

WE BELIEVE TRAVEL CAN BE
LIFE CHANGING,
REVELATORY &
EMPOWERING



The Prairie Meets Peru: Fields, Farms & Friendship

*A Cultural & Culinary Adventure from Lima to Machu Picchu
Hosted by KC Food Movement Leader, Chef Michael Foust*

October 11 – 19, 2019

9 Days exploring and building community in Lima, the Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu and Cusco

Whet Your Appetite

In addition to the many magic moments and memories experienced on this adventure, you will also be pioneers of a new model of transformative travel and long-term community building.

This trip completes a circle of friendship that began in Kansas City with *Peru Meets the Prairie*, a cross-cultural food series where chefs from Kansas City and Peru cooked, created and celebrated together, in the process raising nearly \$11,000 for the life-changing gardens and greenhouses programs of Peruvian NGO *Por Eso*.

This October, the *Prairie Meets Peru*: chef friendships will be rekindled and strengthened; travelers will meet and mingle with Peruvian supporters of *Por Eso* in Lima, and the hamlet of *Sipascancha* invite us to join them for a community-hosted lunch where chefs and villagers prepare an Andean banquet to celebrate two years of participation in *Por Eso*'s programs.

While the world buzzes about Peru's remarkable food ecosystem, you're invited to experience it from the inside, alongside some of the country's leading chefs, researchers and farmers.

In the Sacred Valley, walk through fields of Andean grains, tubers and vegetable crops, and along Inca trails while learning about the region's endemic ingredients and how they tie into local culture and traditions. See how the Inca used terracing to create microclimates, and how salt is extracted and collected in the same timeless fashion that has been used here for centuries.

Experience art and architecture in Lima and Cusco, the rich traditions of the Sacred Valley and of course an in-depth exploration of the UNESCO World Heritage wonder of *Machu Picchu*.

Balance active daytime adventures with charming, upscale lodging at night. From start to finish, this is a one-of-a-kind, purpose filled adventure you'll joyfully reflect upon for years.

Thumbnail Itinerary



Friday, Oct 11: **Arrive Lima** / **Included Meals: None**

Most flights arrive to Lima at night. Be met upon arrival at the airport and transfer to your historic, art-filled boutique hotel in the heart of Lima's bohemian Barranco neighborhood.

Lodging for 3 nights in Lima:

Cozy Character (4 star): Villa Barranco (or similar), a Republican Era mansion recently restored and converted into a cozy boutique B&B in the heart of Lima's Barranco neighborhood.

Dazzling Design (5 star): Hotel B (or similar), a luxuriously re-imagined national historic monument turned art-filled, urban oasis in the heart of Lima's Barranco neighborhood.

Saturday, Oct 12: **Walking Barranco + ABC Afternoon Adventure** / **Included Meals: B, L**

Barranco is one of Lima's most walk-able, colorful, culturally rich neighborhoods. Explore it this morning on foot with a guided walking tour to discover its origins, art and iconic architecture. Lunch is at Isolina, an homage to home-style criollo food interpreted by one of Peru's top chefs.

Choose your own afternoon adventure: Art, Bike or Coffee:

Art: Enjoy a guided visit to the beautifully appointed *Larco Museum* – one of the finest its kind in South America. With over 45,000 pieces of ceramics, sculpture, textiles and jewelry, the museum is the ideal place for an overview of Peru's ancient civilizations.

-- OR --

Bike: Explore the Miraflores and San Isidro neighborhoods by bike, from public parks perched on Lima's seaside cliffs, to native fruits and vegetables in the San Isidro Market. Archaeology and architecture, city parks, a popular cemetery and an ancient olive tree grove all form part of this fascinating urban panorama.

-- OR --

Coffee: Experience coffee from bean-to-bar with a master roaster in Lima. Use all five senses, as you progress through a guided tasting of Peru's various coffee growing regions.

Sunday, Oct 13: **Coastal Foraging & Chef's Table** / **Included Meals: B, D**

Optional early AM: accompany a member of the team of Barra Lima, one of Peru's finest seafood restaurants, to forage along the coast for items that will be on the menu for tonight's eight-hand dinner. Along the way, you may visit one of their dockside purveyors to understand the breadth and quality of Peru's thanks to the cold Humboldt Current that hugs its coast.

Enjoy an unstructured afternoon in Lima.

Tonight, Chef John Evans has reserved his coastal bistro *Barra Lima* exclusively for us. Chef Michael Foust joins Chef John for a four hands meal showcasing the best of Peru's coast with touches of the Prairie in a festive atmosphere of creative small plates, drinks and conversation. **Note: this will be a fundraising dinner for *Por Eso* with guests from Lima and KC connecting for a night of exchange and common purpose. Lima guests are members & friends of *Creemos*, an association formed to support the life-changing gardens and greenhouses programs of *Por Eso*.**



Monday, Oct 14: Rituals & Traditions of the Sacred Valley / Included Meals: B, L, D

Take a midday flight to Cusco and then a private transfer to the Sacred Valley, approximately 90 minutes away by car. En route, stop to admire Pisac, a set of monumental Inca ruins with their iconic terracing. In Calca, meet the founder and team of Por Eso, the ground-breaking non-profit whose greenhouses and gardens programs has improved the lives of over 1,000 families living in remote communities at extreme altitudes.

Lodging for 2 nights in the Sacred Valley:

Cozy Character (4 star): The Greenhouse (or similar). A bucolic setting, terrific food, warm hospitality and tremendous views have made it amongst the most beloved B&B's in Peru. **Dazzling Design (5 star):** at Hacienda Urubamba (or similar), an award-winning hacienda filled with museum quality textiles, ceramics and other Peruvian art. A large, onsite organic huerto (vegetable garden) supplies the hotel's restaurant.

Tuesday, Oct 15: Community, Gardens & Greenhouses / Included Meals: B, L, D

Visit the high Andean community of Sipascancha accompanied by Simone Heemskerk, the director of Por Eso Foundation (about 90 minutes drive each way - some of this over bumpy, windy, unpaved mountain roads).

Sipascancha is in its 2nd year of its Por Eso mentorship, with 43 of 50 families actively participating. We'll visit the community and school gardens then enjoy a community-hosted lunch, in which our chef host will also contribute, using produce from Sipascancha's gardens.

Wednesday, Oct 16: Chicha & Sapito + Ollantaytambo / Included Meals: B, L, D

This morning, learn about *chicha de jora*, a lightly alcoholic, fermented sprouted corn 'beer' that plays a big role in daily rituals of field and farm in the Andes. Over a glass of chicha, try your hand at *sapito*, a coin toss game played with heavy coins, a metal frog and a big, slotted box.

Transfer to the idyllic market town of Ollantaytambo & marvel at the enormous Inca-designed stone fortifications during a walking tour before stopping for lunch at an organic farm restaurant with its own Andean spirits distillery onsite. Take an afternoon train to Machu Picchu Pueblo, the town just below the Machu Picchu Citadel.

Lodging for 2 nights near Machu Picchu:

Cozy Character (4 star): El Mapi by Inkaterra (or similar), a contemporary, cozy lodge. **Dazzling Design (5 star):** Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel member of National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World, set in its own 12 acre nature reserve, where 214 bird species -- along with the world's largest native orchid collection (372 species) -- have been registered.

Take the mid-morning train to Machu Picchu Pueblo, the town just below Machu Picchu Citadel and continue to the Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, nestled in its own lush, 12-acre nature reserve below Machu Picchu. Enjoy an afternoon exploration of the world's largest native orchid garden (with 372 varieties registered) and a twilight walk accompanied by an expert naturalist guide.



Thursday, Oct 17: Magic Machu Picchu – First Light / Included Meals: B, L, D

Be amongst the first to enter Machu Picchu as the sun rises over the mountains. It's wondrous to feel the magic and this early hour before day-trippers arrive from Cusco and the Sacred Valley. Dive into the history and importance of this iconic site with an in-depth guided visit, followed by time to enjoy an unstructured exploration of the ruins, whether that's trekking to the Sun Gate or just meditating in one of Machu Picchu's many quiet corners for contemplation.

This afternoon, those who stay at Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel can enjoy an afternoon exploration of the world's largest native orchid garden and a twilight walk accompanied by an expert naturalist guide. Those staying at El Mapi enjoy an unstructured afternoon to explore the town of Aguas Calientes.

Friday, Oct 18: Surreal Salt, Inca Food Lab & MIL Centro / Included Meals: B, L

Take an early train this morning back to Ollantaytambo, from where we'll drive to the otherworldly landscape of Maras where approximately 3,000 salt pans are hand-harvested by 600 families. An underground spring fills these pans, then evaporation exposes its precious cargo which is hand-harvested in much the same way it has been since Inca times.

Continue to the spectacular crop circles of Moray, thought by many experts to be an Inca food lab where crops from the Amazon to Peru's high altiplano were acclimatized and experimented on via a series of micro climates created by these descending circular terraces.

With this base of understanding, our visit to MIL brings us into the future of thoughtful food collaboration. This project, formed by Peruvian chef Virgilio Martinez, his sister Malena and their team at Mater Iniciativa, is a space where scientists, farmers, artists and chefs seek knowledge and collaborate in a way that engages local communities as stakeholders, honors indigenous food-ways and seeks innovation while respecting tradition. In my humble opinion, this is one of the most groundbreaking projects of its kind anywhere in the world.

Take a walk on botanical trails that have been used by local communities for generations, then meet some of MIL's multi-disciplinary team, from design artists working on plant-based dyes to the chocolate alchemists at *Flavor Lab* producing tree-to-bar deliciousness from Peru's native chuncho cacao.

Settle in for a tasting menu that takes us on a gustatory exploration of Cusco's dramatically diverse geography -- from high humid jungle to frozen Andean altiplano. Early evening transfer to Cusco.

Lodging for 1 night in Cusco

Cozy Character (4 star): *El Mercado (or similar)*, an elegant, welcoming boutique hotel that incorporates flavorful elements of a local market into its décor and atmosphere.

Dazzling Design (5 star): *La Casona (or similar)*, a Relais & Chateaux luxurious boutique hotel housed in a 16th Century Spanish colonial mansion built over the palace of Inca Manco Capac.



Saturday, Oct 19: **Cusco Unveiled** / Included Meals: B, L

Cusco is, simply put, one of the most beautiful Spanish colonial cities of the Americas. This morning is dedicated to an in-depth exploration of this charming city on foot. Delve into one of Cusco's boisterous, fragrant open markets to see and taste some of Peru's exotic fruits and produce. Continue your urban explorations with historical visits including: Santo Domingo, built directly on the Inca stone base of the Koricancha temple (the Temple of the Sun), the Plaza de Armas, the Cathedral, and the artists' neighborhood of San Blas.

Enjoy a few unstructured hours this afternoon to explore Cusco's hidden corners on your own, or just relax with a coffee overlooking the gorgeous Plaza de Armas. Transfer for an early evening flight to Lima in plenty of time for your overnight flights home. Arrive home on Sunday, Oct 20.

Note: if you have some flexibility, we recommend an additional night in Cusco. If you'd like this option, we'll gladly reserve it for you (at additional cost) along with your Cusco airport transfer early Sunday evening, connecting with your flights home. Arrive home on Monday, Oct 21.

Making a Positive Impact

At Culture Xplorers, making a positive impact through travel is a key part of our philosophy and mission. We work hand-in-hand with leading local NGO's to turbo-charge the meaningful work they are doing – both in the communities we connect to on the road and back at home.

In Peru, we proudly support the work of **Por Eso** a local, grassroots NGO that has changed the lives of over 1200 families in 13 remote, high altitude communities through vegetables gardens for schools and families, community greenhouses and the installation of clean water systems and clean cook-stoves in homes. In 2018 Culture Xplorers raised nearly \$11,000 for *Por Eso* with a series of cross-cultural food events, hosted by some of Kansas City's leading chefs, alongside two visiting chefs from Peru.

We also support indigenous weavers in Peru and the revival of their 2,000-year-old textile tradition through our decade-long collaboration with the non-profit Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco (CTTC). The **Peru Weavers Awards** involves over 600 weavers who compete for pride and prizes. Since these awards began in 2005, Culture Xplorers and the CTTC combined have injected more than \$60,000 into nine participating communities, mostly into the hands of female heads of households. This has had life-changing impacts and has raised the self-esteem and respect within these communities of these mostly female weavers.

Cultivate Kansas City, another leading change-agent right here at home, grows food, farms, and community in support of a sustainable and healthy local food system for all. We're proud to facilitate their work, as we did in 2018 through the donation of 100% of net proceeds from the auction of an once-in-a-lifetime culture and culinary adventure deep into the heart of Peru.

Costs & Details



\$5,595 = The Prairie Meets Peru / 4 star lodging / per traveler / double occupancy
\$6,995 = The Prairie Meets Peru / 5 star lodging / per traveler / double occupancy
+ Two flights within Peru / Budget \$320 / CX will book these and add to trip invoice
+ International flights from Kansas City / Budget approximately \$1000 in coach seats
Optional single room upgrade for 8 nights add \$890 (4 star lodging) or \$1190 (5 star lodging)
Optional 4 star travelers can upgrade to 5 star Machu Picchu Hotel for 2 nights add \$398/pp/dbl

Included:

- Kansas City chef & food systems leader Michael Foust hosts this one of a kind adventure
- Seasoned local guides in Lima, the Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu and Cusco
- Special guests: World-class Peruvian chefs, indigenous farmers, artists & other cultural ambassadors join you throughout the course of this adventure
- Culture Xplorers' *Signature Experiences* listed throughout this itinerary
- Lodging in upscale boutique hotels (choose between 4 star and 5-star options) brimming with history, style & local character
- Meals: breakfast daily, lunch most days (except Day 3) plus five (5) dinners
- Private ground transportation throughout (train & shuttle bus to Machu Picchu are public)
- All entry fees to included museums, trail permits, national parks and Machu Picchu
- Emergency oxygen supply aboard our vehicle throughout your time in the Andes
- Purified water provided aboard our vehicle – you will also receive a stainless steel eco bottle which may be refilled at the hotel and aboard our transport – our goal is to reduce plastic waste from single use disposable bottles
- Private airport transfers on day of group arrival and group departure
- Comprehensive pre-departure materials, including: articles of interest, a recommended reading list, plus packing, weather & other tips to help you navigate smoothly in Peru

Additional:

- International airfare to and from Lima, Peru – we have a great airfare resource if needed
- Two domestic air segments within Peru: LIM / CUZ / LIM (approximately \$360/pp)
- Tip to guides & drivers – thumbnail guidelines included in our pre-departure materials
- Approximately 4 meals during the trip
- Traveler's medical and emergency evacuation insurance (highly recommended)
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, alcoholic beverages, etc.

Details:

- One time only KC chef hosted departure for 10 to 20 travelers
- Trip length: 9 days, plus international travel time
- Activity level: on a scale of 1 to 5, this trip is a 2 to 3. It's physically active, but not too demanding. You must be able to walk comfortably and unassisted up to 2 hours at a time & up to 3 hours per day at altitudes ranging from sea level to 12,000 feet. Walking surfaces will vary from city sidewalks, paved roads, cobblestone streets and dirt trails.