

the guard came by checking tickets of people in line, i had my machu picchu ticket, but he checked it and asked where my little numbered ticket was for the hike. i didnt have one, he gave me one and said i was in the 10 AM group, but .

Later reading and talking to other people . Only 400 people per day are allowed to make the hike.

The guidebooks listed this as a one hour, strenuous hike, but no further warnings, other than not to do it in the.

So i set off, with several cliff bars and an apple, as well as a quart of bottled water.

5 minutes in I began to have problems. its an enormous stairmaster, thousands of vertical steps.

About 1/4 of the way up I ran out of water. I sat down and when people came I asked them for water. Two Australian girls on their way down kindly filled my bottle.

From the half way point, I just took it slow and easy, but I had a lot of trouble. i would go a staircase level and have to rest. fortunately, i could recover after 5 minutes or so and continue.

As i approached the top, there was more construction

Finally at the summit it was amazing. There was a small outcropping of rocks and you needed to climb up on it, no more stairs.

Climbing down was very difficult. The stairs began to hurt my legs and they were shaking as i clumped down each stair. towards the bottom, the trail goes up and down as it crosses back towards the ruins. these sections of again walking uphill and upstairs were extremely hard.

By the time i returned to the check in area at the base, i was unable to talk or sign out. i asked for water, the woman in the booth said no.

After i sat on the ground gasping for a few minutes, she produced a big bottle of water for me and said it looked like i was dying right there. it took me about ten minutes to recover and be able to function, talk and walk again.

Then i realized I had to traverse the entire ruins, and climb more stairs, just to get out. I arrived at 6 AM, spent four hours wandering around the ruins, then climbed the mountain at 10 AM, got to the summit at 11:30 AM and hung out at the summit until 1 PM. I actually fell asleep on the top rock, and when i awoke, everyone else was gone and on the way down.

I had serious problems walking back across the ruins and really had some problems walking up

the stairways to return to the gate. I was also out of water and food and extremely exhausted.

One of the greatest sights was the snack bar, upon reaching the main gate. orient express runs this as well, i had read that the food was basic, but really good. i chowed down on a ham and cheese sandwich and a watermelon gatorade, both of which i downed in about five minutes out of sheer hunger and thirst. Sat with two British soldiers who i had hiked up with. By this time it was 4 pm and i was dead tired.

Had made arrangements for dinner with swiss friend i breakfasted with and walked around with during the day.

Crashed out and slept

I could have repeated the process, left hotel at 5 AM, arrive ruins at 6 AM, but would have only had 2 hours at most, to catch the 9:30 Am train i was booked on.