

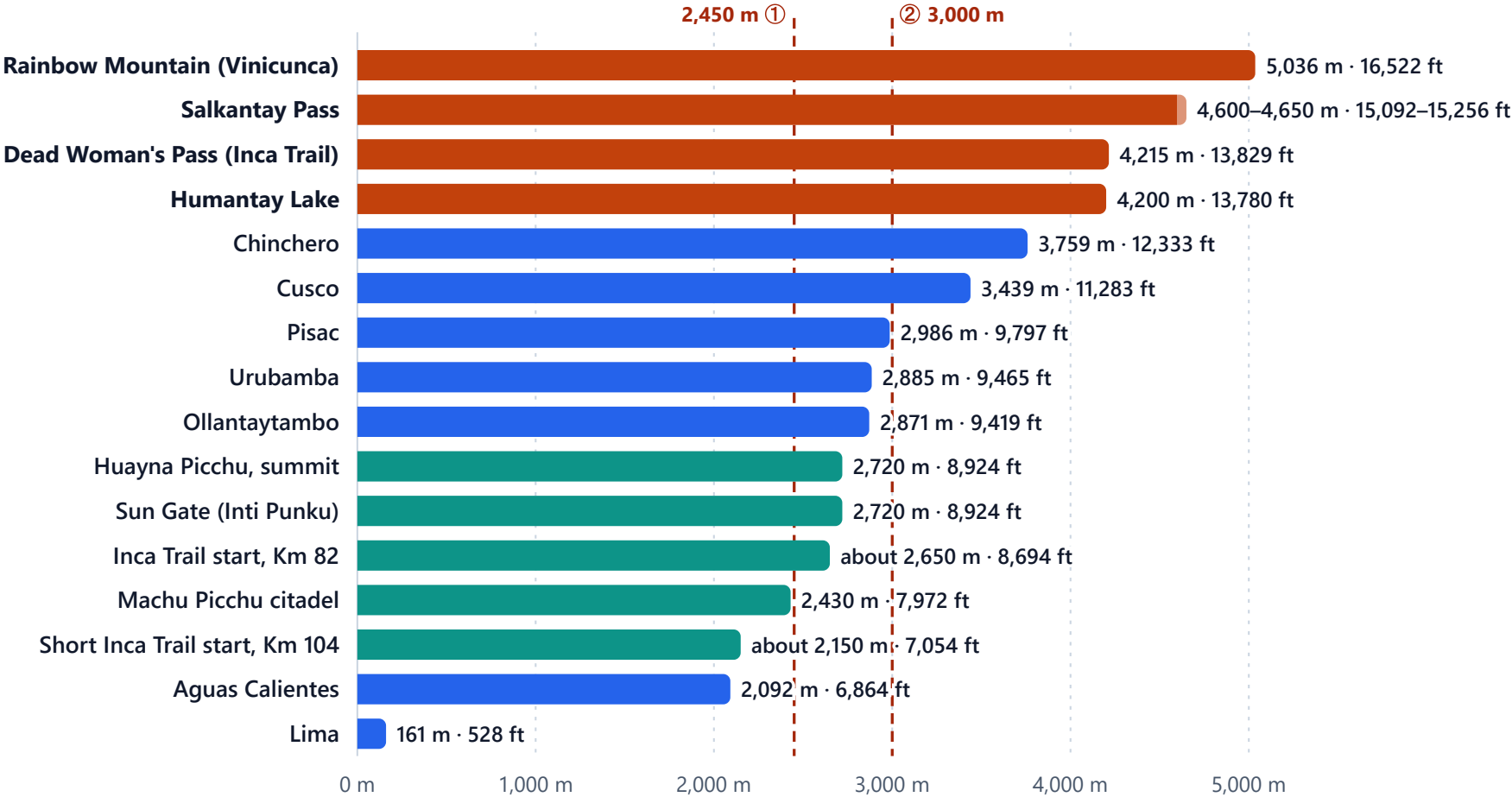
Altitude chart: Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu and the high treks

Official altitudes from Lima to Machu Picchu, Humantay Lake and Rainbow Mountain, with acclimatization advice from health agencies

Salas Travel Peru · salastravelperu.com
Data checked on 15 October 2026

■ Towns and cities (where travelers sleep) ■ Sites and trail starts ■ Trek high points (day visits)

① CDC: altitude sickness can start when you sleep at 2,450 m or higher ② Above 3,000 m: raise your sleeping altitude by no more than 500 m a night



Feet converted from the official metres. Salkantay Pass: El Peruano gives 4,600 and 4,650 m. MINCETUR notes the upper Rainbow Mountain viewpoint is above 5,200 m. Machu Picchu Mountain has no official summit altitude, so it is not shown.

1,009 m

Cusco is higher than Machu Picchu

450–570 m

the Sacred Valley towns are below Cusco

1,347 m

Aguas Calientes is below Cusco

up to ~50%

of people who fly straight to high altitude
can get altitude sickness (CDC)

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Altitude table with sources

Place	Metres	Feet	Source
📍 Rainbow Mountain (Vinicunca)	5,036	16,522	MINCETUR
📍 Salkantay Pass	4,600–4,650	15,092–15,256	El Peruano
📍 Dead Woman's Pass (Inca Trail)	4,215	13,829	Andina
📍 Humantay Lake	4,200	13,780	MINCETUR
📍 Chinchero	3,759	12,333	INEI
📍 Cusco	3,439	11,283	INEI
📍 Pisac	2,986	9,797	INEI
📍 Urubamba	2,885	9,465	INEI
📍 Ollantaytambo	2,871	9,419	INEI
📍 Huayna Picchu, summit	2,720	8,924	Ministry of Culture (2020)
📍 Sun Gate (Inti Punku)	2,720	8,924	Andina
📍 Inca Trail start, Km 82	about 2,650	about 8,694	MINCETUR
📍 Machu Picchu citadel	2,430	7,972	UNESCO; Ministry of Culture
📍 Short Inca Trail start, Km 104	about 2,150	about 7,054	MINCETUR
📍 Aguas Calientes	2,092	6,864	INEI
📍 Lima	161	528	INEI
📍 Machu Picchu Mountain, summit	No official figure		—

Why 2,430 m? It is the figure UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture give for the site. The citadel spreads over terraces at different heights: the park's researchers give an average of about 2,435 m and the Sacred Plaza is about 2,453 m.

How to acclimatize

- **Sleep lower at first.** The CDC notes that in Cusco travelers can go down to sleep below the airport's altitude for the first one or two nights.
- **Go up slowly.** Above 3,000 m, raise the altitude where you sleep by no more than 500 m a night (CDC, NHS).
- **Take the first day easy** and avoid alcohol for the first 48 hours (CDC).
- **Drink enough water** so you don't get dehydrated (NHS). Drinking a lot more than usual does not prevent altitude sickness.
- **Medicines only with a prescription.** Peru's Ministry of Health warns against taking acetazolamide without one. Talk to your doctor before you travel.
- **If symptoms get worse, go down.** Descending is the most effective treatment.

A route that helps you acclimatize

- Day 1** Land in Cusco and go straight down to the Sacred Valley (2,871–2,986 m) to sleep.
- Day 2** Train from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes (2,060 m) and visit Machu Picchu.
- Day 3 on** Return to Cusco (3,399 m), already partly used to the altitude, before any high trek such as Humantay Lake or Rainbow Mountain.

[Machu Picchu elevation guide](#) · [Altitude sickness in Cusco](#) · [WhatsApp +51 961 231 767](#)

General information, not medical advice. If you have a health condition, ask your doctor before travelling to altitude.
Sources: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Ministry of Culture, INEI (Cusco statistical compendium 2025, published January 2026), MINCETUR tourist inventory, Andina, El Peruano, US CDC, UK NHS, Peru's Ministry of Health (MINSA).