

TOURISM IN PERU: MACHU PICCHU OPEN BUT WITH REDUCED CAPACITY



The Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, a crown jewel of tourism in Peru, had to reduce its daily capacity a month after reopening due to the surge in deaths and COVID-19 cases in the country, according to new government measures.

The fall in revenue required limiting access until May 9 to a total of 675 daily visitors, equivalent to 30% of the capacity. **Since its reopening in March, Machu Picchu only welcomed 40% of the capacity, that is, 897 visitors every day.**

The updated restriction includes all archaeological sites in Peru located in “extreme alert” areas of contagion during the current second wave of the pandemic, according to the rule that has been in force since April 19.

In this measure, archaeological sites, such as Machu Picchu, can only be visited from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays, all sites will close due to a mandatory lockdown for the entire population.

Since the reopening, the use of face masks is mandatory to tour this citadel built under the government of Inca emperor Pachacútec in the 15th century.

Machu Picchu, which used to be visited by 2,244 tourists a day, was closed in February following a new quarantine with the goal of avoiding crowds, which were considered one of the main sources of contagion.

After being closed in 2020 for almost eight months after the beginning of the pandemic, the citadel reopened on November 1, closing shortly after on January 31 in a new blow for tourism in Peru, the industry most affected by the coronavirus in Peru.

The mythical stone building is located in Urubamba, in the Cusco region, one of the 41 of 196 provinces of Peru under extreme health alert. Cusco, the county town of the region, is the ancient capital of the Inca Empire that lives mainly from tourism, like the towns of the Sacred Valley of the Incas (Urubamba Valley).

In 2020, the region lost about 1,400 million dollars due to the absence of tourists, and while the country’s GDP fell 11.12% in 2020, the fall was much greater in the tourism industry (50.45% decrease), according to official figures. According to the latest data, Peru was the South American country most affected by the decline in international tourism. Tourism in Peru a fall of 73%, according to a report from GlobalData. Recovery is expected to arrive only in 2022.

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