



Latin America

Trek Tips® 2012

Welcome to the diverse and exciting world of Grand American Adventures!

You are soon to embark on a unique adventure to the world's most exciting and diverse region. From Costa Rica's tropical beaches to Peru's mountainous Inca Trail, you will soon be sharing some of these spectacular destinations with a group of like-minded travellers from all over the world. Our treks are active adventures designed to maximise your experience in-country.

Our Grand American Adventures professional guides will show you the highlights of each location, organise all of the details of the trek and provide you with insight into the local cultures. Our local guides are hired by our regional operators and they utilise their local knowledge and contacts to provide the group an unforgettable experience. Our guides are at least bi-lingual (English/Spanish) and are happy to answer any questions that you may have during the tour.

During the trek, we will travel with the safety, convenience and freedom of our own private vehicles. At times you may also travel by boat, horse, airplane, on foot or even by train - depending on local conditions and which makes the best sense logistically. The individual dossiers will provide further information. Still, you may have some questions...Where do I go? When do I arrive? What should I pack?

This Trek Tips document has been prepared to answer these questions and to provide you with essential information about your upcoming trek. In addition, our Dossiers provide detailed tour information about the daily itinerary, activities, destinations, weather and other information unique to each tour. You may download any of these documents from our website at <http://www.grandamericanadventures.com/dossiers/index.htm>

Have a great time!

The TrekAmerica & Grand American Adventures Team

TREKAMERICA SALES CONTACTS

If you have any questions, after reading through our Trek Tips, please contact the relevant sales office below.

UK Sales & Reservations:

Tel: +44 (0) 844 576 1358 Email: info@trekamerica.co.uk

North America Sales & Reservations:

Tel: 1 (800) TREKUSA (873-5872) Email: info@trekusasales.com

Worldwide Sales & Reservations:

Tel: +44 (0) 208 682 8920 Email: info@trekamerica.co.uk

All details are provided in good faith. Due to the nature of travel, this information can change and should therefore be taken as an indication only and not as a contractual obligation on the part of TrekAmerica and Grand American Adventures.



WHAT TO EXPECT

A typical day may begin with a beautiful sunrise hike in the jungle - spotting monkeys and toucans - and then finish counting innumerable stars camping on the beach. Days will be full and may occasionally include long, bumpy drives; our accommodation will be comfortable with local flavour of a 3 star standard; and itineraries may be slightly altered because the group decides to visit a nearby local festival. We are prepared for the unexpected and know that being open-minded and patient will make for an unforgettably enjoyable experience.

You may be amazed by the grace of the local people while at the same time surprised as your stereotypes are changed. The spirit of discovery, fun, freedom, flexibility and respect should govern your choices when travelling with Grand American Adventures in Latin America. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call one of our friendly booking agents.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

In case your flight is delayed or if you have any problems while on tour please contact our local operators. (This information is correct as of April 09. Please download the most recent Trek Tips from our website before your departure for current details).

Tour Name / Country:

Mexico trips (except Mexico Discovery)

Contact Numbers:

Int'l: (52) 1998 1605 535
/ (64) 7377 8015
From Mexico: (45) 998 1605 535
Or Skype: aventuras-sin-barreras-mexico
Int'l: (52) 322-2259821
/ (52) 1 998 147 0503 (Mobile)

Mexico Discovery

Peru trips

Int'l: (51) 84 243 856
Int'l: (51) 984 632 121

Costa Rica trips
(except Costa Rica Discovery)
Costa Rica Discovery

Int'l: (506) 2257 0202
after 5pm (506) 8871 0202
(506) 2280 6705
/ (506) 8880 6399 (Mobile)

TOUR VOUCHERS

Once your trip has been paid for in full your Tour vouchers will then be emailed to you. Accommodation vouchers for any hotel nights before or after your trek that you have booked will also be available for you to print.

For those without email access your vouchers will be posted.

Please make sure you have the correct vouchers and take these with you.

If you require hotel accommodation before or after your trek, but have not booked this yet, visit our website and check our affordable gateway hotel rates.

<http://www.grandamericanadventures.com/hotels.html>.

If you are leaving your home country early, contact your travel agent or the relevant TrekAmerica / Grand American Adventures office to arrange for vouchers to be emailed to you while you are away.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs, air ambulance, and helicopter rescue service). Our insurance policy is designed specifically to cover the potential risks on our holidays-particularly the many optional activities offered. If you do not take our policy, you must ensure that the policy you do take offers an equivalent level of protection and covers you for the activities involved - be aware that some policies do not include, or restrict, coverage for this type of travel. There may be cheaper policies available, but this does not mean it may better value - we strongly advise you check fully what will and won't be covered. In particular, cover provided by credit cards is often very restricted.

You will be asked to provide details of your insurance policy, including insurer, policy and phone number before embarking on the trip.

Any claims concerning matters for which you are insured must be directed to your insurers.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

All international or domestic flights are the passengers own responsibility. Grand American Adventures is unable to delay a tour, or finish a tour early due to your flight times. We recommend you book your flight to arrive into the departure city at least one day prior to your trek's departure, this will allow you some adjustment time and opportunities for sightseeing.

We recommend you book your return flight the day after your trek finishes. If you do have to return home on the day your trek finishes, please make sure your flight does not depart before 9pm. In the event you must leave the trek early for your return flight, Grand American Adventures must be informed at least two weeks before your trek's departure.

Grand American Adventures can book flights departing from most UK airports. Please contact us. Grand American Adventures cannot be held responsible for any delays, cancellations or changes to your flights.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

If you have any medical condition such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, take prescribed medicines, or have a condition that will affect your participation in the trek, you must tell us or your travel agent at the time of booking. Please be aware we may require a doctor's note prior to travel for some conditions. This information is essential in case of emergency. All our vehicles carry a basic first-aid kit, but for everyday use you should bring your own medical supplies, such as, pain relievers, antibiotic cream, upset stomach relievers, in addition to sunscreen and insect repellent.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

It is your responsibility to obtain the proper passport and visa(s) for the country/countries you are visiting - it is important that you apply for each of the necessary visas while in your home country. Please keep in mind that some tours may spend time in more than one country. For visa information visit www.projectvisa.com. International travellers who are seeking to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program are now subject to enhanced security requirements. All eligible travellers who wish to travel under the Visa Waiver Program must apply for authorisation online at: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>

Please note **all US citizens** will need a valid passport to cross US borders.

IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS

On entering a country you will need to proceed through customs. As long as you have a valid passport and visa (if necessary) you will have no worries. If you are asked your destination or how you intend to support yourself, show your tour voucher and return airline ticket.

VACCINATIONS

We recommend that you contact a physician or travel medicine clinic at least two months before travel in order to allow enough time for any immunisations that may be required to be completed. This is especially true for those planning travel to tropical areas or developing countries. A health professional will be able to assess your individual need for immunisations or preventative medication depending on your health situation, previous immunisation history and your travel itinerary. Information prior to your consultation with a doctor can be obtained from the 'Fit for Travel' website <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/>

TOUR JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

Some of our tours include the arrival night at our starting hotel. You may check into the hotel after 3pm at your leisure. Please see your tour voucher for hotel details and additional information.

The majority of our treks start at our gateway hotels at 7.30 am, (although there are exceptions to this - Peru). Make sure you have packed your bags, eaten breakfast and checked out of your room before meeting your tour leader in the hotel lobby. You will spend a few minutes filling out paperwork and meeting your fellow trekkers before departing the hotel.

For Mexico tours the group will often get breakfast after 7.30 am when the group have met.

IF YOU MISS YOUR TREK'S DEPARTURE

The unexpected can happen. Your plane may be delayed or you may even miss it! If you have missed your trek departure, first check with the hotel for a message from the tour leader. Call the relevant Grand American Adventures emergency contact number and speak to our staff who will help you catch up with the group. You are responsible for any extra travelling expenses incurred because of a missed trek departure, so please be on time. (See Emergency Contact Details).



TOUR CONCLUSION

All treks end on arrival at the gateway hotel in the terminating city. If you require accommodation on this last night, it is essential that you book this before your tour departs. Most treks end at our hotel between 5pm to 6pm on the final day. Some tour activities scheduled for the last day may preclude an earlier arrival at the gateway hotel, so you should not book a departure flight that leaves prior to 9pm. You will be responsible for any transportation costs if you have to arrive for an earlier flight.

LUGGAGE

Luggage Allowance

One bag, backpack or suitcase (20kg maximum) is allowed per person, plus sleeping bag. A small daypack and camera may also be carried in the vehicle. Travel as light as possible.

Packing Tips

Keep in mind that clothing tends to be informal. Take a practical selection of clothes for both hot and cool climates to suit the season. You may encounter a wide variety of temperatures en route due to altitude and unforeseen weather conditions, so be prepared. Please note, new airline regulations prohibit the carriage of lighters.

Clothes Washing

You will have the opportunity to wash your clothes while on trek approximately every 5 days. This can often be done at a local hotel or in a nearby town (at your expense). Ask your tour leader for local information.

Footwear

We strongly recommend a pair of comfortable walking/hiking boots with good ankle support. If you do not own them, sneakers/trainers will suffice. If you buy new shoes, please wear them in prior to the trek to avoid "new-shoes blisters."

Additional Packing

For additional luggage information please see our dossiers:
<http://www.grandamericanadventures.com/dossiers/index.htm>

SLEEPING BAG

Our camping tours require you to take a warm, three-season sleeping bag. We will supply a thermal sleeping pad. For added comfort you may wish to take a small camping style pillow or Thermarest. For the Inca Trail a sleeping bag can be hired for \$30. This should be requested from your tour leader at the beginning of your trip.

BATTERY CHARGING

Many of our travellers bring mobile phones, IPODs / MP3 players, and cameras that require frequent charging during a tour. During camping tours, it is often difficult to find a secure wall outlet to recharge these devices, and therefore we recommend bringing a car charger. For lodging tours, both wall chargers and car chargers may be used. When staying in a hotel room you should have regular access to an electrical outlet - don't forget your travel adaptor.

DRINKING / DRUGS

Alcoholic beverages are easily obtainable and many of you will undoubtedly wish to sample local specialties, such as tequila or pisco. Moderate consumption is important in order to be on time for pre-arranged activities and meetings. Drink responsibly.

Possession of drugs without a proper medical prescription will not be tolerated. Anyone with an illegal drug will instantly be removed from the trek without refund.

SPENDING MONEY

We recommend that you budget approximately US \$40 per day for your locally paid optional activities and other personal incidental expenses. For further information on spending money and exchanging currency, please see individual tour Footnotes or visit: http://www.grandamericanadventures.com/essential_information.html for additional information.

TIPPING

Although it may not be customary in your country, it is normal and expected to tip waiters, bar staff, any type of guide and taxi drivers. These service workers are paid a low wage and depend upon their tips for their livelihood. A minimum of 10% is standard in restaurants. Your tour leader works many long hours for you and may become your friend during the trek, however, if the leader's performance meets or exceeds your expectations, we recommend a tip of US \$5 per person, per day.

SECURITY

No matter where you find yourself in the world you need to look after your valuables. Use your best common sense! While in cities, do not leave valuables in the vehicle. While camping, do not leave valuables in tents when away from camp. In general, the safest place for items such as passports, flight tickets and cash is on your person or in a hotel safe where available. When in doubt consult your trek leader.

TOUR ITINERARIES

Although each trek follows an itinerary, there is a certain amount of flexibility. From time to time, your trek leader may alter the itinerary. This may be due to road conditions, weather, or a visit to a local attraction or event that happens to be in progress. Flexibility is important, and often a side diversion will be a highlight of the trek.

ACCOMMODATION ON TREK

Camping Accommodation

Grand American Adventures use a wide assortment of private and public campgrounds. Most will have flush toilets and hot showers, however, local conditions can vary. On occasion we may utilise a primitive site in order to better access remote local wonders.

Lodging Accommodation

Lodging Tours On our Grand American Adventures lodging tours all accommodation will be in clean, comfortable tourist class hotels based on a twinshare basis (2 people per room) with en suite bathroom facilities. (Rooms will have 2 beds wherever single travellers are sharing.)

Camping & Lodging Tours may utilise multi-share accommodation (2 people per tent, multi-shared mountain cabins/lodges). Rooms are clean, comfortable and centrally located, but levels of sophistication may vary with local conditions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As our adventure tours span 2 continents and visit a number of countries, we recommend that you download and print the trip dossiers that can be found on each Grand American Adventures tour page for more detailed information. Our "Trek Tips" are designed to be brief guidelines and general advice, as a supplement to the dossiers, but certain regions and economies can't be fully discussed in general terms. Please go to: <http://www.grandamericanadventures.com/dossiers/index.htm> to download specific dossiers for your tour. These may be updated as information changes, so please download and print a copy just before you leave on your trip.

PRE TOUR AND POST TOUR HOTELS

Our hotels are conveniently located and serve as your tour's arrival and departure points. Rooms are comfortable and spacious, with two double beds and en-suite facilities. They make good bases for sightseeing and offer an opportunity to informally meet with your fellow trekkers.

Additional nights may be available on a request basis. If you would prefer to have your own room, we can also book single rooms at an additional cost. If you have not booked your gateway hotel, please visit our website for prices and booking details
<http://www.grandamericanadventures.com/hotels.html>

GATEWAY HOTEL DETAILS

All transfer details are based on travel between the closest international airport and our gateway hotel. Prices and transfer times are approximate. These hotels are subject to change so please check your vouchers to confirm this information.

We use different hotels in Lima, Cusco and San Jose, depending on your trip so please be sure to check your vouchers.

CANCUN HOTEL

Ramada Cancun City
Av. Yaxchilan #41 sm 22,
Cancun, Q. Roo.,
Mexico C.P. 77500
Tel: 52 (998) 881-7870
Fax: 52 (998) 884-1324

Transfer: The local Taxi Union operates a "shared taxi" or "collectivo" shuttle from the airport to the hotel for approx. MP \$70 (US \$15-20). Purchase a taxi voucher at the desk just outside the main terminal. Do not pay the taxi driver directly. Transfer takes approx. 45 minutes.

CANCUN HOTEL (Mexico Discovery tour)

Hotel Q Bay
Boulevard Kukulkan Km. 3
77500 Cancun (Quintana Roo)
Mexico C.P. 77500
Tel: 52 (998) 898 8673

Transfer: The local Taxi Union operates a "shared taxi" or "collectivo" shuttle from the airport to the hotel for approx. MP \$70 (US \$15-20). Purchase a taxi voucher at the desk just outside the main terminal. Do not pay the taxi driver directly. Transfer takes approx. 45 minutes.

CUSCO HOTEL

Hotel Sueños del Inka
N° 119 Street Alabado San Blas,
Cusco, Peru
Tel: 51-84 242 299

Transfer: For those completing one of our Inca Trail treks, transfers to your hotel in Cusco is included. Details will be provided with your pre-departure itinerary. Taxi transfers cost approx. US\$5.

CUSCO HOTEL

Hotel Tupac Yupanqui
Calle San Agustin 236
Cusco, Peru
Tel: 51-84 247 789

Transfer: For those completing one of our Inca Trail treks, transfers to your hotel in Cusco is included. Details will be provided with your pre-departure itinerary. Taxi transfers cost approx. US\$5.

LIMA HOTEL

Faraona Grand Hotel
Manuel Bonilla 185, Miraflores
Lima, Peru
Tel: 51-1 446 9414

Transfer: Taxi transfer to the hotel costs approximately US\$18. The journey will take about 45 minutes.

LIMA HOTEL

Carmel Hotel
Calle Atahualpa 152
Miraflores, Lima 18, Peru
Tel: 51-1 241 8672
Fax 51-1 241 8632

Transfer: Taxi transfer to the hotel costs approximately US\$18. The journey will take about 45 minutes.

LIMA HOTEL

Hotel La Castellana
Grimaldo del Solar 222, Miraflores,
Lima, Peru
Tel: 51-1 444 3530

Transfer: Taxi transfer to the hotel costs approximately US\$18. The journey will take about 45 minutes.

LIMA HOTEL

Hotel Leon De Oro
Avenida La Paz 930
Lima, Peru
Tel: 51-1 242 6200
Fax: 54-1 444 9805

Transfer: Taxi transfer to the hotel costs approximately US\$18. The journey will take about 45 minutes.

SAN JOSE HOTEL

Hotel Villa Tournon
125 metres east of "La Republica"
Newspaper
San Jose, Costa Rica
Tel: 506 2233 6622

Transfer: Take the shuttle service from the airport. Transfer takes 20 to 30 minutes, cost approx. US\$12 (one way per person). Or after clearing customs go to the Taxi booth (on your left) and hire a taxi for approx. US\$30. Taxis take 30 minutes from the International Airport (traffic dependant).