

DENTAL CUSCO SERVICE LEARNING TRIP

———— INFO + ITINERARY ————



**SMILES
MOVEMENT**
Dentistry For Low-Income Families Everywhere



CUSCO, PERU



Cusco, situated high in the Peruvian Andes, is surrounded by rural indigenous communities and urban settlements where families face significant barriers to essential services. Many communities lack consistent access to healthcare, clean water, and specialized dental care, leading to prevalent oral health issues and untreated dental conditions.

This destination is recommended for:

Volunteers interested in learning about rural health challenges and supporting underserved highland communities are welcome. In Cusco, mobile dental clinics and community projects help provide accessible dental care, oral hygiene

education, and sustainable preventative treatments to families living in remote areas with limited healthcare access.

Details of Destination

Promo video	Cusco, Peru SLT destination promo video click here
Student Handbook	Cusco destination student handbook (Dental Mobile Clinic station details, phrases in local language, and local emergency contacts)
Country	Peru
Country Population	33.5 million
Languages	Spanish
Currency	Peruvian Sol \$1 USD = S/.3.49 PEN *Susceptible to fluctuation
Weather	Weather: Dry Season (May-Oct): 0°C - 20°C / 32°F - 68°F Rainy Season (Nov-Apr): 7°C - 18°C / 45°F - 64°F Humidity: High

	Precipitation: Occasional drizzle
Location	Peruvian Andes, Southern Peru
Population	430,000
Time from the hotel to the communities	30 minutes up to 1:30 hour
Dental Campaign	Mobile Dental Clinics and education in highland communities
Extra Activities (Not Included)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit San Pedro Market - Explore Sacsayhuamán fortress - San Blas bohemian quarter - Plaza de Armas and Cathedral - Local artisan and craft markets - Qorikancha (Temple of the Sun)
Travel Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Machu Picchu Day Trip or Trek - Sacred Valley & Rainbow Mountain

DENTAL CARE IN CUSCO: CHALLENGES AND STATISTICS

Cusco, situated high in the Peruvian Andes, is surrounded by rural indigenous communities and urban settlements where families face significant barriers to essential services. Many communities lack consistent access to healthcare, clean water, and specialized dental care, leading to prevalent oral health issues and untreated dental conditions.



Dental Care Challenges:

Dental care is scarce in these underserved communities. The limited number of dental clinics and trained professionals means that many residents do not receive the necessary dental care. Only about 20% of the population in these areas has regular access to dental services.



Prevalence of Dental Issues:

- **Tooth Decay and Cavities:** Over 90% of school-aged children in these communities have experienced tooth decay, with many suffering from untreated cavities.
- **Gum Disease:** Around 70% of adults in low-income areas suffer from gum disease, which can lead to pain, tooth loss, and severe infections if untreated.
- **Dental Trauma:** About 25% of children in rural and low-income urban areas have experienced dental trauma, often remaining untreated due to the lack of immediate and affordable care.
- **Malnutrition:** Poor nutrition directly affects oral health. Approximately 30% of children in these areas are malnourished, leading to weaker teeth and gums and increased susceptibility to dental problems.

TRIP LOGISTICS

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

For most volunteers, the only requirement to enter countries where we have Service Learning Trips is a passport valid at least seven months after your trip. Requirements could change frequently and are communicated to volunteers during the registration process.

If you're not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, you may need a visa to enter certain countries. It is your responsibility to determine if you need a visa and make appropriate arrangements.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Volunteers are responsible for buying their own airfare. However, our team can help you in this process by providing a flight quote for your group. You can request a flight quote by emailing info@medlifemovement.org. Once your flight is booked, please make sure to add your arrival and departure information to your booking.

AIRPORT: Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport (CUZ)

Recommended timeframes for arrivals and departures is as follows:

Cusco, Peru

Arrival: Saturday from 5:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Departure: Sunday from 5:00 am to 2:00 pm.

If students arrive outside of the set time frames, they will be responsible for covering the cost of transportation to their site. If your flight arrives outside the timeframes listed please email info@medlifemovement.org. Remember that any additional nights and transfers that are added before/after your trip because of early or late arrival are not included in the Service Learning Trip donation goal, and will be at the cost of the volunteer.

We highly recommend purchasing trip cancellation insurance, which will allow you to cancel for any reason. You can contact info@medlifemovement.org for more information about our insurance options.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation details are shared with your group in the WhatsApp group before departure.

HEALTH

TRAVEL HEALTH INSURANCE

Emergency medical insurance is included in the cost of your trip, but trip cancellation insurance is not included.

COVID 19 PROTOCOLS

- COVID 19 Vaccination is recommended. **NOT REQUIRED.**
- Pre-Trip Covid-19 **TEST NOT REQUIRED.**
- **QUARANTINE** will be required if any participant is sick and tests positive for covid-19 during the SLT.

VACCINATION

MEDLIFE follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations and requirements. Immunization recommendations for all of our trip locations may be found on this page: www.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list. We recommend consulting the CDC page and/or visiting a local travel clinic for more information.

Visit your doctor: MEDLIFE does not require any vaccinations however, you should follow all CDC requirements and any advice from your medical professional.

OTHER

MONEY

We recommend that you have access to at least \$150 to \$200 during your Service Learning Trip week to cover two days of meals, tourism activities, and any additional food, drinks, or souvenirs you wish to purchase.

Volunteers can easily exchange money in the locations they will visit. They can access their bank accounts via ATM or debit card and can also easily change cash with money-exchange officials on the streets or in nearby exchange houses.

WHAT TO PACK

You should plan to look professional but dress comfortably. Jeans, shorts, polos, athletic wear, and t-shirts are all acceptable. In all locations, a MEDLIFE t-shirt will be provided, but you are not required to use it. Check suggested items and checklist for your destination here: [SLT Packing Lists](#)

DONATIONS

Many volunteers organize themselves to bring essential supplies such as medical equipment, educational materials, and hygiene items to the communities they serve. These donated products enhance the effectiveness of healthcare and education initiatives, fostering a direct and immediate positive impact on the lives of those in need. This is not mandatory but if you wish to bring medical or any other kind of donations you can find a recommended list here: [Cusco Recommended donation list](#)

EMERGENCY PREPARENESS

In the unlikely event you have a travel or health emergency and there are no MEDLIFE staff to assist you, you can contact us via the following numbers.

When in-destination or in transit to destination	PERU EMERGENCY PHONE	+51 932 036 509 (whatsapp, call, or SMS)
When calling from within North America	MEDLIFE HQ PHONE	1-844-633-5433

Emergency or Medical Assistance Procedure

Before Your Trip: Contact your local emergency authorities
For non-urgent matters, contact your Chapter, MEDLIFE HQ Phone, or email
info@medlifemovement.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If you still have doubts and/or question about trip details we suggest you consult our FAQ section of the MEDLIFE movement website to search for the answer. the link is here:
<https://www.medlifemovement.org/service-learning-trips/faqs/>

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Arrival → Departure

Day 1	Arrival to Cusco	Day 6	Permanent Clinic
Day 2	Walking Tour & Orientation	Day 7	Development project
Day 3	Reality Tour	Day 8	Optional Tourism Activities
Day 4	Mobile Clinics	Day 9	Departure

DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY

1

Saturday

Arrival to Cusco

Arrive at Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport (CUZ) between 5am and 2pm. A MEDLIFE associate will be waiting for you outside of the airport with a MEDLIFE sign. Take the rest of the day to rest and acclimatize to Cusco's altitude.

Meals are not provided today, but there are restaurants nearby.



Overnight
Cusco MEDLIFE Hostel



DAY

2

Sunday

Walking Tour & Orientation

Sunday morning will be dedicated to an orientation meeting where we will cover what to expect for the week and review safety precautions.

Today will be an introduction to Cusco for all students with a walking tour led by your Trip Leader. In the afternoon, participants can enjoy some free time to explore the area.

Meals are not provided today.





Overnight
Cusco MEDLIFE Hostel

DAY

3

Monday

Reality Tour

After breakfast in the hostel, volunteers and Trip Leaders will depart for the Reality Tour for your first immersive experience in the urban settlements where MEDLIFE works.

We will explore the harsh realities of living in these settlements and learn about how MEDLIFE works to bridge the gap between Peru's public health system and low-income families. We will also visit a partner community for a firsthand look into the daily life of the people in Cusco communities.

Return to the hostel and have some time to rest and relax before meeting in the conference room at 5pm for a presentation. We will discuss MEDLIFE's work and you will receive your Mobile Clinic station assignments for the week. Afterward, volunteers are free for the night.



Overnight
Cusco MEDLIFE Hostel

DAY

4-5

Tuesday to Wednesday

Mobile Clinics

Every day, Mobile Dental Clinics travel to various communities, with 30-minute to 2-hour travel times. Upon arrival, volunteers unload supplies and attend a brief training session before opening the clinic at 8-9 am. They work until lunch around 11:30 am, then switch stations. Clinics close between 1-3 pm, depending on patient volume.

Volunteers will also visit a permanent clinic to learn from and shadow local doctors while overseeing deeper and more complex treatments for patients. Procedures can include surgeries, permanent dentures, and more!

On free days, they can explore the city.



Overnight
Cusco MEDLIFE Hostel



DAY

6

Thursday

Permanent Clinic

Volunteers visit MEDLIFE's permanent dental clinic to learn about and observe our long-term Patient Follow-Up Program. Patients who require specialized or complex procedures that cannot be completed during Mobile Clinics—such as root canals, oral surgeries, dental implants, or prosthetics and dentures—are brought to the permanent clinic. On this day, volunteers shadow local dental specialists and healthcare professionals during advanced treatments, seeing firsthand how MEDLIFE provides continuous, sustainable care to patients in need.



Overnight
Cusco MEDLIFE Hostel



DAY

7

Friday

Development Project

On Development Project Day, volunteers work alongside local community members and MEDLIFE staff on hands-on development projects that address long-term infrastructure and safety needs in partner communities. Designed in collaboration with local community leaders, these sustainable initiatives may include constructing pedestrian staircases, building water and sanitation facilities, or renovating community spaces and schools. Volunteers engage in physical building and improvement activities, fostering meaningful cross-cultural connections while helping improve quality of life and access to essential services.



Overnight
Cusco MEDLIFE Hostel

DAY

8

Saturday

Optional Tourism Activities

Make the most of your trip by participating in an optional tourism activity or extension. In Cusco, most volunteers choose a Day Trip to the historic ruins of Machu Picchu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

[Click here to see the full list of extension options.](#)



DAY

9

Sunday

Departure

Continue exploring Cusco or return home. Depart Cusco anytime between 12pm and 9pm.

INCLUDED

- ✓ 8 nights dorm room accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast, lunch, and dinner from Monday to Friday
- ✓ Transportation to and from the airport (within the established schedule), and to SLT activities
- ✓ English-speaking Trip Leader
- ✓ Safety equipment (including face masks)

NOT INCLUDED

- ✓ Flights
- ✓ Tips
- ✓ Pre or post-trip accommodation
- ✓ Optional excursions
- ✓ Weekend meals

Travel Advisory

All volunteers require a valid passport of at least 6 months from the SLT start date. You can register for the MEDLIFE SLT without a passport, but you must submit the info at least 2 weeks before the trip. You must ensure your passport validity before departure.

If you're not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, **you may need a visa** to enter certain countries. It is your responsibility to determine if you need a visa and make appropriate arrangements.

Visit your doctor: MEDLIFE does not require any vaccinations; however, you should follow all CDC requirements and any advice from your medical professional.