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Sumaq Machu Picchu Hotel Machu Picchu, Peru

“Valley views, stylish interiors and exquisite local dishes make this not just one of the finest hotels in Aguas Calientes, but in Peru. The cocktails are potent, the staff are friendly and the Machu Picchu excursions are both interactive and informative.”

Location 8 / 10

Right on the edge of Aguas Calientes, this hotel enjoys unspoilt views of the steamy valley, reaching almost as far as nearby Machu Picchu itself. This makes it one of the quietest retreats in a town that can often become a buzz of panpipe muzak and train horns. It is, however, on the main, often muddy road to Machu Picchu and at peak times this means a procession of vehicles whizzing past. But in a muddled and messy tourist town, this is certainly as good as it gets.

Style & character 9 / 10

Gold, mahogany and maroon are married together throughout, conjuring a sense of authentic regal class. Furnishings are robust and well upholstered, not cheap – and the abundant imitation Inca ceramics are of high quality – far from tacky. This hotel is a stylish refuge, away from the often muddy deluge outside and the way it blends into the hillside gives the place a genuine feeling of being close to nature.

Service & facilities 9 / 10

For a high altitude town where space is tight, this hotel has plenty going on. The interactive pisco sour and ceviche classes are fun and informative, and the basement spa is of a very decent standard. The tour of nearby Machu Picchu with a local shaman is extremely interesting. This was my fifth visit to the

citadel, but with him it opened up a whole new world of intrigue. The coca leaf readings and rituals are also worth taking part in. The staff are friendly, bilingual and helpful – making the effort to memorise the names of guests.

- ✓ Bar
- ✓ Laundry
- ✓ Restaurant
- ✓ Room service
- ✓ Spa
- ✓ Wi-Fi

Rooms 9 / 10

Very much in keeping with the rest of the hotel, the bedrooms combine dark woods with mostly claret fabric furnishings and robust blocks of sandy marble. Televisions are huge, the contents of the minibar are complimentary and the coffee machine is modern and easy to operate. There's also a selection of fresh teas, rather than simply a stash of cheap tea bags. The bathrooms are forged of solid marble slabs and vast mirrors, with a separate toilet room, shower and bathtub. The valley facing rooms are particularly special, providing some of the finest hotel views in Peru.

Food & drink 9 / 10

Breakfast is a buffet of pastries, fresh fruits, cured meats, cereals, and eggs are cooked to order. The lunch and dinner menus are diverse and delicious. The Sumaq salad, for example, is a tasty variety of local leaves, artichoke stems and nuts, served with a sweet honey dressing. The ground cooked meats are also particularly good, roasted to tender perfection in the small garden at the back of the property.

The taster menu is a sumptuous mix of local ingredients and can be tailored to dietary requests. The Pachamanca ground cooking experience is not only fun and culturally informative, but the tender, slow cooked food it produces is delicious. Valley views from the first floor restaurant are spectacular. Exceptional across the board.

Value for money 8 / 10

Doubles cost PEN 2,134 (£501) year-round, including breakfast, afternoon tea and dinner. Free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities? 9 / 10

There's a ramp in, lifts and rooms on the ground floor, but in general, Aguas Calientes is not well designed in this respect.

Family-friendly? 9 / 10

No interconnecting rooms. No kids' club and no children's menu. Under-11s stay free. Additional beds can be hired for \$176 (£141)

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