

PERU: AN INTENSE DISCOVERY

The history of Peru is vast and ancient, making it one of the most amazing destinations in the whole continent with a history of over ten thousand years that has made Peru, a country rich in cultural heritage, traditions and mysticism.

The Inca Empire was so large that it reached the current countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina, and had Cuzco (meaning “navel of the world” in Quechua) as its capital city. The Empire came to an end with the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in 1532, who established the vice royalty of Peru, lasting for almost 300 years until 1821 when Peru got its independence, giving birth to the Republican era.

Nowadays, Peru shares with the world its magic, from the lost city of Machu Picchu – one of the Seven New Wonders of the World – to the floating islands of Uros in Lake Titicaca to the thick green jungles of the Amazon. Peru is a land of mystery and constant discovery, with countless archaeological sites, its enigmatic Nazca Lines which can only be seen from the sky, and the most varied and unforgettable landscapes. Peru is one of the 12 mega-diverse countries in the world; its changing geography, from the desert coast to the jungle, crossing the incredible Andes, shows amazing sceneries that host a large variety of wildlife.

Lovers of the outdoors will find much to love about Peru: white capped mountains, dense rainforests, the deepest canyons and a number of pristine, well-kept national parks. Lovers of culture will likewise find themselves right at home because of the well-known hospitality of the people and unique museums, historical sites, ancient ruins and fine restaurants that can be found all over Peru.

Peru is a country full of color and mixture of cultures in which history and modernity coexist in total harmony in its architecture, cuisine, arts but most importantly, in its people who keep traditions alive.

Meet the people, experience the adventure, live the traditions, delight your palate, encounter the past, embrace nature, feel the mystery... Discover the intensity of Peru.

GENERAL FACTS

- Official name: Republic of Peru
- Area: 498,222 square miles (1,285,215 km²)
- Populations: 30,475,000 inhabitants
- Capital city: Lima
- Government: Democratic based on 3 powers: Executive, Legislative and Judicial
- President: Ollanta Humala (2011-2016)
- Main Cities: Lima, Cusco, Arequipa, Trujillo
- Official languages: Spanish. English is widely spoken.
- Independence date: July, 28th 1821
- Currency: Soles S/ (Dollars and Euros can be easily changed)
- Religion: Majority Roman Catholic

THE COUNTRY

Peru is located on the western side of South America. Its territory borders the Pacific Ocean to the west and bounded on the north with Ecuador, on the northeastern with Colombia, on the east by Brazil, on the southeast by Bolivia and south to Chile. Because of its geographic position and its tropical location, the presence of the Andes and both the Humboldt and El Niño currents, Peru is the earth's most ecologically diverse country. Eighty-four of the one hundred and four ecosystems in the world, and twenty-eight of the thirty-two climates on the planet can be found here. Additionally, it is one of the world's leading countries in terms of variety of species and habitats.

THE PEOPLE

Peru is a nation of mixed ethnic origins. Throughout its history, Peru has been the meeting ground for different nations and cultures. As a result of this encounter, and later enriched by the migration of Africans, Asians and Europeans, Peruvians emerged as the representatives of a nation whose rich ethnic mix is one of its leading characteristics.

BANKS AND BUSINESSES

Most businesses and Bank offices are open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., although some banks also open Saturday mornings. You can withdraw money with major credit cards at the principal banks. In major cities, most hotels, restaurants and shops accept international credit cards and travelers checks. Nevertheless, it is always advisable to carry some cash. The use of U.S. Dollars is allowed. You may pay for goods and services directly in US Dollars or in Soles at the daily rate of exchange. ATM's are easily found throughout the main cities. Cash advances can be made at most banks or ATM's.

CURRENCY

The official currency in Peru is the Sol (S/), which is divided into 100 centimos. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency or travelers checks brought into Peru.

CUSTOMS

Each passenger is allowed two bags of up to 50 pounds (23 kilos) each, plus a 11 pounds (5 kilos) carry-on luggage, photo or video camera, wheel chair, or baby carriage can be transported free of charge if there is space availability.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity in Peru is 220 volts AC, 60 cycles. Some hotels have 110 volts AC or adapters.

LANGUAGE

Peru's official language is Spanish. Quechua is the second official language, and is widely spoken in the sierra (highlands). English is spoken in major visitor centers.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Valid passports are required for entry into Peru. No visas are needed for stays of up to 90 days, however we recommend you verify this before travelling. Before

landing, your airline will hand you an embarkation /disembarkation card to be filled out and presented to the Immigration officer.

Passports should be taken with you on your excursion to Machu Picchu as this document will be requested at the train stations and at the entrance gate to the ruins.

IMMIGRATION CARD

Upon arrival to Peru, Customs will provide all foreign travelers an Andean Immigration Card that should be kept throughout your trip, until you leave the country, as this immigration card will exonerate you from the Peruvian Sales taxes at hotels. In case of loss, Customs will charge a fee for the card.

TAXES

There is a local sales tax of 18% (IGV) added to all purchases.

TIME ZONE

Peruvian time is five hours past Greenwich Mean Time and is similar to Eastern Standard Time in the United States (except when the U.S. goes on daylight savings time from April to October). In reference to other cities, when it is noon in Peru, it is:

Santiago de Chile and Caracas	13:00
Rio de Janeiro	14:00
New York	12:00
Madrid	18:00
Londres	17:00
Tokyo	03:00

WEATHER

Being such a geographically diverse country within the tropical belt, the weather in Peru is determined both by altitude and season. However, it also means that there is almost invariably sunshine somewhere in Peru! Below is a summary of the weather conditions you can expect to find in each different region of the country at different times of the year.

Coast (Ica, Chiclayo, Lima, Piura, Trujillo, Tumbes)

Northern region: warm year-round with highs of up to 35°C in the summer.

Central and southern regions: two well-defined seasons, winter between April and October, and summer between November and March.

Highlands (Ancash, Arequipa, Ayacucho, Cajamarca, Cusco, Puno)

This region has two seasons, dry season between April and rainy season between November and March.

Rainforest (Iquitos, Madre de Dios, Manu)

High rainforest (over 2,300 feet asl): has a temperate, subtropical climate with abundant rainfall.

FOOD

Anyone who has been to Peru can vouch for its wonderful cuisine. Sophisticated restaurants, awarded several forks, reflect the diversity of a nation that has blended its native traditions with the cuisine of Europe, the Middle East, China, Africa and Japan. The result: unique flavors that make Peruvian cuisine one of the finest and most varied in the world.

Today the gastronomy bounty can be enjoyed in traditional restaurants and also through the creations of a new generation of chefs who have achieved international recognition for their imaginative use of traditional ingredients and recipes with haute cuisine techniques. Peruvian restaurants throughout the country can be a fantastic and inexpensive treat. Most restaurants take major international credit cards.

TIPPING

As in many places, gratuities are customary, but entirely at guest's discretion. Guidelines for tipping will be found in the "Welcome Kit" you receive upon arrival.

PARK FEES

Visitors to Machu Picchu, archeological sites, and National Parks and Natural Reserves must pay entrance fees. Such prices vary and may not be included in tour rates.

HEALTH

No inoculations are required for entry. Travelers with heart conditions or high blood pressure should check with their physicians about high-altitude travel, as well as preventive measures for visiting tropical areas. Bottled water is advised and available everywhere. Altitude sickness, known as soroche in Peru, is occasionally a problem for visitors traveling directly from the coast or jungle regions to the high Andes, above 2,500 meters (8,000 feet). The best way to prevent it (headache, dizziness, fatigue) is to eat lightly, and drink plenty of fluids. It is recommended to ascend gradually to become acclimated and rest on the first day of your arrival.

While there are no required vaccinations for guests traveling to Peru, a yellow fever vaccination is highly recommended for guests traveling to the Amazon. The shot should be given at least 10 days before their arrival.

DRINKING WATER AND DRINKS

Bottled mineral water, with or without carbonation, soda drinks like Inca Kola and Coca-Cola are available in all hotels, ships and restaurants, as well as Cristal, Pilsen and Cusqueña beer. Coffee and tea are usually served at the end of meals. The "chicha morada" is the typical drink of Peru, and it is generally consumed in the coast.

Drinks are usually not covered in paid-for meals so you may have to pay for those separately; please verify before ordering.

CLOTHING

It is advisable to bring a variety of clothing, depending on the places to visit. If the traveling is through the coast, it's appropriate to wear clothing for fall. If traveling to the mountains, winter clothing will be necessary. Be prepared to dress in layers

in the jungle. If the plan is to enjoy some time at the beach, bring light summer attire. Comfortable shoes, a hat and sunblock to protect you from the sun's strong rays in the mountains and from the heat of the jungle are recommended.

CHILDREN

Some tours and programs are not suitable for smaller children, and thus not recommended for them. Children over eight will have no problem. Hotels in the major cities cater to children of all ages, providing children's menus, baby sitters and extra beds/cribs.

INTERNET ACCESS

Most hotels offer complimentary wireless internet services in all areas as well as a business center. Consult the front desk for specific details in each property. Additionally, some cafes and restaurants in Lima and Cusco also offer free Wi-Fi.

WHAT TO BRING

- Hiking boots, sneakers and shoes
 - Long pants or slacks
 - Long-sleeved shirts
 - T-shirts
 - Sweaters and a jacket
 - Rain wears for rainy season
 - Camera
 - Insect Repellent
 - Personal toilet items and first-aid kit
 - Medicine to arrest or prevent the so called "Soroche" or altitude sickness
- Please consult your physician what medicine is best suited for your organism