

PERU – PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Peru is most famous for the sacred archaeological site of Machu Picchu. Each year, scores of intrepid hikers brave the arduous slopes of the Inca Trail to explore the fascinating ruins, while even more journey by train.

But the country’s attractions extend far beyond the mystical allure of this legendary location, and include palm-fringed beaches, quaint Andean villages and archaeological treasures that predate Machu Picchu by hundreds of years – all imbued with the nation’s rich mélange of indigenous and colonial cultures. Equally enticing are the exotic reaches of Peru’s Amazon rainforest; Lima’s superb eateries, exquisite architecture and effervescent nightlife; the glittering, mountain-ringed waters of Lake Titicaca; and the vibrant city of Cusco, referred to by the Incas as ‘the center of the world’.

People and Population

Peru’s total population is about 30 million people, roughly evenly split between the descendants of the Spanish and those of the native populations. The Spanish population is concentrated in the narrow coastal desert areas and urban centers of Lima, Arequipa and Trujillo, while most of the native descendants live in the highlands and jungle areas.

Language

The official language of Peru is Spanish, although Quechua is also widely spoken in the Southern highlands, sometimes as the Mother Tongue. Different indigenous groups in the jungle area have local languages and dialects. If you try to learn a few standard phrases in the local languages it can enrich your experience and the local people will appreciate the effort you make. The following are some basic words and phrases in English, Spanish and Quechua.

English	Spanish	Quechua
Hello	Hola	<i>Rimaykullayki / Napaykullayki</i>
Goodbye	Chao / Adiós	<i>Tupananchiskama</i>
Good morning	Buenos días	<i>Wuymus diyas</i>
Good afternoon	Buenas tardes	<i>Wuymus tardis</i>
Goodnight / Good evening	Buenas noches	<i>Wuynas nuchis / Allin tuta</i>
Where is the bathroom?	¿Donde está el baño?	<i>¿Maypi bañu?</i>
Excuse me	Con permiso	<i>Pampachaway / Dispinsaykuway</i>
Thank you	Gracias	<i>Solpayki / Urpichay songoy</i>
I’m sorry	Lo siento	<i>Pampachaykuway</i>
You are welcome (it was nothing)	De nada	<i>Imamanta</i>
How much does it cost?	¿Cuánto cuesta?	<i>¿Haykátaq kay? / ¿Haykataq kay?</i>
Please	Por favor	<i>Allichy</i>
How are you?	¿Cómo está usted?	<i>¿Allillanchu?</i>
Nice to meet you	Mucho Gusto	<i>Anchatam kusikusani riqsisuspayki</i>
What is your name?	¿Cómo se llama usted?	<i>¿Imataq sutyiki?</i>
My name is...	Me llamo...	<i>X Sutyimi...</i>
Yes	Sí	<i>Arí</i>
No	No	<i>Mana</i>

Geography

Peru covers a total area of 1.2 million square kilometers and is the third largest country in South America. It is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, Ecuador and Brazil in the north, Chile in the south and Bolivia to the south and east.

The country lies almost entirely in the tropics and experiences a wide variety of climatic conditions. Peru can be divided into three distinct geographical regions. The first is a narrow coastal belt separated from the Amazon rain forest by the Andes mountain range. Most of this area is desert. The second region is within the Andes, the second highest mountain range in the world. The mountains ascend rapidly from the coast, reaching heights of 6,000 meters just 60 miles from the Pacific. The area is very rugged and dramatically beautiful, with jagged cliffs and deep canyons. The third region is the Amazon basin or rainforest, mainly bordering Ecuador and Brazil. The population is highly concentrated on the coastal region, especially in the capital city of Lima, and secondly in important highland centers of population, such as Arequipa and Cusco.

Time Zones

GMT -5, the same as Eastern Standard Time (New York City), except during Daylight Savings Time (DST), when Peru is at GMT -6 (no DST is applied in Peru).

History

Like many other nations, Peru has a history filled with conquest and domination by succeeding invaders. The first inhabitants of Peru were nomadic hunter/gatherers who traveled the country in loose-knit bands. In 4,000 BC these people began the transition from a nomadic existence to life as agriculturists and fishermen, settling in the coastal areas. As they evolved, they developed their lifestyles and began to create simple ceramics. This period is known as the early formative period, extending from 1250 BC to 850 BC.

The following 1,000 years saw little cultural unity, until the period of 100 - 700 AD. During this time, pottery, metalwork and intricate weavings reached a pinnacle of technological development throughout Peru. The two cultures which were most noted for their expertise are the Moche and the Nazca. The latter were then conquered by the Wari, who imposed their values upon, and suppressed the freedoms of those they ruled. However, little evidence remains from this period as no written records were kept. By about 1100 AD the Wari were overthrown by separate groups, resulting in three regional states. These three groups were known as the Chimú, Chachapoyas and the Chancay. The ruins that were left by these cultures still survive today.

Without a doubt, the most famous empire of the region was the Incas, who left a significant legacy in Peru. Interestingly enough, the empire only survived for about a century before it was dissolved in the mid-16th century. The Incas lived in the Cusco area of Peru and defeated the Chankas in the 1430's. During their period of power, the Inca Empire (known as Tahuantinsuyo or 'four corners') began a military campaign that conquered all of the existing cultures from southern Columbia to central Chile. At the time when the Spanish arrived in the New World, the Inca's had already absorbed the cultures within this region of South America.

During his initial explorations of South America, the Spanish Conquistador Pizarro saw the vastness of the Inca Empire and made preparations to invade their territory. In 1532, he landed on the coast of Ecuador and began his march towards Peru, conquering the remaining part of the empire by capturing the emperor. Shortly thereafter, the city of Lima was founded and became the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru, and although the Incas continued to fight for the next three decades, they failed to expel the Spanish from Peru.

The next two centuries were relatively peaceful and Lima became the major political, social and commercial center of the Andean nations. By the time the 19th century arrived, the entire continent of South America was prepared to rebel against Spain due to high taxation levels and restrictions placed on individual freedoms. In 1821 Jose de San Martin entered Lima after liberating Argentina and Chile, while Simon Bolivar had freed Columbia and Venezuela. The two met and it was agreed that Bolivar, with the help of his Field Marshal, would continue the liberation of Peru. After two decisive battles in 1824, Peru became independent. Still, the wars were not over; Peru had a brief war with Spain in 1866, which it won, followed by a losing war with Chile in 1883 that reduced the size of its territory. Finally, in 1941 Peru fought a war with Ecuador over a border dispute in the north, an issue that has since been resolved.

Government

Peru is officially known as a constitutional republic, although it has experienced military coups and dictatorships with intermittent periods of civilian rule. In 1980, President Belaunde was elected. His defeat in 1985 by Alan Garcia Perez led to the imposing of martial law in 1986 to quell the Maoist Sendero Luminoso ('Shining Path') movement. In the '90's under the government of Fujimori, much of the steam was taken out of the 'Senderistas,' though at a price. Currently Fujimori is serving a prison sentence for corruption and crimes against humanity. Today however, Peru has once again become a relatively safe and peaceful country in which attention is focused on developing the economy and increasing the standard of living, rather than on fighting politically charged ideological battles within the country.

Fujimori was followed by a government by Alejandro Toledo and later Alan García, both of whom built on the country's economic stability and growth. However, a still significant gap between social classes led Ollanta Humala, a centralist supporter of Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales, to become the president in 2011. The new president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski was elected in 2016 and will serve a 5-year term.

The change of government takes place on July 28, which is the date of independence from Spain and thus a national holiday.

Economy

The Peruvian economy is dependent upon the export of raw materials and the import of finished goods. The economy has been growing at a robust rate. Most of Peru's workforce is concentrated on the agricultural, mine extraction, service and government sectors. Peru's exports include petroleum, cotton, minerals and agricultural produce like quinoa and asparagus.

Religion

The Roman Catholic faith is the dominant religion in Peru. Though the native people are outwardly Roman Catholic, at heart they tend to blend Catholicism with their traditional spirit beliefs. The Conquistadors brought the Catholic faith to South America in the 16th century. They imposed their religious beliefs on the native people, who in turn never truly renounced to their traditional beliefs. However, as a result of the long Catholic history, many old towns in Peru boast magnificent examples of colonial architecture in the form of Catholic churches.

Souvenirs

Souvenirs, art, handicrafts and the like are available from literally pennies to hundreds or even thousands of dollars for rare art objects. There is a wide variety of goods available in Peru, from alpaca sweaters, tapestries and fur rugs, to silver and gold jewelry. In addition, you will also find many markets filled with beautiful goods as well as specialized items that you will find in the specific

regions in which you are traveling. However, the premise of 'buyer beware' is very much the rule throughout the country. Objects found in the markets may require bargaining and items in boutiques are generally fixed in price.

Also, please make sure you are not purchasing any illegal pieces of art, archaeology or other which may be forbidden by law to take with you back to your country.

Photography Conditions

In general, the best lighting conditions for photography are in the early morning and late afternoon. Between 10am and 2pm, the bright overhead sun may cause your pictures to have a washed out bluish look to them, although a skylight filter may help to cut the glare.

Recommended Reading

Peruvian History

- The Conquest of the Incas - John Hemming (Harcourt, Brace 1970)
- The Royal Commentary of the Incas - Garcilaso de la Vega
- Mystery on the Desert - Maria Reiche (Lima, 1949)
- Pathways to the Gods - Tony Morrison (Harper & Row, 1978)
- Demon River Apurimac: The First Navigation of Upper Amazon Canyons - J. Calvin Giddings, 1996
- Dance of the Four Winds: Secrets of the Inca Medicine Wheel – A.Villoldo, '96
- Markham in Peru: The Travels of Clements R. Markham, 1852-1853 - Clements R. Markham, 1991
- The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics – 2005
- History of the Conquest of Peru – William H. Prescott, 1847

Travel and Adventure

- Cutstones & Crossroads: A Journey in the Two Worlds of Peru - Ronald Wright (Viking Press, 1984)
- Adventuring in the Andes - Charles Frazier
- Path to Arequipa - Mark Jacoby, 1998
- Peru: The Land - David Schimpky, Bobbie D. Kalman, 1994
- Warriors of the Clouds: A Lost Civilization in the Upper Amazon of Peru - Keith Muscutt, 1998
- Eight Feet in the Andes - Dervla Murphy, 1986
- Journey to the Jungle: An Artist in Peru - Corinna Sargood, 1990
- No Bells to Toll: Destruction and Creation in the Andes - Barbara Bode, 1989
- Postcards from Peru - Denise Allard, 1997
- Planet Peru: An Aerial Journey Through a Timeless Land – M. Bridges, 1991
- Trails of the Cordilleras Blanca & Huayhuash of Peru - Jim Bartle
- Turn Right at Machu Picchu – Mark Adams, 2011
- The White Rock: An Exploration of the Inca Heartland – Hugh Thomson, 2003
- The Celestine Prophecy – James Redfield, 1993

Literature

- Aunt Julia & the Scriptwriter - Mario Vargas Llosa (Avon Books)
- The Green House – Mario Vargas Llosa (Avon Books)
- Death in the Andes – Mario Vargas Llosa (Avon Books)
- The Celestine Prophecy – James Redfield, 1992

Visa Regulations

Passport holders of 97 jurisdictions can visit Peru for tourism purposes without a visa for up to 183 days (per year). Currently Visas are not required by Australian, British, Canadian and US nationals as well as all other EU citizens travelling as tourists.

Citizens of Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela and Chile are able to enter Peru with only their valid national identification document.

Nationals not referred to above are advised to contact their embassy to check visa requirements.

Guidance

To enter and exit Peru, please make sure your passport is valid for more than 6 months from the date of arrival and that there is sufficient space in your passport to allow for all immigration procedures. Tourists may also have to provide evidence of return or onward travel.

Peru does not require any immunizations for entry, although it recommends vaccination against yellow fever.

Check with your airline or an embassy in case you have connecting flights overseas as part of your journey to and from Peru. It may be the case that countries you pass through enroute to your destination may require a separate transit visa or a yellow fever vaccination certificate.

Travelers to Peru will receive a stamp from Peruvian Immigration upon arrival stating the length of approved stay (usually 90 days). Extensions are not available and overstays will result in fines. Keep a copy of your passport details just in case you lose your passport.

It is imperative that all travelers entering Peru – especially those crossing at a land border – obtain an entry stamp from Peruvian immigration authorities at the time and place of entry. Travelers without an entry stamp will not be allowed to exit the country. Immigration authorities often insist that travelers must return to the point of entry in order to obtain the stamp.

MONEY

Currency

The Sol (Spanish pronunciation: sol, plural: Soles; currency sign: S/) is the currency of Peru. The Sol is subdivided into 100 cents, called céntimos in Spanish. Sol notes are in denominations of S/200, 100, 50, 20 and 10. Coins are in denominations of S/.5, 2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1 céntimos.

US Dollars are also in use and accepted for payment, particularly in tourist areas. The current rate of exchange versus the dollar should be estimated at US\$1 to 3 Soles. Make sure that the notes in US\$ that you bring from home or accept are in excellent condition. Even the slightest rip will make exchange almost impossible.

Only a few bureau de change in Lima and Cusco will exchange currencies other than US Dollars. Outside Lima it is virtually impossible. It is not recommended to exchange money at the airport due to a lower exchange rate, or on the street as counterfeits are a problem.

It is best to use local currency wherever possible, and it is always good for tourists to have some local currency in small denominations to pay for taxis, tips and goods in small establishments. We

also advise you to carry cash, an ATM card and a credit card that can be used for cash advances in case of emergency.

There are no restrictions on the import or export of local or foreign currency, but amounts exceeding US\$10,000 must be declared.

Banking Hours

Banks are usually open Mon-Fri 09:00-18:00, Sat 09:00-13:00 and closed on Sunday or Public Holidays.

Credit, Debit Cards & ATM Machines

Of the major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Diner's Club, you'll find Visa the most widely accepted in Peru. To avoid having to carry large quantities of cash with you, we encourage you to make use of the ever-increasing number of ATM machines available throughout the country, where you will be able to obtain cash withdrawals in local currency as well as in US\$.

When withdrawing money from a bank or ATM, please follow this list of recommended precautions:

- Please beware that no one is close enough as to see your pin code
- In case of any problem with your card at an ATM, do not trust any stranger and rather report it to any of the accredited bank staff available next to the ATM. For this, we strongly recommend you to withdraw cash from ATMs located in safe neighborhoods, those located inside a bank and during bank opening hours
- Do not withdraw large quantities of money and if you need to do so, please do it in a discreet, not very visible way to those surrounding you
- Do not walk with large quantities of cash with you. If you need to withdraw cash to make payments, do so close to the place where you have to pay

Remember that when withdrawing cash using a credit card, you'll start paying interest on the amount from the moment you make the transaction. Therefore, by far the best way to withdraw money from an ATM is by using a direct-debit card such as Visa. On withdrawal, the money is immediately deducted from your bank account and no interest is charged so long as you have sufficient funds back home. The exchange rate is excellent at approximately 3 Peruvian soles per U.S. dollar. You may find, however, that like credit cards you may be limited to the amount that you can withdraw each day, as some overseas banks and credit cards only limit you to 600 soles (200 dollars) per day.

Travelers' Check

For safety's sake, it is sometimes advisable to carry the bulk of your money as travelers' check/cheque. By far the best and most easily changed are American Express, although Thomas Cook, Citibank and Visa are usually fairly easy to change in the major cities. To make replacement quicker in case of theft, keep a record of check numbers and the original bill of sale in a safe place. Even with proper records, replacement may not always be as quick as the companies promise. In Peru, you will find that the exchange rate for a travelers' check is 1.5% to 2% lower than for cash - a small price to pay for the added security.

Casas de Cambio

These “exchange houses” can be found in just about any town or city on the tourist circuit. They are often open all day and late into the night, are rarely crowded and the exchange rate is nearly always better than the banks.

Street Changers

Changing money on the street is perfectly legal in Peru. Unlike other South American countries, Peru does not have a Black Market exchange rate. In fact, the rate on the street differs very little from the Casas de Cambio, which are safer. However, we encourage you to opt for the Casas de Cambio and identified street changers (some use a special uniform with their street changers association or neighborhood logo) – this way, in case of problems (ripped or even unfortunately forged notes), you know where to complain.

Cash

For smaller villages and in rural areas, ATMs may be nonexistent and US\$ and traveler’s cheques may be hard to cash or the rate of exchange is very poor. For these places, bring along cash in Peruvian Soles.

Local Taxes & Andean Migration Card

Since end of 2016, it is no longer required for visitors to complete the arrival form (Andean Migration Card). Your information will now be saved automatically and electronically by Immigrations upon entering Peru. When passing Immigrations, your passport must be stamped, and after collecting your luggage, you will have to declare your baggage at customs if you are carrying goods for which you must pay taxes.

Non-Peruvian and non-resident passengers are exonerated to pay 18% of general taxes at hotels and restaurants located inside the hotels. To make this exoneration effective you must have an arrival stamp in your passport and your virtual Andean Migration Card must be available to all hotels via the Peru Immigration website.

In case you require a copy of your Andean Migration Card, please advise the Immigration officer of your e-mail address upon arrival so an electronic copy can be sent to you by the Immigrations department. Alternatively, please contact consultamvirtual@migraciones.gob.pe for further information.

Please note that it is imperative that a scanned copy or clear picture of your passport and arrival stamp is presented to our representative upon arrival in Peru. The copy must be clearly legible as this is an official document that enables us to exempt you from local IGV taxes (18%).

TIPPING

Tipping is not compulsory but it is greatly appreciated throughout Peru, especially in the service industry. For reference, we have provided a general guideline below.

Tour Guide & Drivers

If you are pleased with the services provided by your tour guide and driver, then a tip for their work will be very much appreciated.

- In general and if there are 4 people or less in a group, we recommend around US\$30-35/day/group for guides and US\$10-15/day/group for drivers.
- If there are 5 people or more, we recommend around US\$7-10/day/traveler for guides and US\$3-5/day/traveler for drivers.

Hotel & Restaurant Staff

A tipping of 5-10% of the total bill in restaurants is appreciated. If you stay a couple of days in the same hotel, a tip to the maid service of \$2-3/day/room is appreciated. For porters, US\$2-3/time/room is acceptable.

Treks

If you are pleased with the services provided by your porters and cooks during your trek, then a tip for their hard work will be very much appreciated.

- In general for an average 4-day trek, we recommend US\$45/trek/group per porter and US\$60/trek/group per cook.
- For your trekking guide, we recommend similar tipping guidelines as mentioned above under 'Tour Guides'.

Boat Cruise

For overnight cruises, the suggestion is \$20-\$30/day/passenger for the crew (to be divided among all of the crew members) and around US\$7-10/day/traveler for the guides.

TRANSPORTATION

Road Travel

Main roads in Peru are reasonably paved; others can range from extraordinarily bumpy to impassable after landslides. Landslides are frequent in the mountains during the rainy season (December to March), making for slow travel and closed roads. Take care driving on the mountain roads, which are narrow, windy and above all high-up. The well-maintained Pan-American Highway runs down the length of Peru's coast, with intersecting highways running east into the mountains.

Flights

International Flights

The reconfirmation of international flight reservations at least 72 hours prior to your leaving Latin America is no longer necessary with major airline companies. However, international flight seat assignments may not be able to be changed or assigned in advance. As your international ticketing has been arranged independently, our concierge will be more than happy to assist you in anything you may need regarding your reservations. However, please be aware that it is the responsibility of the international airline to notify you of any changes or alterations that may occur to your international departure flights.

Domestic Flights

Domestic flights require a minimum of 1-hour and a half presentation at the airport prior to departure for baggage drop-off in case a pre-check-in has been made. We will do our best to arrange a pre-check-in for all domestic flights and transfers will be planned to guarantee your attendance at least 1.5 hours before departure. However, should the pre-check-in not be available, transfers will be planned to be at the airport at least 2 hours prior to flight departure.

Please be aware that domestic baggage allowance for all flights within Peru is 23 kg plus one carry-on (max. 8 kg) per person. Note: Luggage allowance for domestic travel in Latin America may be LESS than your International flight allowance. This may or may NOT be noted at check-in for your domestic travel. Your transferring representative will inform you at the time of check-in if a surcharge is required by the airline. Where possible we recommend travelling with a smaller carry-on bag and storing the bulk of your luggage. Our local representatives can always assist you with this.

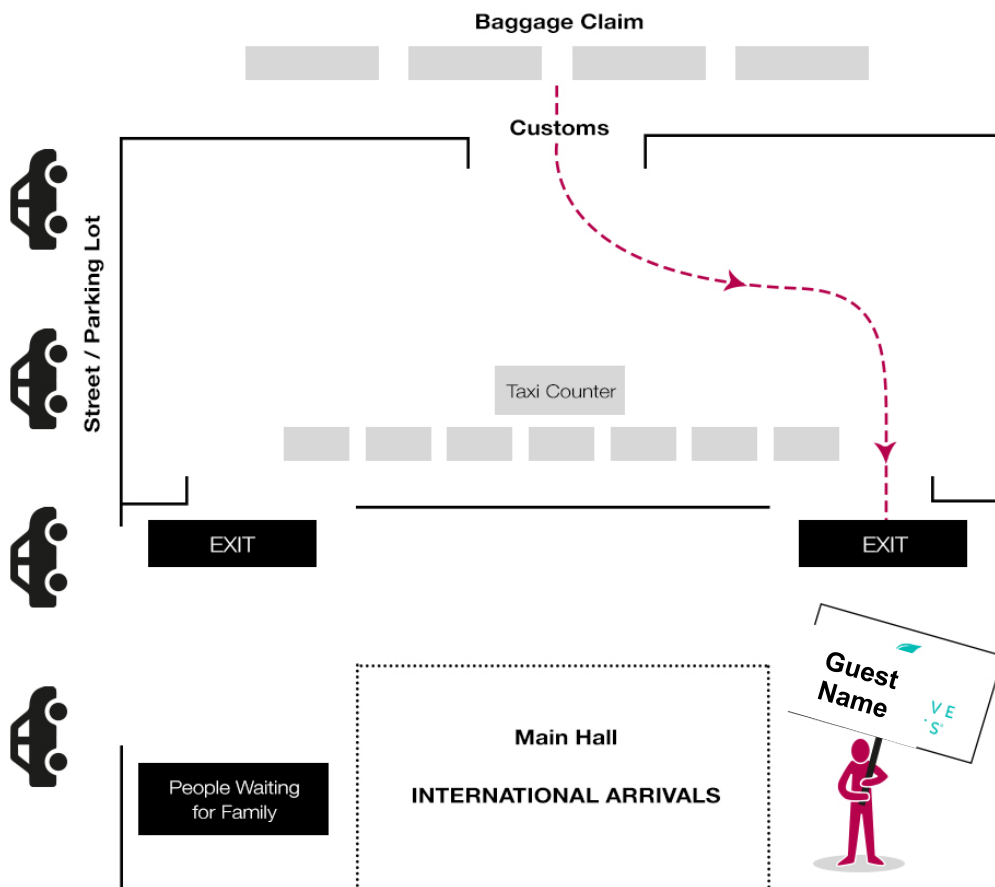
Please note that domestic flights may be subject to last minute schedule changes, lengthy delays and/or cancellation without ANY advance notice. Our staff makes every effort to institute the most suitable alternative travel arrangements if and when incidents such as this occur. We will advise you of any change affecting your itinerary and, if required, will book alternate travel plans. They may be at a reduced or increased cost. Should there be an increase in cost, we will bill you locally.

Airport Departure Tax

Airport departure taxes are included in all commercial air tickets in Peru, both domestic as well as international. Exception may only apply in certain remote airports with little affluence of commercial flights or for private flights. If your itinerary includes any of these airports or conditions, this tax will be mentioned in your itinerary.

Airport Arrival Information

Kindly find below a map of the International arrivals area in the Jorge Chávez International Airport in Lima, Peru. This information will help you successfully meet and locate our representative at the airport. If you don't find your representative, please call our emergency number (+51) 984 704 591.



Taxis

Many unlicensed taxi companies operate in Peru and visitors are advised to avoid them. They usually have a red and white taxi sign on the windscreen. Licensed yellow taxis are the only cabs allowed in downtown Lima.

Taxis do not have meters and you should agree fares before departure (they are relatively inexpensive). Extensive and safe taxi services are available by telephone in the main cities and hotels can assist with booking them for you. 'Uber' (www.uber.com) has also recently arrived in Lima and is considered one of the safest and fastest ways to get around the capital city. Kindly note that taxi fares can increase by 35 to 50% after midnight and on holidays. Drivers do not expect tips.

Train

By far the most popular train routes in Peru connect Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu. The train to Machu Picchu from Cusco is a truly spectacular ride.

The journey from Cusco to Arequipa is one of the most scenic and the train stops in Puno en route.

Note: Most rail companies in Peru impose restrictions on the amount of luggage each passenger can take with them on the train: 5 kg/11 lb per passenger, 62 lineal in/157 cm (height + length + width). Extra baggage should be left at your hotel for collection and, if required, our staff can provide assistance and transport your extra luggage to your hotel in Cusco.

MOBILE PHONES IN PERU

If you want to bring your mobile phone with you, make sure it works in Peru. To avoid frequency compatibility problems we recommend a GSM multi-band phone. While you most likely can use your SIM card from home, be aware of high roaming charges.

Phone & Sim Card Rental at the Lima Airport

To avoid high roaming fees, you can buy a quite inexpensive local pre-paid SIM card directly at the Jorge Chavez International Airport in Lima. Another option is to rent a local mobile phone including a local SIM card.

The local operator Claro offers the sale and rental of mobile phones with pre-paid and post-paid packages, sim cards, International Roaming and wifi modem rental plans. The cost of your rental will depend on the exact services required as well as the duration of your stay.

Please note that the rental of mobile phones, sim cards or other services has to be done in person as confidential information such as passport and credit card details are required. The two Claro shops at the airport are open 24 hours and are located in the arrival hall and on the second floor near the 'Renzo Costa' and 'Happy' souvenir shops.

Please do not forget to return your rental mobile phone or sim card before leaving Peru.

FOOD & DRINK ADVICE

Food

You will probably be surprised by the delicious Peruvian seasoning and fascinating gastronomy. Our program includes some meals and you will also be handed a recommended list of trusted restaurants and locales that are safe and hygienic. We strongly recommend to avoid eating food from street vendors and to be careful in choosing well-cooked dishes. Avoid seafood in case you try local restaurants, both in cities as well as in remote areas. In particular, you will find lots of ceviche, a cold seafood dish made using raw fish, which is practically the national dish. It is heavily acidic, which must kill some bacteria; nevertheless, be aware that unless the fish is very fresh, the potential for food poisoning is high. Finally, fruit in Peru is plentiful and delicious, but ensure that you wash it or peel it yourself.

Cuisine

Peruvian Food is incredibly diverse with each region, and even some cities, having their own specialties. Below we have included some of the most traditional, popular and easiest to find dishes in Peru.

Creolle Food

“Comida Criolla” is the name given to traditional Peruvian Dishes.

- **Papa a la Huancaína:** Sliced boiled potatoes covered in a cheesy, slightly spicy yellow sauce (which contains Turmeric) served on top of lettuce. This dish is usually garnished with a quarter of a hard-boiled egg and sometimes with olives.

- **Anticuchos:** Skewered meat (brochettes) that are sold throughout the streets of Peru and of course in restaurants. We recommend that you ask what type of meat it is before ordering, as the most common kind is called “anticucho de corazón,” which is marinated beef heart grilled on a stick.

- **Lomo Saltado:** If you are on a diet we don't recommend this dish. Peruvians take strips of steak and sauté them with soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, chilies, onions and tomatoes. It is then served over a bed of rice with a large helping of chips (French fries) and often with a small side salad. It is a hearty meal that is served in many different restaurants; from budget-friendly to high-end.

- **Aji de Gallina:** Shredded chicken cooked in a sauce of milk, onions, chilies, garlic, walnuts and cheese. It is served over rice and is a favorite of many Peruvians and visitors alike.

Fish & Seafood

- **Ceviche:** There are many different variations of the dish, which can be found in almost every restaurant in Peru. It is generally made with bite size chunks of raw white fish, normally sea bass. The fish is marinated in lemon / lime juice, onions and chilies. Traditionally it is served with boiled sweet potatoes and corn.

- **Tiradito:** is similar to Ceviche though the fish is cut into strips instead of the chunks and it is marinated without onions, thus giving it a milder flavor.

Chifa

No account of Peruvian food would be complete without mentioning the Asian influence. Chifa refers to the Chinese restaurants and their cuisine. There are several different places that sell fusion dishes, as well as a Chinatown in Lima that has a great variety on a good budget. The word Chifa is said to come from the Chinese Mandarin words Chi – Fan, which means to eat rice.

Regional Food

- **Papa Rellena:** Basically a variation of your stuffed potato. It is mashed potato rolled into balls or ovals and then stuffed with ground meat and spices. This potato/meat ball is deep fried until crispy brown.

- **Rocoto Relleno:** Stuffed rocoto peppers with a kick (they're a little hot/spicy). They are usually filled with meat, onions, egg whites, olives and sometimes with nuts. This dish originally comes from Arequipa.

- **Pachamanca:** This is a traditional meal that is served almost exclusively for major celebrations, mainly because it takes hours to prepare. A hole is dug in the earth and heated stones are placed in it. The food is a mixture of meats (lamb, pork, chicken, guinea pig), vegetables (potatoes, corn, beans) and herbs, which is put in a sack or cloth and slowly cooked in natural juices. It has a similar preparation to Curanto in Chile and the Hangi in New Zealand.

- **Cuy:** Here is where Peruvian cuisine might get a little scary for you. Fried Guinea pig! It was once eaten by Incan royalty and today remains a special food in Peru. While some restaurants serve it cut into small pieces and marinated, others prefer a more dramatic presentation. It isn't uncommon to see the entire animal – head, feet and all – grilled and served on a platter.

- **Cau Cau:** A tripe stew with diced potatoes. It is often accompanied by rice.

- **Choclo con Queso:** A snack that is typical of the Cusco region, choclo con queso is a simple dish that consists of only boiled Peruvian large-kernel corn and a side of local cheese or queso fresco.

- **Ensalada Pallares:** A salad of Peruvian Lima butter beans. The beans are first boiled, and then mixed with tomatoes, chilies, onions, lime juice, vinegar and salt. It is a very traditional dish that has been served for thousands of years; probably because it tastes so good!

- **Sopa (Soup):** Everywhere you go there is soup and no two restaurants are serving the same kind. It seems that whatever is left over for the day goes into the soup, but the results are always very pleasant. It is a common dish to have for breakfast in Peruvian homes. In Cusco, quinoa soup is a favorite specialty.

- **Escabeche de Pescado:** The preparation includes boiled fish, chilies, onions and a whole lot of vinegar. Traditionally this was only a preparation for fish, but today chefs sometimes prepare it with chicken or duck.

Peruvian Desserts

- **Picarones:** These look like thin donuts (with a bigish hole in the center) that are not perfectly round. They are a type of pumpkin fritter which are normally served with syrup on top. It is sweet, but not overly so, and are a filling dessert or snack.

- **Lucuma:** This 'nutty' flavored, orange colored fruit can frequently be found in Peruvian desserts. Peru is the only place in the world that has a large production of the lucuma fruit, although you will also find smaller lucuma farms throughout South America. The most common way to find this unique flavor is in ice-cream.

- **Mazamorra Morada:** This is a purple jelly-like dessert that gets its color from one of its ingredients, maize morado or purple corn. It is often served over arroz con leche (rice pudding).

Drink

While in Peru, it is best to drink only bottled, boiled or treated drinking water, all of which are widely available. Tap water is unsafe to drink. For that reason, we recommend even brushing your teeth with bottled water. In most restaurants, purified water is used to wash fruit, vegetables and salads. If you want to be extra careful, order salads made from boiled veggies (carrots, beans, beetroot, boiled eggs etc) and avoid vegetable leaves. Please also be careful with ice cubes – we recommend avoiding them in small local restaurants or food stalls. In areas where purified water is available, it may be useful to bring with you a reusable water bottle. Pasteurized milk, fruit drinks, soft drinks and tea are all widely available and safe to drink.

Peruvian Drinks

- **Pisco:** This colorless or yellowish-to-amber colored brandy is produced in the winemaking regions of Peru and Chile. No one really knows where the alcohol was first made or who invented the pisco sour cocktail drink. However, Peru currently exports three times more Pisco than Chile and Peruvian Pisco won over 20 gold medals and was named the best liquor of the world in the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2011. The Peruvian pisco has a stronger flavor than the Chilean pisco, which has high sugar content and a strong grape flavor. A pisco sour is a mixture of lemon juice, sugar, egg white and pisco.

- **Juices:** Because of the large amount of fruit that is grown in the country, you will find juices made out of all kinds of fruits. We recommend star fruit juice as it is sweet and refreshing, or Chirimoya, also a popular juice - and we promise it tastes much better than the fruit looks.

- **Inca Kola:** The drink of the Gods, this golden liquid is consumed throughout Peru. It is the only national soft drink to outsell Coca-Cola. It is a very sweet concoction tasting somewhere in the neighborhood of cream soda or bubble gum. The brand is so famous that you will enjoy returning to your own home country and seeing other travelers who also sport the Inca Kola t-shirt.

- **Maté de Coca:** It is a tea made with the coca leaf. It is often served when you first arrive at your hotel in Cusco or the Sacred Valley and truly helps with altitude sickness. Many Peruvians chew the leaves in the back of their mouths as they walk around town or climb in the Andean mountains. It is completely legal in Peru and a bag of dried leaves is an incredibly inexpensive purchase, although it does not offer the most pleasant taste. It should be noted that we do not recommend the consumption of coca to people with high blood pressure.

- **Maté de Muña:** This is a pleasantly minty tea that is made from the leaves of the muña plant that grows naturally in Peru's highlands. Muña is believed to have many useful properties and is often taken to relieve the symptoms of altitude sickness. However, muña is best known for its ability to ease digestive or gastrointestinal issues.

- **Chicha:** This is a fermented or non-fermented drink that is very typical all throughout Peru. The fermentation of all different kinds of products can be made into Peruvian chicha, although purple corn seems to be the most popular. It is commonly drunk by Peruvians and tourists should be cautious since the alcohol content varies largely. Moreover, the drink is often homemade and sanitation doesn't seem to be a primary concern in the process.

- **Chica de Jora:** This is a corn beer that has been consumed since Inca times. It is made from fermented yellow corn. This drink is very popular throughout southern Peru where chicherías are often identified by a bamboo pole adorned with a red flag. Reminiscent of hard cider, chicha de jora does not have a high alcohol content.

WEATHER IN PERU

The weather in Peru varies according to area – the changes in altitude are so extreme that the climate goes from freezing snow in the mountains to boiling sun on the coast. Likewise, the coast covers such a large stretch of longitude that the temperature changes dramatically as you head further south.

On the coast, winter lasts from June to September. The weather tends to be overcast and slightly damp at this time, but rarely very cold. It hardly ever rains in Lima or along the coast, except for Tumbes and Piura which have tropical climates.

During June to September, the mountainous areas are often sunny during the day but cold at night. This is high tourist season and the best time to visit most regions. Rainy season in the Andes starts in September and peaks between January and March, making trekking sometimes complicated.

Heavy rains in the mountains and jungle last from December to April. It is rainy and hot for most of the year, but between March and September there are occasional cold surges which might require a jumper.

Climate

The Andes (Cusco, Arequipa & Colca Canyon, Puno & Lake Titicaca, Chachapoyas & Kuélap)

The Southern Andes have, in general, well-defined seasons. From June to August, while winter days are typically sunny and warm, the temperature can drop to below freezing (27°F/-3°C) at night. Rain seldom falls during winter. From January to March, the summer months offer daytime temperatures to 85°F/30°C, milder nights (typically to 45°F/8°C) and plenty of rain. Despite some rain, December and April are nice months for traveling since the mountains are lush with summer flowers and you enjoy plenty of sunshine. But definitely our favorite month is May, right after the rainy season, when the temperatures are mild and the mountains are still green. Visits during Andean spring and fall offer weather patterns that vary between intermediate and seasonal extremes.

The Coast (Lima, Paracas, Nazca, Chiclayo, Trujillo and the Northern Beaches)

The Southern Peruvian Coast offers two well-defined seasons. From December to April is summertime, when the weather is warm and even hot (February). Although the ocean is still cold compared to other spots around the world, it's still nice for swimming and getting a tan, especially for travelers who enjoy surfing. Temperatures on average range from 25–33°C / 77-91°F. There is little or no rain during these months. The beaches around Lima and the North can be packed during

the months of January and February, which coincide with school holidays. From May to November the temperature drops a bit and visitors will find blankets of sea mist engulfing the coast from the south right up to about 600km / 325mls north of Lima. At this time of the year only the northern beaches such as Mancora and Punta Sal are warm enough for pleasant swims.

The Jungle (Tambopata, Manu)

The so called “dry season” goes from April to October, with daily temperatures averaging 30–35°C / 86-95°F. However, cold fronts from the South Atlantic are common. When this happens, the temperatures can drop to 15°C / 59°F during the day and 13°C / 55°F at night. The dry season is the best time to visit the jungle regions, since mosquitoes are not so abundant and the rivers are low, exposing the beaches. It’s also a good time to spot animals, especially birds, which usually hide during the rain falls. From November to March is the wet season, hot and humid, and when visitors can expect heavy rain at any time. However, the rains only last for a few hours at a time, so it is definitely bearable.

Packing Tips

Use your daypack as carry-on luggage and take your money, personal documents, hiking footwear, toiletries, personal medications, camera and film on the flight with you. It is helpful to have a number of small ‘zip lock’ plastic bags with you, as these are invariably handy throughout a trip for everything from waterproofing your valuables to storing a wet bathing suit or suntan lotion.

Gifts or Donations

In the past, many of our clients have asked about the kinds of things that might be appropriate to bring as gifts for locals we meet along the way. This is not necessary, but is greatly appreciated by those we may meet. Some examples of the items that we feel may be good to bring along include pencils, pens, pins, toothbrushes for kids, school materials and photographs or postcards from your country to share with them. This list is by no means exhaustive because often virtually anything will be appreciated.

Valuable Items

Many travelers find a money belt or neck pouch capable of holding your passport and air tickets to be helpful. It is a good idea to bring along a photocopy of your passport and camera gear or other valuables in case you lose anything and have to make an insurance claim. Please remember to keep these photocopies separate from the valuables in question.

In Peru you must be cautious with your belongings; pickpockets are common in the more congested urban areas, especially in markets and train stations. It is highly recommended that you use a money belt or neck pouch to defend your valuables against theft, as well as that you carry only the necessary cash for the daily visit and your passport only if needed.

ELECTRICITY AND PLUG STANDARDS

Electricity in Peru is 220 Volts and 60 Hertz (cycles per second). If you want to use a 110-volt appliance in Peru, you’ll need to buy a voltage converter. But always check before spending money on a converter, as many modern laptops and digital cameras can safely take both 110 and 220 volts (they are dual voltage).

Many of Peru's top-end hotels have outlets for 110-volt appliances. They should be clearly labeled as such, but always check if you are unsure.

There are two types of electrical outlets in Peru. One accepts two-pronged plugs with flat, parallel blades, while the other takes plugs with two round prongs. Many Peruvian electrical outlets are designed to accept both types.

If your appliance has a different plug attachment (such as a three-pronged UK plug), you'll need to buy an adapter. Universal plug adapters are inexpensive and easy to carry around. It's a good idea to buy one before you go to Peru (most major airports have a store selling plug adapters).

Basic Adapter Kit



Non-Grounded Plug

Universal to American Plug Adapter



HEALTH

If sensible precautions are taken by the visitor to Peru, there is no reason why you shouldn't remain as healthy as at home. The most common problems encountered by the traveler in Peru are stomach related problems (between 30% and 40% of travelers in a 2 week stay experience this to some extent), but the majority of these upsets will be relatively minor. Please don't become paranoid, just be cautious with some food items.

Travel Insurance

Before you travel, make sure that you hire a good medical insurance. If you plan to undertake "adventurous activities" such as rafting or mountain biking, make sure that your policy covers you. You may have to pay a small surcharge for this.

Medical Check-ups

As your trip to Peru may involve active programs including day-hikes, several-day treks or access to remote areas, we strongly recommend that participants have medical and dental check-ups to be certain they are in good health. **Anyone with a history of severe heart, lung or other major ailments should check with their doctor before confirming their trip to Peru.** If you have any doubts, please have your doctor call us to discuss the condition.

Dietary Restrictions

If you have any restrictions or allergies, **we kindly encourage you to discuss these dietary needs with us prior to the start of your trip or otherwise we may not be able to cater to them.**

Altitude sickness

It is important to take your time when becoming acclimatized to high altitudes that you may not be accustomed to. On reaching heights above 2500-3000 meters above sea level (8200-9840 Ft), heart pounding, shortness of breath and even a mild headache are normal responses to the lack of oxygen in the air. However, for some visitors these symptoms can deteriorate into a condition known as Soroche (or acute mountain sickness) in which you can experience headaches, loss of appetite, extreme tiredness, sleeplessness and often nausea. Symptoms usually develop within the first day or two at altitude.

For better coping with altitude, we recommend the following:

- Eat light the day before heading to a place of high altitude and eat light when you arrive
- Try not to rush and take it easy upon arrival
- Once settled in your hotel room, try to rest a little bit and, more importantly, drink plenty of fluids such as water and fruit juices. Drinking coca tea (an infusion of coca leaves - and perfectly legal in Peru) may help. However, those with high blood pressure should be cautious when drinking coca tea
- It is always a good idea after a short rest to walk around the city in order to start getting used to the altitude
- Avoid alcohol until you feel you are totally acclimatized (no shortness of breath anymore, no headache)
- Eat light meals for the first 1-2 days
- Avoid smoking
- Rest well before arriving in altitude and during your stay
- During the first day or two, engage in exercise but without pushing yourself to the limits

If you have experienced altitude sickness before, or you know that altitude affects you even in a mild form, we recommend you take “Dexametazona” (in its 4mg version for adults), starting with the first pill the night before you travel to high altitude and taking a maximum of 3 pills (one each 24 hours), or less if you already feel fine. The drug Diamox is often used by many visitors to speed the acclimatization process and counter the symptoms of “Soroche.”

Most importantly, almost all of our staff, and definitely all head guides working in Andean regions or altitude sickness prone areas, have been trained in Advanced First Aid by the Wilderness Medicine Institute (USA). We strongly encourage you to inform your guide of any symptoms you may feel regarding shortness of breath, headaches, weakness, cough or any uncomfortable feeling you may experience.

We want to make sure your visit to Peru is way beyond your expectations, but it is essential for you to share with us if you do not feel well, no matter how the rest of your group feels. Altitude sickness, when diagnosed in time and treated accordingly, will have almost no effect on your trip.

However, when not identified or hidden from us until symptoms are openly clear, altitude sickness could become acute or even fatal. Please do inform our guide immediately in case of not feeling well.

Other General Health and Safety Precautions

Due to the wide variety of conditions and the unpredictability of the weather, it's best to have clothing and accessories that are versatile. In Peru, the sun can be bright, so good sunglasses and a good sun-protecting cream are a must. Sunburn can be a problem, so a hat is recommended in your pack-list. The foregoing recommendations should be heeded strongly due to the possible high UV levels associated with the high altitudes you will experience.

If you require eyeglasses or wear contact lenses, be sure to bring a spare pair in case of loss. If you are taking any prescription medicines on a regular basis, please be sure to bring along enough to last the entire time that you will be away. Medical care in major centers is adequate, while medical services are far more limited in more remote areas. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services. Our guides will have a comprehensive medical kit in case of emergencies; however, it is recommended that you have a small first aid kit for your own use. Details are provided in the “What to Bring” section of this document.

Finally, in Peru as in most developing countries, the most serious health hazard on a day-to-day basis remains city traffic - on the streets of major cities in particular. Given the notorious driving habits of the region, one can only stress that all visitors take great care on the streets. Additionally, our vehicles are regularly undergoing safety checks and we always assure to provide safe transportation throughout the country.

GENERAL CODE OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDUCT

We invite all our guests to follow our code of conduct:

- Respect cultural differences: Local customs and traditions may be different from your own. Ask our guide or representative about what behaviors are acceptable or not.
- Take photos with care: Always ask permission to take photos of people and respect their wishes if they refuse. If you do take a photo, offer to send copies back to them and make sure to follow through with your promise. If your subject wants immediate compensation in return for the photo taken, offering a piece of fruit or bread, or a souvenir from your home are ways to do it, as well as paying for them, this being the most common compensation requested.
- Avoid buying items or animals whose export would be punishable by law.

If you are travelling in Natural Protected Areas and/or camping, please follow our guides’ and representatives’ guidelines regarding:

- Selective disposal of garbage (organic & inorganic) and garbage removal
- Use of flush toilets built along trekking routes, different communities or villages and remote areas. Otherwise, we provide toilet tents with biodegradable toilet products. All garbage is disposed of outside the Natural Protected Areas
- Avoid fires – no smoking allowed inside the tents
- Avoid disturbing animals - no animal hunting allowed
- Preservation of flora, no picking orchids or other plants allowed
- Walking over ruins, walls or archaeological sites is strictly forbidden
- Avoid giving money, candies or other items to local community children or adults in order not to impact their lifestyle
- Protect local water systems through the use of biodegradable soaps and shampoos while camping. Please use our provided bowls for washing purposes to avoid the soap getting into the ground