

# Sustainable Tourism in Peru

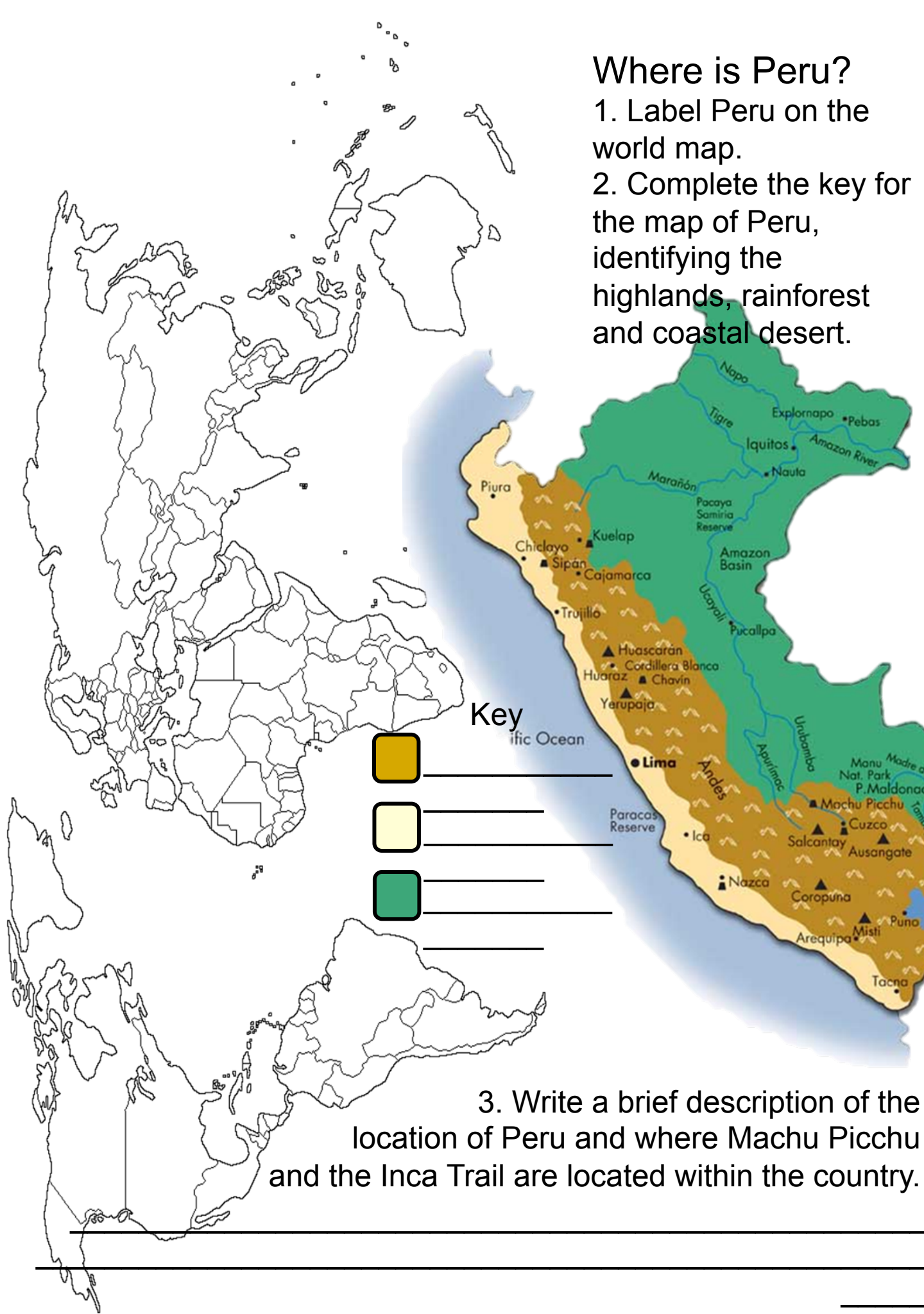


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# Where is Peru?

1. Label Peru on the world map.
2. Complete the key for the map of Peru, identifying the highlands, rainforest and coastal desert.



3. Write a brief description of the location of Peru and where Machu Picchu and the Inca Trail are located within the country.



# The Inca Trail

The Inca Trail is a path built over 550 years ago by the Inca people of Peru. The path leads from the city of Cuzco to the World Heritage Site of Machu Picchu, passing various Inca ruins along the way (see the map below). It takes 4 to 8 days to complete the trek.

Before 2001 there were few restrictions on the Inca Trail, anyone could walk the route and could camp wherever they liked. This led to the path becoming eroded, Inca ruins being damaged and lots of litter and pollution (including human poo because there were no proper toilets). Something had to be done.

In 2001 the Peruvian Government introduced a set of rules to protect the area, ensuring that the area is managed in a sustainable way. They also had to ensure that these rules did not impact on tourism too much. As this would have a major impact on the local economy. These changes are outlined in more detail later on.





# Machu Picchu

Machu Picchu is possibly one of the most famous tourist destination in the world. It is situated deep in the Peruvian mountains at an altitude of 2400 m.a.s.l. The city was built in 1450 by the Incas. It was believed to be the secret hiding place of the Incas during the Spanish colonisation of South America. Then it was suddenly abandoned to protect it from destruction. The city lay undiscovered by westerners until 1911, when Hiram Bingham found it covered in thick jungle.

In 1983 Machu Picchu was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, providing it with the highest level of protection. The city now gets over 400,000 visitors a year, who come to see the superb examples of Inca architecture and how this lost civilisation once lived. Most of these visitors arrive by train from the near by town of Aguas Calientes (famous for its hot springs) or the city of Cuzco. The tourists are willing to pay US\$70 each to enter the ruins. A lucky few who have trekked the Inca Trail finish their expedition at the lost city.



Machu Picchu



The End of the Inca Trail



Tourist Entrance

# Cuzco and Aguas Calientes

Cuzco was the capital city of Inca empire. It now has a different role, the tourist centre for those wishing to trek the Inca Trail or visit Machu Picchu. It has its own airport, which has several internal flights to Lima (the capital) each day. A major bus station, with buses to other attractions including the Nazca Lines. But, most important of all, it has a railway which connects it with Machu Picchu.

Other than the Inca Trail and Machu Picchu, Cuzco has several other famous ruins nearby, including Sacsayhuamán (a possible fortress or sun temple). Cuzco and the surrounding ruins were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983.

Cuzco is also the base for people wishing to undertake adventure activities in the local area, such as mountain biking and white water rafting.

Aguas Calientes is the village closest to Machu Picchu and lies at the end of the train track from Cuzco. Its name comes from the Spanish for hot water, due to the natural hot springs in the village. The main role of Aguas Calientes is to provide hotels, restaurants and gift shops for tourists. In the centre square there is a statue of Pachacutec, it is believed that Machu Picchu was built for him.



Back street in Cuzco

Aguas Calientes



## What have they done to make tourism sustainable?

## Making the Inca Trail Sustainable

In 2001 the Peruvian Government introduced seven rules to make tourism on the Inca Trail and Machu Picchu sustainable. These rules are:

.No independent trekkers allowed, all walkers must be accompanied by a guide.

.All tour operators must meet strict checks, including professional guides.

.All visitors must pay an entrance fee of \$50, on top of what they have paid for the tour. This money helps maintains the trail and Machu Picchu.

.Only 500 people per day are allowed on the Inca Trail.

.Groups can have a maximum of 16 tourists. If a group has more than 8 people there has to be two guides.

.Reasonable working condition for the porters. A minimum wage of US\$10/day and a maximum bag weight of 25kg.

.The trail is closed during February, allowing vegetation to regrow and vital footpath maintenance to take place.

Make notes how the rules would make the Inca Trail and Machu Picchu more sustainable.

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