out the window to see the great snowcapped Andes rising in their jagged splendor. Nestled among the towering peaks is our destination: the ancient city of Cusco.

Upon landing at 10,950 feet above sea level, you will be greeted by our expert guides and embark on a spectacular journey through the Río Urubamba Valley, also known as the Sacred Valley.

Our first stop will be the rural farming region of Pisac -- one of many rustic and traditional villages. It has acted as an important place of trade for rural communities for centuries. Spreading out from the central square, Pisac's artisan market is an explosion of color and activity, with vendors -- the indigenous Quechua people who come from the surrounding highlands - selling items including jewelry, ceramics, decorative alpaca fleece and traditional scarves.

Next our journey takes us to the tiny Village of Maras and its centuries-old salt mines. The town is well known for its nearby salt evaporation ponds that have been in use since Inca times. Perched at more than 11,000 feet above sea level, the village's heritage harks back to salt exploitation as far back as Incan times and it provides a fascinating glimpse into an industry and society that has changed very little over the centuries. Salt has always been a vital commodity to the community and is still farmed in Maras's privately owned salt ponds.

Then, we will travel to Aranwa and check into the luxurious Aranwa Sacred Valley Hotel and Spa. Engulfed in pristine nature, and with no noise or bright lights to spoil the solitude, the Aranwa offers its guests first-rate modern amenities and comforts with a subtle Peruvian style and décor.

Photo Session: After dinner, we'll meet for an informal discussion of what we have seen and photographed. Thus, preparing us for the activities of the days to come.

Lodging: Aranwa Sacred Valley Hotel and Spa (B, D)

## DAY 3. OLLANTAYTAMBO, SACRED VALLEY

We will begin the day travelling to Ollantaytambo, one of the most important Incan sites in the country. The quaint little village of Ollantaytambo provides a master-class in the impeccable city planning for which the Incas are renowned.

As you climb the Terraces at Ollantaytambo, you will marvel at the construction. These terraces were built to a higher standard than common Inca agricultural terraces and have higher walls made of cut stones instead of rough fieldstones. This type of high-prestige terracing is also found in Inca royal estates. Look across the valley at Pinkuylluna and see the Inca storehouses high in the mountains and wonder how they Incas managed to access them.

Next we will step back in time and walk the village's cobbled streets amid the remains of this ancient fortress of gray and rose-colored granite, discover its

ancient baths and get a wonderful insight into 13th-century Inca life.

Return to our hotel and take time to review and select your three best images and put them on a thumb drive for submission to Essdras.

**Photo Session:** Late afternoon we will gather and look at the submitted images. This is an anonymous-photography review by Essdras, where it is your choice whether you acknowledge that you are the owner of the images being reviewed. This is a great learning experience.

**Lodging:** Aranwa Sacred Valley Hotel. (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 4. MULLAK'AS MISMINAV, SACRED VALLEY**

Today we will travel Village of Mullak'as Misminay where we will spend two truly special days.

We will experience a "one-of-a-kind" opportunity to be welcomed into a tight-knit Peruvian indigenous community that still lives in much the same way as their forefathers. Here, you will get to know the local community and photograph their amazing way of life:

- Become fully immersed in their lifestyle
- Discover and photograph their arts and crafts, pre-Hispanic customs, the plants and animals with which they coexist

The 300 families who live in Mullak'as Misminay not only have a profound commitment to preserving their ancient traditions, but they are also deeply connected to both nature and the wider universe.

Amid the stunning natural scenery, where green slopes soar toward the clouds and condors circle the blue skies overhead, enjoy a gourmet picnic of locally grown products, prepared by the people of the community. We will learn about their customs, learn about how they make yarn from lamb's wool, what plants are

used for natural color dyes and how those same plants have medicinal qualities.

**Lodging:** Local guesthouse in the village. (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 5. MULLAK'AS MISMINAV, SACRED VALLEY**

We will continue your photographic exploration of the community where we will have the chance to spend more intimate, quality time with artisans, weavers, farmers and cooks as they go about their daily jobs – all of which makes for some astounding photographic opportunities.

Tonight we will sample the Andean Peruvian specialty of pachamanca, comprised of marinated meat cooked on hot stones and served alongside potatoes, lima beans or other produce of the mountain region. Pachamanca is a communal affair and an important tradition that dates back to Incan times.

**Lodging:** Local guesthouse in the village. (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 6. MACHU PICCHU, SACRED VALLEY**

After a short drive to Ollantaytambo Station, we step aboard the beautiful Vista Dome Train on its way to Aguas Calientes at the foot of Machu Picchu.

Sit back and enjoy the beautiful scenery on the about 2-hour train ride bound for the ancient capital of the Incas and one of the Seven New Wonders of the World.

Upon arrival, we will check into our hotel, then, we will begin our explorations of the grandest of the Incan citadels, the 550-year old Machu Picchu, which was built into the saddle between two forest-blanketed Andean peaks.

Despite the number of photographs you may have seen, nothing can prepare you for the experience of seeing this magnificent site first-hand. We will weave

through the ruins, learning about the history and archaeology and, of course, receiving photographic guidance.

While we navigate the grassy terraces and the maze of infrastructure, photographing the fascinating, stonewalls, buildings and plazas, we will pay special attention to several key places:

- Intihuatana, the beautifully carved, ritual stone that points to the sun during the winter solstice.
- Sacred Plaza, that offers the condor's-eye view.
- Temple of the Sun, the rock-carved, temple whose windows allow the summer solstice sun to flood through. The Incas long believed in the energy and spirituality of this place and you will feel the undeniable atmosphere of one of the most significant and astounding archaeological sites in the world.

**Lodging:** Sumaq Hotel. (B,L,D)

#### **DAY 7. MACHU PICCHU - CUSCO**

Before the sun rises, set off on a pre-dawn walk to the Sun Gate to witness one of Machu Picchu's most spectacular displays. Watch the sun rise from behind the shadow of the mountain, slowly illuminating the great site as though on a grand stage. Spend the rest of the morning exploring the site or relaxing at the hotel.

In the afternoon we will take the 1½-hour train ride to Cusco and check in to the Palacio del Inka Hotel, a luxurious 500-year old mansion in the heart of the city and your home for the next two nights.

**Photo Session:** This afternoon, once again, we will gather and look at the submitted images that you have taken in the last few days. Essdras will offer constructive and educational comments on how to take your photography to the next level.

**Lodging:** Palacio del Inka Hotel. (B,L)



## **DAY 8. CUSCO**

This morning will set off to explore Cusco, the ancient capital of the Inca Empire and today one of Peru's most picturesque and fascinating destinations.

Cusco with its captivating blend of Peruvian cultures offers excellent photographic opportunities.

We will wander the cobbled streets on our way to Cusco's main square -- the Plaza de Armas -- and discover the colonial architecture and charming neighborhoods. The Plaza de Armas, anchored by the ornate Cusco Cathedral (Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption) and the Church La Compañía de Jesús, is always bustling with activity: local vendors, restaurants, musicians, artists, etc.

After lunch, we will regroup and visit the most ancient and curious neighborhood in Cusco -- San Blas -- with its narrow streets dating back to the 14th century. After the Spanish conquest it became a colonial parish with many colonial architectural influences. It is an area quite different to the rest of Cusco and, today, is known as the barrio de los artesanos (artisans' quarter).

Lodging: Palacio del Inka Hotel. (B)

## **DAY 9. CUSCO**

Today the Inca Temple of the Sun (The Coricancha) an important Inca temple complex dedicated to Inti, the sun god of the Incas.

The complex, built on a natural hill, is believed to have been constructed under the direction of the Inka ruler Viracocha about 1200 AD and later embellished by the Inka Pachacuti in the 1400s. Outside of high, amazingly constructed wall surrounding the temple (part of which is curved) is the beautiful Sacred Garden of the Sun.

Photo Session: Before dinner, join Essdras for a slideshow of the photos he

has taken over our time together along with his commentary on what caught his eye sufficiently for him to make the photograph.

Lodging: Palacio del Inka Hotel. (B, D)

## **DAY 10. CUSCO - LIMA AIRPORT**

After breakfast, we will transfer to the Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport for departures home. (B)

## **ABOUT ESSDRAS M SUAREZ**



Essdras M Suarez, a Pulitzer Prize Winner, worked as a photojournalist for over two decades. The last 12 for the Boston Globe, where he earned his second Pulitzer as part of the team covering the Boston Bombing Marathon. He has also covered stories such as the Columbine Shooting, Indonesia Tsunami, Iraq War and evacuation of Gaza. He has worked in over 50 countries around the world. Suarez, a Pulitzer Prizewinner, has covered stories such as the Boston Bombing Marathon, Columbine shooting, Indonesia Tsunami, and evacuation of Gaza. He has worked in about 50 countries around the world.

He has taught over 20 workshops nationally and internationally. He is also a USDOS expert speaker in Photojournalism specializing in Latin America. He was born in Panama and has been married for over 25 years.

He graduated from the University of Florida in 1993 with Bachelors in Science of Journalism and was bestowed Alumnus of Distinction award in 2010.

His passion for fitness and the martial arts spans over 20 years. He is also the founder of the visYoga™ An ever evolving physical-conditioning system which blends principles of yoga, martial arts, personal training, isometrics, stretching and relaxation.

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[www.essdrasm Suarez.com](http://www.essdrasm Suarez.com)

## **WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

This workshop is for photographers of all levels. Participants must bring a digital camera, laptop computer and software for organizing and presenting images.

## **TERMS & CONDITIONS**

To reserve space in this workshop, a \$750 per person deposit is required at the time of making the reservation. Deposits are due no later than 90 days prior to departure. Final payment is due no later than 60 days prior to departure unless indicated otherwise in the description of the tour or workshop. All payments must be made by credit card or wire transfer to Photo Xpeditions, LLC, and instructions for payments will be mailed upon confirmation of participation.

Photo Xpeditions reserves the right to cancel a reservation if full payment has not been received by 60 days prior to departure. For reservations made within 60 days of the departure date, full payment is required when the reservation is accepted. All cancellation notices must be received in writing and will become effective as of the date of the postmark. If you cancel 90 days or more prior to departure, a refund less an administrative

PhotoXpeditions reserves the right of canceling the workshop at any time if the minimum amount of students required for the workshop is not reached. If a workshop needs to be cancelled for this reason, a full refund will be given to all participants.

If you need more information or have questions, give us a call or drop us an email, we will respond promptly.

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