



Machu Picchu: The Salcantay Trek

May 31 – June 10, 2027 (11 days in Peru)

Join expert Himalayan trekking guide Cathy Ann Taylor on an off-the-beaten-path high altitude trek to the celebrated Inca ruins of Machu Picchu. You'll trek through misty cloud forests and alongside brilliant blue glacial lakes, with constant views of the glacier-draped peaks of the Cordillera Vilcabamba, a spectacular mountain range in the heart of the Andes cradling the sanctuary of Machu Picchu, the "Lost City of the Incas." Much less traveled, higher and more rugged than the regular Inca Trail, this trek takes you across a variety of ecosystems, from alpine habitats with views of icy glaciers and the avalanche-swept slopes of Salcantay (20,574') to lush bamboo forests, fruit orchards, and coffee plantations. And although the trek is challenging, you won't go unrewarded. Instead of camping, you'll end each day at a delightful mountain lodge, where you'll dine on delicious international and local cuisine, soothe your weary muscles in a Jacuzzi, and sleep in a comfortable bed. The Incas never had it so good!

TRIP DETAILS

Strenuous ▶ 6 days moderate to strenuous hiking; 10 nights hotels and lodges

ITINERARY

(You may need to leave the U.S. on May 30 depending on the routing in order to arrive in Cuzco on May 31. We highly recommend coming in a day early for rest, acclimatization, and exploration.)

Day 1, May 31 ▶ Arrive in Lima, fly to Cuzco (11,200')

Fly to Cuzco, Peru, via Lima (you will need to depart the U.S. the previous day—most flights are overnight). You will be met upon your arrival in Cuzco (11,200') and transferred to the Palacio del Inka Hotel, a lovely renovated colonial manor house located about three blocks from the main square. After meeting your trip leader you can take a rest, acclimatize, have lunch, or take a walk around this charming city, once the capital of the Inca Empire and now a treasure trove of ornate cathedrals side by side with artisan shops offering all sorts of colorful handicrafts for sale. Lunch and dinner on your own at one of the many fine restaurants in town. Palacio del Inka or similar



Day 2, June 1 ▶ Cuzco (11,200')

In the morning we'll slip on our hiking boots and take a tour of the Inca ruins just outside Cuzco—a good warm-up and acclimatization hike for the days ahead as well as our introduction to the scope of Inca history and civilization. We'll visit Kencho, noted for its fine stone carvings, Tambo Machay, with its fountains and ceremonial baths, Koricancha (the Temple of the sun), Sacsayhuaman, a majestic fortress known for its incredible zigzag walls made of blocks of stone put together without any mortar in the classic Inca manner, the Cathedral, and many more attractions. Lunch on your own in Cuzco. In the afternoon, Cuzco is yours to relax or explore on your own. Wander up and down the busy streets, where the remains of Inca architecture lie alongside Spanish convents and cathedrals, and poke around in the many shops and stalls. In the evening we'll gather for a “welcome” dinner and trip briefing.

B,D... Palacio del Inka or similar

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Day 3, June 2 ▶ Salcantay Lodge, Soray Pampa (12,670')

After breakfast we take a 4-hour drive towards the Salcantay Lodge (12,670'), situated in the beautiful Soray Pampa valley. En route to the lodge we'll visit the ruins of Quillarumiyoc, built from finely polished granite and believed to have been one of the critically important sites of Inca culture and religion. We continue driving to Mollepata where we'll sit down for lunch at El Pedregal farm house. We'll continue driving a bit further where we will take a scenic easy to moderate three hour hike to the lodge, a perfect opportunity for us to acclimate. Our arrival at the lodge is heralded by an unimpeded view of Salcantay, at 20,574' the highest peak in the Cordillera Vilcabamba, and considered by climbers to be one of the most difficult, and Humantay, at 17,969'. After settling into our rooms, the rest of the late afternoon is at leisure to adjust to the altitude. An evening briefing is followed by aperitifs and a hearty dinner. (2-2 ½ hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Salcantay Lodge



Day 4, June 3 ▶ Salcantay Lodge, Soray Pampa (12,670')

Today is a day of rest and further acclimatization. We'll take an optional hike to a high glacial lake (13,845'), to a spot with wonderful views of the snowy Vilcabamba Range, or choose to relax and just take in the beautiful setting. (4-5 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Salcantay Lodge

Day 5, June 4 ▶ On trek – Wayra Lodge (12,900')

Today we begin our four-day trek to the celebrated ruins of Machu Picchu. Hiking up the Rio Blanco Valley, we circle the peak of Humantay, across from Salcantay. Our high point today is at Salcantay Pass at 15,100 feet along the shores of Lake Salcantaycocha, from where we set our eyes on the glacial moraines and snowcapped peaks of the Vilcabamba Range. Descend to Wayra Lodge (12,900'), to enjoy a hot lunch and where we can soak our weary muscles in a welcoming Jacuzzi. (6 hours hiking.)
B,L,D...Wayra Lodge



Day 6, June 5 ▶ Collpa Lodge (9,400')

We descend to the Collpapampa Valley, where the scenery of pasturelands and lush vegetation is a sharp contrast to the harsh alpine territory we have emerged from. Our evening accommodation is at Collpa Lodge, set in a beautiful cloud forest at 9,400', with orchids and butterflies all around. (4 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Collpa Lodge

**Day 7, June 6 ▶ Lucma Lodge (7,100')**

We continue to descend in elevation as we make our way through the Rio Santa Teresa Valley, where we find orchards of coffee and tropical fruits and a myriad of incredible wildflowers. Just before arriving at the lodge, we hike on a newly restored Inca Road to Lucma Lodge (7,100'), set on an organic coffee plantation. After our arrival we have some time to explore the village and meet some of the local people. (5 hours hiking & 30 minute drive.)

B,L,D...Lucma Lodge

Day 8, June 7 ▶ Aguas Calientes (6,693')

Our final day of hiking begins with a crossing of Llactapacta Pass (~9,400'), from where we have awesome views of Machu Picchu in the distance. We'll continue to enjoy views of this fairytale city as we descend through bamboo and mountainous terrain to the Urubamba River. We catch the train here for a 50 minute ride to the village of Aguas Calientes, the gateway to Machu Picchu. Upon our arrival we can explore this small town and perhaps shop for some alpaca wool hats, sweaters, or blankets before enjoying a delicious dinner at the hotel. (6-7 hours hiking.)

B,L,D...Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

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Day 9, June 8 ▶ Machu Picchu

We're up early to catch the bus (30 minutes) for Machu Picchu (7,970'). As we make our way on switchbacks up to the ruins, we can appreciate the truly wonderful setting the Incas chose when deciding to build their retreat high above the Urubamba River in the mid-15th century. The landscape is stunning, with green mountains plunging to the valley floor, the massive cliff face of Huayna Picchu (towering above the remains of temples, sanctuaries, altars, and fountains, and colorful orchids tumbling over the rough stone walls at ~8,750'). Our knowledgeable local guides will give us a detailed explanation of the many structures and help us to envision the life of the Incas ages ago. We'll have a whole morning to explore the ruins, with lunch at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Hotel, right at the entrance to the ruins. After lunch we return to our hotel (a butterfly and hummingbird sanctuary) or shop in town. This evening, we will enjoy a joyous farewell dinner. B,L,D...Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

Day 10, June 9 ▶ Cuzco

The morning is free to explore Machu Picchu on your own, relax at the hotel gardens or shop in Aguas Calientes. Late morning, we take the train to Ollantaytambo (1 ½ hours) and our private bus back to Cuzco (1 ½ hours), with an evening free to dine at a restaurant of your choice. B, L... Palacio del Inka or similar

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Day 11, June 10 ▶ Lima – departure

Transfer to the airport and fly to Lima, with the day free to relax before your evening flight home. If you want to see Lima and perhaps visit Lima's Gold Museum, which contains many interesting artifacts, or the beautiful Miraflores neighborhood for a walk along the ocean and to taste some delicious ceviche you may want to book an early flight out of Cuzco, otherwise you can have an extra day to explore Cuzco with a late afternoon flight out. Evening departure on homeward-bound flights.

B...

June 11 ▶ Arrive home

LAND COST

\$7,895 per person (11-12 members)

\$8,195 per person (9-10 members)

\$8,395 per person (6-8 members)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations, there are 12 double rooms at the first eco lodge and 6 double rooms at the other three eco lodges.

Single Supplement—\$2,500 for requested singles; \$850 for singles in hotels and share in the lodges.

*Should you choose to pay with credit card there will be a service charge of **3.5%**, the fee we incur from the bank.

Note—Prices listed are subject to change. We are occasionally faced with unavoidable cost increases or currency fluctuations that we cannot absorb. We will, however, do everything we can to keep prices the same as published.

LAND COST INCLUDES...

- Expert leadership of Cathy Ann Taylor
- Local guides throughout the trip
- Accommodations in hotels and mountain lodges
- Meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Drinking water & sodas at the lodges
- Wine & house alcoholic drinks at the lodges
- Wine at welcome & farewell dinners
- Snacks for the trail at the lodges
- Airport transfers
- Sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- Ground transportation
- Tipping at Mountain Lodges on Salcantay trek

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LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE...

International airfare to Cuzco and return; trip insurance (we strongly recommend you purchase the optional trip insurance to include trip cancellation insurance); tipping to leader and local guides; excess baggage charges; cost of medical immunizations; and items of a personal nature (sodas in Cuzco, alcoholic beverages in town, laundry, etc.); meals not noted on itinerary.

TRIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation25% of land cost
120 days prior to departure25% of land cost
90 days prior to departure.....Balance

CANCELLATION & TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

From time of reservation
until 90 days prior to departure25% of land cost
89-60 days prior to departure.....50% of land cost
59 days or fewer prior to departure.....100% of land cost

EXPERT LEADERSHIP

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Cattara attracts knowledgeable and gifted leaders who are passionate about guiding trips and truly enjoy sharing the experience with others. They understand the cultures and traditions they work in and are a fountain of information. In addition to making sure everything runs smoothly and safely, Cattara guides enhance your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends.

TRIP LEADER



Cathy Ann Taylor, a high-altitude trekking & cultural guide for the last 36 years, will be leading this trip. Cathy Ann has trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, India, and Bhutan, with well over 200 trips in the Himalayas (she still considers the Himalayas her “second home”)! She has also hiked extensively in the European Alps (Tour du Mont Blanc—six times, Tour of Monte Rosa, The Haute Route, Gran Paradiso, Scotland—three times, and the Dolomites—four times), the Georgian Caucasus—seven times, South America (20 trips in Peru, 8 in Patagonia), Antarctica—three times, Kilimanjaro—one time, Morocco—four times, The Great Walk of Africa Kenya—four times, Vietnam—three times, Laos—two times, Cambodia—six times, and Uganda & Rwanda—nine times. A devout hiker and mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the sponsorship of nineteen remote village children, all of whom are in boarding school in Nepal or in universities in India, Nepal, and the United States. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a following. Cathy Ann is active in the Breast Cancer Prevention Partners and has participated in sixteen expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Mount

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Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped increase awareness of breast cancer. Cat's special trekking program, Sacred Treks, benefits Breast Cancer Prevention Partners. Past trips include Bhutan, Mont Blanc, Peru, Everest, Ladakh, Mustang, Georgian Caucasus, Sikkim, Dolomites, Cordillera Blanca, and Annapurna Sanctuary treks (she has raised \$1.8M to date!). Cathy Ann has also been active in the American Himalayan Foundation and has helped raised \$35,000 for their STOP Girl Trafficking project. She has also raised over \$25,000 for Lama Pasang's Himalayan Children's Care Home which houses 87 children from Mustang, Nepal. Cathy Ann is also involved in fundraising for the National MS Society and has raised over \$95,000 for the organization. She has also reached the summits of Ama Dablam (22,500') and Island Peak (20,305') in Nepal and Argentina's Aconcagua (22,834'), the highest peak in South America. Cathy Ann received an honorable mention in *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine's Outdoor Person of the Year Awards and received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from former Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

You should be an experienced hiker in very good physical condition. This trip is rated strenuous, as you will be hiking four to eight hours a day on steep and rocky mountain trails, and often at elevations above 12,000 feet (highest elevation reached is ~15,100'). Pack animals will carry the gear from lodge to lodge; you'll just need to carry your daypack with essential things you need during the day. Even so, hiking at high altitudes is challenging, as you can experience a variety of symptoms you wouldn't encounter at sea level (shortness of breath, sleeplessness, and headaches).

For physical preparation, we recommend regular cardiovascular exercise for one hour at least 4-5 times a week. We suggest stair climbing, running, and mountain biking on hills, or elliptical or treadmill training in the gym. And, of course, the best way to train for a trek is to go hiking! We recommend you get out on the trails at least once a week for 5-6 hours. Wear your boots and daypack with 10-15 lbs. of gear in it and pick some trails with hills so you can strengthen your leg muscles and build up your stamina.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

You will need a passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of completion of the trip. No visas are required for this trip (for US citizens). Please make a photocopy of the photo page of your passport and carry it separately from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, a photocopy will help the local consulate speed up authorization for replacement.

AIR TRAVEL

Airfare is not included in the land cost of the trip. For air reservations, please contact the airlines directly, either by phone or via the Internet. You will need to transit through Lima to arrive in Cuzco. Customs and immigration procedures are handled in Lima (**make sure you pick up your luggage and transfer it to your domestic flight**). Depending on your choice of air carrier and routing, you could arrive in Lima late at night or very early the next morning. Should you require an overnight in Lima, recommend the Wyndham del Sol Hotel at the Lima airport. Let us know your

flight arrival information and we will meet you at the airport in Cuzco. Please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip. Note—Names on air tickets and passports must match!

MEDICAL MATTERS

No vaccinations are currently required to enter. The usual immunizations for typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A, and polio are *recommended*. These regulations and recommendations change frequently, so please check with your local health department or CDC for more information (www.cdc.gov). Please advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions that may affect your health on the trek (recent injuries or surgeries, chronic illnesses, etc.). We recommend you bring your own personal first-aid kit, pain killers, and allergy medicines if you are prone to allergic reactions (especially EpiPen's if you are allergic to bee stings). Moleskin or Second Skin for blisters is also recommended, as well as Band-Aids and antibiotic ointment. Consult your doctor about bringing other medications, such as Diamox for altitude, antibiotics like azithromycin for traveler's diarrhea, and a broad-spectrum antibiotic. The trip leader will also carry a basic kit for emergencies but can't administer prescription medications. We strongly recommend you get a medical check-up before the trek if you are over 65 years of age.

EATING OUT & HYGIENE

Although you need to be careful about eating out in Peru, we believe it is fun learning experience, and Cuzco is full of wonderful little restaurants. Make sure you drink water which is treated or bottled and food that is fully cooked (all foods in recommended restaurants in the final bulletin are hygienically prepared and safe to eat). Most importantly, wash your hands frequently with soap & water and carry hand sanitizer.

MONEY MATTERS

You should bring enough money for any souvenirs you may buy, plus a few meals that are not included in the cost of the trip (e.g. various meals in Cuzco, or meals and accommodation en route to Peru). Depending on how much of a shopper you are, \$500-\$600 should be enough for incidentals and souvenirs (there are lots of ATMs available, so you don't need to carry too much cash). The ATMs give both US dollars & Nuevo Soles. ATMs are available at the airport, in downtown Lima and Cuzco, and at some of the hotels. The currency in Peru is the Nuevo Sol, but US dollars are widely used and accepted, **be sure to bring crisp US bills, as torn and defaced currency is not accepted**. Credit cards are generally accepted at most restaurants and shops (Visa is the most widely accepted). The exchange rate as of March 25, 2026 is 3.46 (PEN) Nuevo Sol per one US dollar.

You should bring an additional amount for optional gratuities to the trip leader and local guides, (At least US \$800 per guest is recommended for the trip leader; at least \$175 per guest for the lead local guide and at least \$130 per guest for the assistant guide. You can present your gratuities to your leader and local guides individually. Generally, tips in restaurants are about 15% and tips to the bellman in Cusco and Aguas Calientes are about \$2.00 per bag. The gratuities at all the lodges, to the muleteers, chefs, drivers, and group meals are included in your trip cost.

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WEATHER & CLIMATE

As in most mountain environments, the weather in the Andes can be unpredictable, so each day on the trail you need to be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: hot sun, wind, rain. The months from May through October are usually the driest and clearest. However, you will carry your raingear and jacket in your daypack every day, even if the morning starts out bright and hot. Dressing in layers that can be adjusted to suit the prevailing conditions is highly recommended. The temperatures at night are typically between 35 – 55 F and daytime between 50 – 80 F.

WHILE ON THE TRIP

While on trek we'll be staying at mountain lodges, each with spectacular views of the mountains or valleys. They feature well-appointed rooms with private baths, hot showers, and down bedding, while the public areas have Jacuzzis, bar/lounge areas (great Pisco sours!), and reading rooms. Delicious Peruvian and international cuisine is served in the dining room. It doesn't get much better than this!

INCIDENTALS

Laundry: Laundry service is available and very reasonable at the hotels, and at the lodges. You can hand wash a few items and hang them to dry in your room. Synthetic, quick drying fabrics are best (see the equipment list).

Electricity: Most hotels in Peru feature both 110 and 220V, 60Hz outlets. There is electricity at the lodges. It's a good idea to buy a converter set with a selection of plug adapters before you leave the US. If your appliance has a dual voltage switch, you will simply need an adapter plug but not a converter (camera chargers can be used as they are—no need for an adapter).

Time Zones: Peru is Greenwich Mean Time minus five hours. That means that Lima and Cuzco are the same time as New York and three hours ahead of California. Peru does not observe Daylight Savings Time.

Communications: While we discourage the use of cell phones on our trip, we can't deny the fact that you may want to be in touch with your friends or family. Please be sensitive to the needs of others and use them in the privacy of your room. Contact your cell phone service about international coverage. A satellite phone is available in each lodge. Internet is available at the hotels in Cuzco & Aguas Calientes as well as at the lodges (can be spotty in the lodges).

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WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT LIST

Packing Notes

It's best to go as light as possible and take only the essentials. Excess baggage can be a burden, not only to you but to support personnel.

Always bring all irreplaceable items, such as camera, medications, important documentation, and trekking boots in your carryon luggage.

Luggage

- ❑ Duffel bag, large enough to hold your trekking clothes and gear. It should have a full-length zipper (for easy access) and be sturdy and water-resistant or waterproof. Keep the weight of your duffel to no more than 20 - 25 lbs. as there are weight limitations for mule transport and for the train back to Cuzco. (Loaner duffels are available for the trek; they will be distributed at the trip briefing to those who need one.) Please do not bring hard-sided suitcases or carry-ons with wheels.
- ❑ Daypack with a capacity of 24 – 30 liters, with a good, padded waist belt. It can double as your carryon bag.

- Spare roll-up duffel (optional). This is essential if you wish to bring home those great souvenirs! It should be lockable.

*Remember, you must carry your fleece jacket and rain gear with you every day on the trail, as well as your snacks, 2 liters of water, sunscreen, warm hat, gloves, camera, and cover for daypack in case of rain. Be sure your daypack is large enough!

Clothing Notes

You should be prepared for very unpredictable weather. Bring comfortable clothing that will protect you from cold and possibly wet weather. Synthetic fabrics (such as synthetic or wool) are the most effective barriers against the cold. They provide the best insulation, are light in weight, wick away perspiration, and dry quickly if wet. (Cotton garments are not good in cold or wet mountain conditions.) When layering, your innermost layer should be a synthetic T-shirt or long underwear. The middle layer can be a synthetic turtleneck or wool shirt, and pants. The outermost layer should be a synthetic fleece jacket, and/or a good quality wind/rain parka and over-pants.

We haven't included quantities for each item listed. Use your own judgment, based on the expected weather conditions, your personal needs, and the overall weight restrictions for your luggage.

Underwear

- Regular underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry.
- Thermal underwear (lightweight), top and bottoms, of a polyester-type fabric.

Socks

- Casual socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for walking (not hiking) shoes.
- Light to Mid-weight hiking socks (synthetic or wool/synthetic).
- Synthetic or silk sock liners—optional. Some people wear sock liners to help prevent blisters, and some wear the same pair of hiking socks for three days in a row and achieve the same result.

Shirts

- Long-sleeved, synthetic or wool shirt.
- Short-sleeved synthetic T-shirts (in case we have some hot, sunny days on trek).

Pants

- Full-length synthetic hiking pants.
- Casual pants for non-hiking activities.
- Sweatpants or similar for at night in the lodges.

Outerwear

- Medium-weight jacket of synthetic fabric or down.
- Rain/wind shell (must fit over bulky clothing).

- Waterproof poncho for warmer days in the rain – optional.
- Rain/wind pants, preferably with full-length side zipper (must fit over your other pants).
- Gloves or mittens (wool or fleece).
- Waterproof daypack cover.

Head Gear

- Sun hat with wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off, or baseball cap.
- Fleece or wool hat.
- Bandanna or BUFF - A generally useful item—it will keep your neck from getting sunburned and can double as a hand towel in the field.

Footwear

Please break new boots in well before the trip.

- Medium-weight, sturdy hiking boots with padded ankle, good arch support, and lug sole for traction. Your hiking boots should be waterproof, well broken in, and suitable for prolonged walking on mountain trails.
- Comfortable walking shoes to wear while in towns and flip flops or similar for the lodges.

Other Items

- Water bottles, 1 or 1.5 quart capacity. Make sure they are leak-proof. Bring 2 and mark them with your name or initials as several people may have the same bottle.
- Hiking sticks—optional, but highly recommended. These are essential to relieve the impact on your knees during long downhill; they are also useful on uphill. Practice with them before the trip. **Note—At Machu Picchu, regulations prohibit the use of metal tipped hiking poles at the site of the ruins unless the tips are protected with rubber caps (these tips can be purchased at REI or similar. You do not need these tips during our 6 day trek.**
- Toiletry kit—toothbrush, etc. (**All of the Eco lodges and hotels provide shampoo, conditioner, soap, and body lotion.**)
- Purell hand sanitizer for quick hand washing and hygiene (a must!).
- Personal medical kit, including Diamox, antibiotics, and blister protection.
- Ace bandage or brace if you're prone to sore knees or ankles.
- Sunglasses (100% UVA/UVB protected).
- Spare pair of prescription glasses, prescription sunglasses, or contact lenses.
- Sunscreen lotion and lipstick of SPF 25 or higher.
- Insect repellent for the lower altitudes.
- Small locks for your duffels.
- Heavyweight plastic garbage bag(s) to help keep the contents of your daypack and duffel bag dry during hikes.
- Swimsuit for the Jacuzzis.
- Flashlight or small headlamp for the lodges.

Optional Travel Accessories

- Camera
- Repair kit with needle, thread, and safety pins.
- Pair of compact binoculars.
- Swiss Army-type pocketknife.
- Powdered mixes such as electrolytes for your water.
- Reading and writing material.
- Sit-upon pad for the trail.
- Light – weight sun gloves for the trail.

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