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3RD UPDATE IN ALTITUDE AND EXPEDITION MEDICINE CUSCO/SALCANTAY AND INCA TRAIL JUNE 21—JULY 2, 2010

PROGRAM OUTLINE

21st June:	<p>Arrive Cusco . We will aim to arrive in Cusco today. This will give you the opportunity to settle into your hotel for four nights and start acclimatising to the rarefied air of this beautiful city (3,326m). Get to meet the other delegates. You have the rest of the afternoon free to relax after your long journey. In the evening there will be a short introduction to the meeting and program.</p>
22nd June:	<p>Cusco - At the conference</p> <p>First full day of the MOTE meeting (see course outline).</p> <p>Today will be classroom based with the educational program running from 11:00 – 18:00.</p> <p>Our local guide will also be on hand throughout your time in Cusco to provide any help or advice you may need. He can also make suggestions for any free time.</p>
23rd June:	<p>Cusco - At the conference</p> <p>Second day of the MOTE meeting (see course outline). Today will be classroom based with the educational program running from 11:00 – 18:00.</p>
24th June:	<p>Cusco - Festival of the Sun</p> <p>Third day of the MOTE meeting (see course outline).</p> <p>Today is also IntiRaymi, “the festival of the sun”, which marks the winter solstice. Daylong celebrations take place in Cusco and the streets become strewn with flowers, music and dancing. At Sacsayhuaman, just outside the city, crowds throng to a theatrical representation of the original Incan ceremony, honouring the god Inti. As the sun sets, celebrants dance around stacks of straw lit in homage to Tawantinsuty, or the Empire of the Four Wind Directions. A colourful procession then makes its way back to Cusco where celebrations last long into the evening. Time will be allocated today to allow delegates to fully experience this unique event.</p>
25th June:	<p>Start the Salcantay/Inca Trail</p> <p>Set off early this morning to drive into the Sacred Valley of the Incas. The road passes through the Pampa de Anta region, past the small town of Mollepata, then up through eucalyptus groves up to Markokasa to join the trail. Your start point here is higher than Cusco so set off at a gentle pace as you continue acclimatising. You will be walking for around four to five hours today, climbing gradually to your first campsite at almost 5,000m.</p> <p>This evening we will run a 2 hour educational session in our campsite (see course outline).</p>

<p>26th June:</p>	<p>Walk the Salcantay Pass</p> <p>A spectacular day's walking as you take the Salcantay pass close to the glacier. The zigzag path leads steadily north. En route you pass the terminal moraine, a large wall of scree left by the advancing glacier. On your left you pass the glacier itself. Seeing the bulky mass of the ice it's rather incredible to think that this is one of the origins of the Amazon. Begin the descent through the Inca Canal valley towards Pampacahuana, your second campsite on the trek.</p> <p>This evening we will run a 2 hour educational session in our campsite (see course outline).</p>
<p>27th June:</p>	<p>Meet the Inca Trail</p> <p>A steady start today as you walk along the Inca Canal, passing through a huddle of farms and a local football pitch. As the path descends into the relative warmth of the Cuischaca Valley the sparse mountain vegetation mellows to rich scrub. Snapdragons and orchids flourish. Arrive at Llulluchapampa, your first campsite on the "official" Inca Trail.</p> <p>This evening we will run a 2 hour educational session in our campsite (see course outline).</p>
<p>28th June:</p>	<p>The toughest day!</p> <p>Today is the hardest day of the trail as you cross over two high passes, effectively hiking an 'm' shape. The 15km walk takes around eight hours. From your campsite walk a steady and increasingly steep path up to Dead Woman's Pass at 4,215m, the highest point of the classic Inca Trail (although lower than Salcantay). Standing at Dead Woman's Pass you find yourself beyond obvious signs of human life and you begin to get a sense of how remote Machu Picchu really is. You will also have stunning views of the surrounding Andean peaks and should have a great sense of achievement by the end of the day. Lunch is served in the dip between the two passes. Once you hike over the second high pass of the day (3,900m), then you should find the going good. Your campsite tonight is at 3,600m on a bluff overlooking beautiful mountain scenery.</p> <p>This evening we will run the last 2 hour educational session in our campsite (see course outline).</p>
<p>29th June:</p>	<p>Arrive at Machu Picchu</p> <p>The final day of the trail is the most beautiful, starting with what can be the most stunning sunrise. We will walk 11kms over about 6 hours. There are lots of steps as you approach the satellite Inca site of Winaywayna. The evidence of Inca masonry is everywhere as the trail leads you through cloud forest rich with orchids and birds. This afternoon your walk is longer than in the morning but at lower altitude so it should be easier on the lungs. Lunch is served at the ruins of Winaywayna before the final push up a steep stairway to the Sun Gate and your first views of Machu Picchu. From the Sun Gate it is another 3km to Machu Picchu itself. You should be here at around 4pm when most people have gone for the day so take time to just wander through the ruins in the quiet of the late afternoon. Take time to soak up your achievement and, hopefully watch the citadel bathed in the warm afternoon light. Catch a shuttle bus down the hill into the river valley to spend tonight in a fairly plain but comfortable hotel in the ramshackle village of Aguas Calientes.</p>
<p>30th June:</p>	<p>Free day to explore Machu Picchu</p> <p>This morning if you are feeling energetic, you can catch one of the first buses up to Machu Picchu, heading slightly up the hill beyond the site to catch sunrise over the mountains. Enjoy a full-guided tour of the site this morning. Afterwards you can continue to explore the extensive ruins on your own or climb the emblematic peak of Huayna Picchu for a 'condor's-eye' view of the city. Return to Cusco by train this afternoon to arrive some time after nightfall. Transfer to your hotel for your last night in the town.</p>
<p>1st July:</p>	<p>Cusco Goodbyes</p> <p>After breakfast we say goodbye. You can then depart for home or the next leg of your journey.</p>