



Peru

Inca Kola and the Quest for Choquequirao

20 Days

Join us on a classic expedition to deepest darkest Peru. Step back in time and explore remote ruins far from the madding crowds of Machu Picchu. We undertake a classic 8-day trek through spectacular mountains and high passes, get hands on with a local community project as well as get an adrenalin fix with white-water rafting and mountain biking. Interspersed amongst all this is the ever present and colourful Peruvian and Quechua culture. It promises to be a great adventure!



[Learn more about our Carbon Labels](#)

Your Recommended Expedition Itinerary

- Days 1 - 2** **Travel to Peru & welcome to Cusco** LD
After arriving in Lima, we will hop onto a connecting flight to Cusco. We will be met by our local STC Expedition Leader and transferred to the hotel. After freshening up, we have our first introduction to Latin America with a "Locals' guide to Cusco". This short walking tour is a great way to get our bearings and acclimatise to the altitude. The beautiful historic centre was declared a World Heritage Site in 1983 with Inca and colonial architecture evident all around. This evening, we have a full briefing for the adventure ahead and tuck into our first traditional meal.
- Day 3** **Cusco City Tour** BLD
Today, we enjoy a city tour to discover the beauty and the magic of Cusco, the Imperial Capital of the Incas. Our tour starts at the Koricancha and the Santo Domingo church. According to the Chroniclers who wrote during the period directly after the Spanish Conquest, the Koricancha was the most sacred and the most important site in the Quechua world. Next will be the Cusco Cathedral and the imposing Fortress of Sacsayhuaman. Here the stones that form the walls are the size of a truck, they have been carefully cut and perfectly fitted together and altogether a very impressive Incan construction! From here we head up the hill to the Tambomachay Archaeological Complex. This was an important ceremonial centre during Inca times. It is sometimes called the Bath of the Incas, and the cult of water used to perform their rites here.
- Day 4** **Project phase** BLD
Suitable for all cycling skill levels, with paved route and trail options, this activity will be an excellent way to explore Cusco's surroundings. Our 35km route passes through quaint villages, magnificent mountain vistas, Lake Huaypo, the archaeological sites of Moray and Maras and the salt pools or Salineras. Here, some 5,000 salt ponds slowly evaporate and offer up their tasty minerals. Lastly, we will descend a steep route to Pichingoto to reach the Sacred Valley. There will also be an opportunity to test our bartering skills and purchase souvenirs with an afternoon visit to the colourful and traditional market at Pisac.
- Day 5** **Start Choquequirao Trek** BLD
Our private bus will pick us up from our hotel for the 4-hour drive to the trailhead at Cachora (2,800m). We load our equipment onto horses and begin our 8-day trek! First, we climb for two and a half hours to the Capuliyoc pass at 2,750m. We then descend into the Apurimac canyon for two and a half hours to Chiquisca, where we camp for the night. Hiking time approx. 5hrs.
- Day 6** **Chiquiska to Choquequirao** BLD
We have an early start to make the most of the cool morning and descend for one hour to Playa Rosalina, where we cross the Apurimac River. We then begin to climb steeply for two hours until arriving at the community of Santa Rosa, where we will stop for a rest in the shade. Our climb continues for another two and half hours until we reach Marampata - our lunch-spot! A final gentle two-hour hike brings us to our campsite at Choquequirao (3,103m). Hiking time approx. 8hrs.



Day 7	<p>Choquequirao Archaeological Site</p> <p>Today's focus is to explore Choquequirao! Upon waking up early, we'll head off on a guided tour of the site during which we'll be shown the most important and interesting sections of the city. While learning about the Inca culture and the close relation between Choquequirao and Machu Picchu. Compared to Machu Picchu, little is known about Choquequirao even though it has existed much longer. Originally, discovered in the 17th century by the Spanish, it laid abandoned and forgotten until recent years when tourism raised the profile of the city and exploration began. Even with this increased interest, only 25% of the city has been explored and many of its secrets still wait to be discovered. After our tour we'll head back to our campsite for the night. Hiking time approx. 6hrs.</p>	BLD
Day 8	<p>Choquequirao to Maizal</p> <p>We start our ascent from our campsite to the Pass of Choquequirao (3,250m), entering cloud forest where we find polylepis trees, epiphytes and bromelids. On the other side as we descend the Yuracmayo river we pass some terracing that supplied Choquequirao and finally arrive at the river bed, which we cross. We continue our ascent until reaching Maizal, a balcony with an impressive view of the Yuracmayo and Yanama gorges, as they join and rush towards the Apurimac Canyon. It's a natural viewpoint, looking out to the west with beautiful sunsets where we camp. Hiking time approx. 5hrs.</p>	BLD
Day 9	<p>Maizal to Yanama</p> <p>The trail starts climbing steeply towards Mina Victoria, an Inca and later colonial mine. We hike along a hill called Qoriwayrachina, where recent archaeological explorations have taken place. Once over the pass at (3,900m), we have lunch and begin our descent to the village of Yanama with views of the mountain country and Mt. Pumasillo towering above us and our campsite below. Hiking time approx. 8hrs.</p>	BLD
Day 10	<p>Yanama to Totora</p> <p>Heading up the Yanama valley, past fields of farmers we reach the trailhead below the Quiswar pass. Cross over the pass, beautiful views of Mt. Salkantay and Humantay on a clear day. Descend on the winding trail to the valley of Totora below, camping in the vicinity of the Village. Hiking time approx. 8hrs.</p>	BLD
Day 11	<p>Totora to La Playa</p> <p>Today we continue our hike with an easy walk along the Salkamayo River, enjoying the increasingly lush vegetation, passing waterfalls, passion fruit and coffee plantations. In the afternoon we arrive at our camp at the village of La Playa (2,155m), where we can refresh in the river before dinner! Hiking time approx. 7hrs.</p>	BLD
Day 12	<p>La Playa to Aguas Calientes</p> <p>After breakfast, we cross the river and start climbing through coffee and fruit plantations to reach El Mirador (2,860m) from where we have an exceptional view of Machu Picchu. We enjoy a last lunch at the recently restored Inca site of Llaqtapata (2,650m) with views of both Machu Picchu and Salkantay before a 2-hour descent brings us to the small train station of Hydro- Electrica. A short train ride will take us to Aguas Calientes and our hostel for the night. Hiking time approx. 7hrs.</p>	BLD
Day 13	<p>Machu Picchu</p> <p>Another early start this morning for breakfast before we catch a short bus journey to the gates of Machu Picchu! Here we will watch the sunrise. After entering the Citadel we will enjoy a guided walking tour (approximately two hours) of the citadel complex. A little later we walk back down to Aguas Calientes for lunch and board the train back to Ollantaytambo. Finally we transfer to our project and home for the next few days. The journey takes about 30 minutes.</p>	BLD
Days 14 - 17	<p>Project in Huilloc Community</p> <p>We spend the next three days working on a project at a small community in the Sacred Valley. Exact details will be finalised closer to the time of our departure, but previous groups have worked on footpath restoration, water irrigation schemes, refurbishing greenhouses and installing ablution blocks. Whilst on project, we'll be getting to know the everyday life of the villagers and their traditions, skills and handicrafts as we learn about weaving, animal husbandry and farming. We'll be camping on the edge of the village or, depending on group size, we will stay in homestays in the village with two or three students to a family. After breakfast on day 17, we leave our new friends and return to the capital city Cusco. The afternoon is ours to explore the city, shop or relax.</p>	BLD

Day 18

Chuquicahuana Rafting

BLD

This great day of rafting takes us down a beautiful section of the Urubamba river. Rafting is a fun sport and this fantastic day out is suitable for almost all ages and abilities. The section we run is usually the class III-IV Chuquicahuana section located above Cusco, where the river is cleaner and more fun. It takes two hours to drive to the river and on arrival we inflate the rafts and provide a full safety briefing and instruction in the art of white-water rafting. We then set off for approximately two hours of rafting, making the most of the gentle start to practice our technique. The river then flows through a beautiful canyon, filled with great rapids, torrent ducks and views of the surrounding peaks. Having reached our 'takeout point', we enjoy a full picnic lunch and relaxing in the sauna. This afternoon we return to Cusco for a well-deserved rest.

Days 19 - 20

Return to UK

BL

This morning we will be picked up from the hotel and transferred to the airport in time for our flight to Lima. Here we change planes for our overnight flight back to the UK, arriving on day 20.



Look what's included:

- International flights
- All accommodation, transportation and activities
- All food as described above
- Local, bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC leader
- Parent and student trip launch presentation
- Pre-travel training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for school staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Emergency Medical & Repatriation Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Donations to two carbon & conservation charities
- Free Fairtrade t-shirt for every participant and teacher
- Free travel guide book to your destination

What's not included:

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations or Covid tests
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters (ask for guidance)
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Personal effects and cancellation insurance



A word about Responsible Tourism

On our expeditions and educational journeys, we strive to connect teachers and students with the people they meet, nurture the cultures they experience and protect the beautiful environments they are lucky enough to explore.

Many companies talk the talk, few truly walk the walk. We are far from perfect, but we are leading the way in sustainability in the school travel sector. In 2018 we were the first UK travel company to become **Travelife Certified** – a verified sustainability certificate formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



This is our passion, and we'd love to tell you more about it in due course. In the meantime, for more information on some of the steps we take as a company to make our operations more sustainable, please visit:

<https://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/what-do-we-do/>

Trees for Life

Physical Rating for this trip: Grade 4



Fitness is important at this grade, which compares to extended walking in mountainous terrain such as the Lakes or Snowdonia, for up to three to five days in a row. It is likely that significant sections of a trip will involve walking and trekking with some days up to eight hours. Some of the trip could be at altitudes of up to 4,500m, but the itinerary will be designed with appropriate acclimatisation in mind. Be prepared for significant possible variations in temperatures throughout the tour. There is not usually time to 'get fit' on these treks, so a two to four-month fitness improvement programme would ensure you get the most out of the trip.

Cultural Rating for this trip: Grade 3



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



Travel Safety & Other Expedition Training

Preparing students and teachers for their upcoming adventure is an opportunity to teach important life skills and a vital part of our overall approach to safety management. Please ask for your quote for the training schedule specific to your expedition. Topics covered will include:

Responsible Tourism workshop

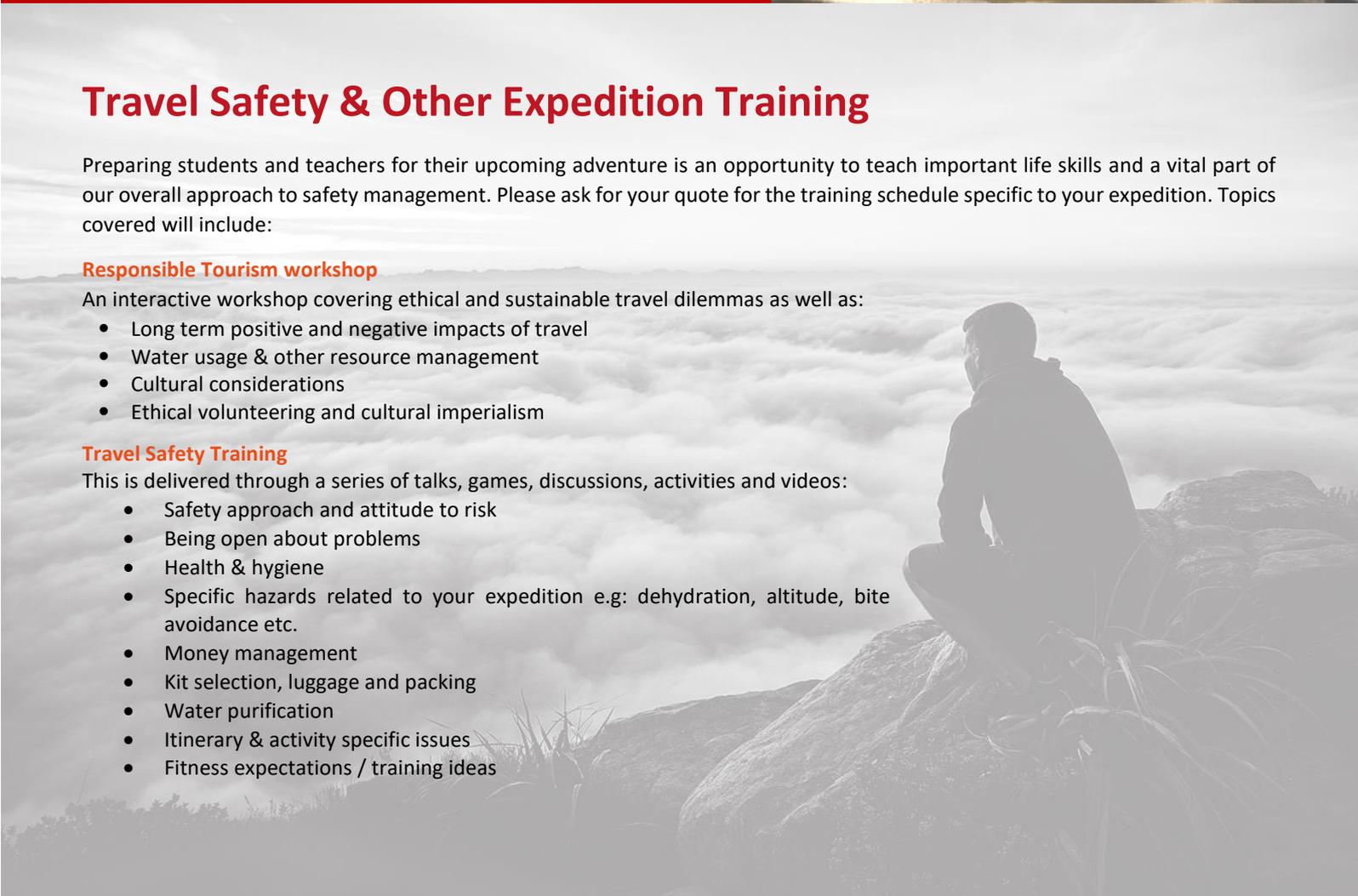
An interactive workshop covering ethical and sustainable travel dilemmas as well as:

- Long term positive and negative impacts of travel
- Water usage & other resource management
- Cultural considerations
- Ethical volunteering and cultural imperialism

Travel Safety Training

This is delivered through a series of talks, games, discussions, activities and videos:

- Safety approach and attitude to risk
- Being open about problems
- Health & hygiene
- Specific hazards related to your expedition e.g: dehydration, altitude, bite avoidance etc.
- Money management
- Kit selection, luggage and packing
- Water purification
- Itinerary & activity specific issues
- Fitness expectations / training ideas





A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey

1 Ask for your personalised quote & further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an adventure that's just right for you and your students. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk and threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your Pre-Booking Information Pack too.

3 Arrange an expedition launch evening

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening covering the itinerary, safety management, the build-up to the trip and lots more. There is also plenty of opportunity for questions.



The home of the modern, innovative school expedition, where a sustainable, ethical approach guarantees unique experiences and a life enhancing adventure.



Our school trips and educational tours are all about maximising the learning opportunities of travel. It's all here, the humble school tour has just come of age.



Adventures, holidays and cultural journeys for teachers looking to 'Escape the Classroom' and discover more about our amazing world, its people and places.



"I am being completely serious when I say that I won't ever run a school trip without you guys. I trust you and your team completely - and the in-country staff that you carefully cultivate and train are a cut above the rest."

Teacher feedback, King's High Warwick

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