



About Peru

Peru's position in west central South America has made it the meeting place of numerous cultures for thousands of years. Bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, Chile to the south, Bolivia and Brazil to the east, Colombia and Ecuador to the north, Peru is the natural gateway for tourism and trade on this continent of 300 million people. Nature has endowed Peru with an enormous variety of climates, landscapes and ecosystems. Eighty four of the world's 103 known ecological zones and 28 different climates are present in Peru, which place it among the 5 countries with the greatest biological diversity in the world. This variation allows Peru to produce the world's largest-grained and most tender corn, the smoothest avocado, the finest cotton fiber and the most refreshing passion fruit juice. The landscape is punctuated by 50 mountains of 6,000 meters or more above sea level and 1,679 glaciers. There are 12,000 lakes of varying sizes and depths, and 262 different river basins. Throughout its history Peru has also been the place where different races and cultures met. To the native population were added, first, the Spaniards who brought over African slaves, then later migrations of Europeans and Asians. Today, Peru is inhabited by 23 million descendants of all these races. Half the population is under 21. Like most of the region, Peru's official languages are Castilian Spanish, inherited through the Spanish Conquest, and Quechua, the language of the Incas. English and other languages are frequently spoken by business executives, or used in the tourist trade. The country is predominantly Roman Catholic, another legacy of the Colonial period. This has not kept sierra populations, however, from maintaining some Inca rituals and mixing them with Catholic festivals. Jews, Protestants and other religious groups have also established places of worship.

Travel Documentation

Ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your return travel date as this is the minimum requirement to enter the country. As passport information is required to purchase your permit for the Inca Trail, please be sure to renew your passport early if required.

You must carry a copy of your insurance details including company name, policy number and international emergency contact information for the insurance provider. A suggestion would be to scan a copy of your insurance detail information, passport and ID; email it to yourself and save it in your inbox. That way you will be able to access it from any computer.

Upon entering Peru you will receive an **ANDEAN IMMIGRATION CARD**, a small white sheet of paper that must be shown upon check-in at all hotels within the country and presented to Immigrations upon your departure from the country. It is a hassle but not a disaster if you lose this sheet of paper: replacements can be purchased at the immigration office in Cusco, or you can simply pay a fine as you leave.

There are currently no required vaccinations to enter Peru although there are some which are recommended. Please speak to your travel doctor about this. Also, if travelling to other countries after Peru please make sure that you have checked the consular website of that country to determine what is required for entry.

Visa Information

If you hold a valid Canadian, American, Australian, New Zealand or E.U. passport, as of January 2016 you DO NOT need to apply for a visa for Peru. If you are not from one of these countries, you may need a visa. Please check with the Peruvian consulate in your area to find out whether or not you will need a visa. If you are travelling with a U.S. passport you a visa is required to enter Bolivia. There are several Bolivian consulates in Peru however we cannot comment on the length of time required to process your visa and you must speak with the Bolivian consulate in your area.

If travelling to countries other than Peru, it is important that you check with their embassy to determine requirements as many South American countries DO require visas for Australian, Canadian and US citizens many of which need to be obtained in your home country before you begin your travels.

Travel Insurance

It is required that you purchase emergency medical insurance that includes repatriation services as part of the insurance plan. It is recommended that you also purchase trip cancellation or interruption insurance which reimburses you for the value of your trip should you fall ill or for any other reason (other than a change of mind) you may not be able to complete your trip. Many insurance providers also offer all-inclusive insurance which includes emergency medical, baggage loss, delay or damage and trip cancellation or interruption. Not all insurers cover adventure travel so please make sure that your insurance does cover this type of travel.

Recommended links are:

1. www.worldnomads.com
2. <https://www.care-concept.de/index.htm?vmnr=9009410053&mail=holistic@travelandhealing.com> FOR EUROPEAN TRAVELERS

As they insure adventure travel however we cannot guarantee that this insurance will cover all of our activities. You must speak with this or any other insurance company directly to ensure that their policy is appropriate for the type of travel you are undertaking.

Luggage Allowance for Domestic Flights

Domestic flights in Peru on Star Peru (the airline that we use) have a baggage allowance for air travel is one bag per person with a maximum weight of 25kg (55 lbs). Charges for extra luggage, that are over and above the airline allowances, are considered a personal expense.

You are also permitted one carry-on bag per person, small enough to fit in the overhead compartment or underneath the seat in front of you (maximum weight of 8-10 kg (17.5-22 lbs) and an approximate size of 23 cm x 40 cm x 55 cm) as well as one

business article, such as a purse, briefcase or laptop computer bag (maximum size of 16 cm x 33 cm x 43 cm). Please be sure to clearly identify your luggage.

About the Local Food & Water

The local cuisine is something for the traveler to look forward to. It usually includes superb combinations of typical Andean foods, such as corn, potatoes, and chili pepper, with pork and mutton introduced by the Spanish. Adventurous diners can feast on cuy (guinea pig), a Peruvian specialty. During the trip, you can expect to spend an average of \$5-10US for lunch and \$15-20US for dinner.

Do not drink tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically treated. Do not drink unbottled beverages or drinks with ice if you are not in a tourist restaurant. For those with weak stomachs or with little travel experience outside of North America and Europe we recommend that you do not eat fruits or vegetables unless they have been peeled or cooked. Avoid cooked foods that look like they have been sitting for a long time. Cooked foods that have been left at room temperature are particularly hazardous. Avoid food and beverages obtained from street vendors. Do not eat raw or undercooked meat or fish, including ceviche unless advised of a safe restaurant by your local representative or hotel staff. If you have any further questions in regards to food dos and don'ts please do not hesitate to ask your local representative. Please note that we will our best to advise you of safe foods however everyone is different and some, especially those who are not well-travelled may have some problems with their stomach.

Health

All travelers should visit either their personal physician or a travel health clinic at least 6 weeks before departure.

Recommended vaccinations as per Tropical Medical Clinic:

- ☑ Hepatitis A & B
- ☑ Typhoid.
- ☑ MMR (Measles/Mumps/Rubella)
- ☑ Tetanus-diphtheria (if not received in the past 10 years)

Optional – see with your travel doctor

- ☑ Yellow fever, Rabies, and anti-malarials

General Health Advice:

Bring adequate supplies of all medications in their original containers, clearly labeled. Carry a signed, dated letter from the primary physician describing all medical conditions and listing all medications, including generic names. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to carry a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. Pack all medications, with the exception of needles and syringes in hand luggage. Carry a duplicate supply in the checked luggage. If you wear glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair. If you have significant allergies or chronic medical problems, wear a medical alert bracelet.

It is always recommended to carry your own personal medical kit. Take appropriate measures to prevent inconveniences to your tour. We recommend that you bring something for motion sickness like Gravol and an anti-diarrheal like Imodium. You

may even take precautionary measure by taking travellers' diarrhea prevention medicine like Dukoral however you must talk to your travel doctor for the most up-to-date recommendations.

Altitude Sickness:

Altitude sickness is a result of the low air pressure that can be found at higher altitudes and the corresponding lower levels of oxygen. There are normally no effects until 2400m.s.l. At altitudes higher than this, effects varying from a slight headaches to nausea and extreme fatigue to serious lung problems can result.

Recommendations for Avoiding Altitude Sickness

Drink 2L to 3L of water a day. Remember that coffee and alcohol dehydrate you and should not be drunk in excess while at altitude.

Eat lightly for the first couple of days at altitude, avoiding red meat if possible. As your body spends more time digesting food, the blood and its oxygen stay in your stomach instead of going to your head.

Try coca tea. It is none to have many wonderful medicinal properties and often helps people with altitude, especially in regards to alleviating headaches that are a common symptom.

Get lots of rest. We know that you have come to Peru to see the sites but taking a cat nap here and there could be the difference between feeling great and missing a day or two of your tour. Your body needs time to be able to adjust to the lack of oxygen and while you sleep you are giving it the chance to do this.

Stay protected against the sun. The sun is incredibly strong at altitude and if you have ever suffered from sun stroke you will know that the headaches and discomfort associated with it will not help you to feel any better at altitude.

If you are feeling very unwell or are unable to breath properly even at rest, please advise our local rep or the hotel reception as a half hour of oxygen (available at many hotels) may be enough or they can contact a physician for you.

General Health Tips

Avoid contact with stray dogs and other animals. If an animal bites or scratches you, clean the wound with large amounts of soap and water and contact local health authorities immediately.

Wear sun block regularly (at least SPF30) and do not forget to reapply. You should also wear a hat to protect you from the sun as it is much stronger due to both altitude and Peru's proximity to the equator.

Avoid ice cubes and tap water.

Insect and tick protection

Insect bites may be an issue at lower altitudes along the coast, in the jungle and while visiting Machu Picchu and hiking the Inca Trail. To protect yourself from insect bites wear long sleeves, long pants, hats and shoes (rather than sandals). Apply insect repellents containing 20-35% DEET (N,N-diethyl-3- methylbenzamide) or 20% picaridin (Bayrepel) to exposed skin (but not to the eyes, mouth, or open wounds). DEET may also be applied to clothing. Products with a lower concentration of either repellent need to be reapplied more frequently. Products with a higher concentration of DEET carry an increased risk of neurological toxicity without any additional benefit. For additional protection, apply permethrin-containing compounds to

clothing, shoes, and bed nets. Permethrin-treated clothing appears to have little toxicity. Don't sleep with the window open unless there is a screen. If the sleeping area is not otherwise protected, use a mosquito coil, which fills the room with insecticide through the night.

For a more natural approach, use mint or citronella essential oils.

Ambulance

For a public ambulance in Peru, call **141**. For a private ambulance, which usually offers better service, look in the local telephone directory or call one of the following if one is required in Lima before meeting with your local representative:

- Alerta Medica (tel. 225-4040)
- Medicos Salud Union En Alerta (tel. 449-6133)
- Mision Medica (tel. 346-2929)

Medical facilities

In general, private clinics offer better care than the public hospitals. There are several high-quality medical clinics in Lima that are open 24/7 for medical emergencies. They also function as hospitals and offer subspecialty consultations. Many travelers go to one of the following:

- Clinica Anglo Americana (Alfredo Salazar, 3rd block, San Isidro; tel. 221-3656; also urgent care center at Av. La Fontana, La Molina; tel. 436-9933)
- Clinica San Borja (Av. Guardia Civil 333, San Borja; tel. 475-3141; website www.clinicasanborja.com.pe/)
- Clinica El Golf (Av. Aurelio Miro Quesada 1030, San Isidro; tel. 264-3300)
- Clinica Montesur (Av. El Polo, Monterrico; tel. 436-3630; specializes in women's issues)

Good medical care may be difficult to find in other cities and impossible to locate in rural areas. In Cusco, there are several private clinics that provide acceptable care, but serious medical problems will generally require transport to Lima. Most doctors and hospitals will expect payment in cash, regardless of whether you have travel health insurance. Life-threatening medical problems may require air evacuation to a country with state-of-the-art medical facilities.

Safety

One consolation is that guile is favoured over violence in Peru, but you should always pay attention to any warnings you hear or read, and take sensible precautions.

With respect to the Inca Trail specifically, thefts from tents, particularly in the region of Huayllabamba, do occur. Don't leave your tent unattended, and don't leave valuables in your tent. At night, bring everything - including your boots - inside the tent and keep things close to you.

Peru is a safe country but basic precautions to avoid theft are always recommended:

- Don't flash money, jewellery or expensive watches around.
- When carrying a shoulder bag or camera, carry it in front of you. Put the strap across your body, not just over one shoulder.
- Don't leave valuables in hotel rooms.
- Don't leave your luggage unattended. If you put it on the roof of a bus or in storage compartments, watch closely to make sure it doesn't get unloaded before the bus leaves.
- When sitting in cafes or restaurants, make it difficult for someone to snatch your bag or camera by putting the leg of your chair through the strap (and sitting in such a way as to make it difficult for thieves to get at it).
- Watch out for pickpockets in a crowd, or for any attempt to distract you by bumping into you, or thrusting something - a newspaper, a piece of cardboard with something written on it, etc. - into your line of vision. Be aware of a favorite trick to spray you with something unpleasant - grease, excrement and so forth. While 'helpful' passers-by try to clean you up, their friends are busy cleaning you out.
- Women alone should be especially careful, as women seem to be considered easier targets than men.
- Don't go to isolated areas alone. Be very careful after dark. If you have doubts, ask locals, other tourists, your local representative or hotel staff if an area you intend to go to is safe.
- Most importantly, follow your instinct. If you feel that an area is unsafe do not chance it. Avoid that area.

Currency and Money

The currency in Peru is Peruvian Nuevo Sol (PEN or S/.). One Nuevo Sol is broken down into 100 céntimos (cents). Banknotes currently circulating include 200, 100, 50, 20 and 10 Nuevos Soles, while there are coins for 1, 2 and 5 Nuevos Soles and 50, 20, 10, 5 and one cents. It is best that you bring un-torn and unmarked US dollars or Euros with you or that you plan to withdraw funds from ATM machines or a combination of both. Most bank machines are affiliated with PLUS or CIRRUS and will dispense USD or Soles. Please make sure that your bank card is associated to one of these networks if you plan on using your bank card to make withdrawals. You should advise your bank and credit card company that you will be travelling overseas so that they do not block your account. Please note that if you have a PIN that is more than 4 digits you may be unable to use Peruvian bank machines. Lastly, you will be charged a larger than normal amount to withdraw money overseas. Please check with your financial institution what the withdrawal fees are. US dollars are commonly accepted in most large hotels, stores and supermarkets in Lima; however we recommend that you exchange your money in banks which will accept most bank cards and credit cards, because they offer more security and guarantees. It is also possible to withdraw money in both PEN and US dollars using either a debit or credit card

In Peru, all goods and services are taxed 19% (IGV) however this amount should already be included in the listed price for the item. Restaurants and hotels often charge an additional 10% service fee. It is important to note that this service fee goes to the restaurant and not to the server. Typically, if you have received good service from your server, a 7-10% tip is appreciated. The exchange rate varies daily, please see your bank or www.xe.com for the current exchange rate but note that the rates seen online will not be the same as the actual exchange rate received.

Electricity

Power outlets in Peru are 220V. Some electronic items such as cameras and computers from North America may be able to be plugged directly into Peruvian sockets but be sure to check before plugging. If you are bringing items that are only suitable for 110V please be sure to bring a travel converter with you. It should also be noted that most plugs in Peru only accept either two round or flat pins and do not have a third hole normally used for grounding. Travel adaptors can be purchased in Peru however it is best to arrive with one if required. Please note that waste disposal in Peru is very basic. If you require batteries for anything please be sure to bring a recharger (that works with 220v) with rechargeable batteries. If this is not possible we ask that you bring your batteries home with you for proper disposal.

Weather

Like all big mountain ranges, the peaks of the Andes generate and attract their own weather, making conditions impossible to predict. There are however two distinct seasons in the region, a wet season that occurs from November to March, and a dry season April through early October. The dry season is characterized by cold nights, but sunny days, with an average daytime temperature in Cusco of approximately 15°C. This can be considered a stable pattern, but be prepared for a wide range of temperatures, from freezing nights, to snowy and windy conditions, to bright sunshine intensified by high altitude. The wide fluctuation in temperatures makes it important to bring layers so that you are always prepared.

Peruvian Culture

Peruvian culture is an interesting mix of age-old tradition, remnants of colonialism and modern-day Western culture. In the Andes and the Amazon region many people continue to live very basic, subsistence-based lifestyles. The mother tongue of these areas is almost never Spanish but either Quechua in most of the highlands or one of the many tribal dialects of the jungle regions. Bartering is still common in these areas and modern luxuries such as electricity and running water are uncommon. The coast, lead by the capital, Lima, is quite different. With two of the largest cities in the country, Lima and Trujillo which account for approximately 35% of the population residing in the coastal area, this region is on a whole more modern and it is not unusual to see internet cafes, boutiques and other modern conveniences. The mother tongue is almost always present and the effects of colonialism are more easily discernible. As alluded to above, Peru's geography has defined its cultures. On the coast you will find mostly mestizo people who share a mixed Indigenous and European culture. You can also find a thriving Afro-Peruvian culture just south of Lima, descendants of African slaves who were originally brought over to work in the mines of Bolivia but who escaped to the coast only to find themselves enslaved again on the cotton plantations of the region. Seafood is par for the course and you will find very few Costeños, who do not enjoy a good ceviche, fish and seafood —cooked in lime juice. The Sierra or highland region is probably the most recognized of Peru. Consistently of mostly indigenous people or mestizo people in the cities this is the land of the Andean condor, the pan flute and the colourful ponchos that many of us recognize as being Peru.

The diet is representative of the foods available in the area and consists mainly of legumes, potatoes and corn. There are also Andean grains such as quinoa and kiwicha which have been recognized as having extremely high nutritious value and can now be found in health food stores in many Western countries. The Amazon basin, which accounts for 60% of Peru's size, is sparsely

populated. The residents are often also mestizos although it is not difficult to spot purely indigenous people whose physical traits are much more similar to the Guarani people of Paraguay and Brazil than to the rest of the country. Although there is some agriculture many people in the jungle still rely on hunting, fishing and gathering as a large part of food supply. Shamanism is still the most prevalent form of curing in the highlands and jungle and although you can see many modern, medical clinics in the large cities many people still turn to herbal remedies for minor ailments before seeking the advice of a medical doctor. The use of Coca is a prevalent and clear example of people's reliance on herbs.

To find out a bit more we have put together a short list of helpful websites and a couple of books that you may find interesting:

www.peru.info/perueng.asp - The official tourism site of the Peruvian Government

www.lonelyplanet.com/worldwide/peru/ - The Lonely Planet Guide of Peru

www.worldweather.org/029/m029.htm - Peru page of the World Meteorological Organization

www.nationalgeographic.com/inca/ - National Geographic articles, Peruvian mummies

The Incas: The Royal Commentaries of the Inca – Garcilaso de la Vega a half Inca and half Spanish chronicler of the Inca culture, is said to be the most accurate description of the culture.

Death in the Andes – Mario Vargas Llosa, probably Peru's most recognized author, has written a novel that is based on the era of the Shining Path.

The Coca Culture

Distinguished visitors to Peru, including Pope John Paul II and Princess Anne have drunk coca tea (mate de coca) as it is the traditional way of avoiding altitude sickness. Impartial and scientific investigations have shown that regular use of coca is not harmful and no major social problems are known to have resulted from its traditional, and millennia-long, use in the Andes. This contradicts the claims of its ill-effects contained in reports by the United Nations and other official bodies, which seem to be based more on prejudice, ethnocentric bias, and the desire to portray the natural source of cocaine as negatively as possible in order to justify plans for eradicating coca in its homeland. Just so you know, to create one gram of cocaine, about one ton of coca leaves are needed. It is only possible to chew around thirty coca leaves in the mouth at any one time. The stimulating effects of this amount of coca can last for several hours, if chewed constantly. The stimulation is roughly equivalent to the effects of two strong cups of coffee, or one over the counter caffeine tablet. The Mate de Coca is a medicinal tea made from the leaves of the Coca plant (*Erythroxylum*). This tea has been used for over four thousand years by the people of South America. Coca was and is still used at every stage of the Andean people's lives. Before giving birth, a woman drinks and chews coca to hasten labor and ease the pain. When a child is born, relatives celebrate by chewing the coca leaf together. When a young man wants to marry a girl, he offers coca to her father. And when somebody dies, Mate De Coca is drunk at the wake and a small pile of leaves are placed in the coffin before burial. From ancient times, these rituals were considered sacred, and as such, the coca leaf continues to have a great significance in the culture of the Andean people.

Peruvian Food & Drink

Peru's varied climate allows for the growth of an impressive variety of fruits and vegetables, some native to the area and some having been brought over by the waves of immigrants that have settled here. Although the term "super-food" is hard to define there are many Peruvian plants that are considered super foods, including cacao, aguaymanto (similar to a goose-berry), maca

and amaranth in addition to a host of other with medicinal properties such as coca, cat's claw, sacha inchi (a vegan source of omega 3, 6 & 9) and purple corn.

This wealth of ingredients has led to a wide array of culinary specialities that are usually pretty good for you as well as being delicious but you should watch out as food allergies are not very common in Peru and it would be extremely rare to see an allergy alert. Always ask, to be on the safe side.

Here are a few of the dishes that we recommend trying while in Peru.

Ceviche – Consisting of fish or a mix of fish and seafood, this dish is prepared by using lime juice to cure. To the mixture of lime juice is added ginger, celery, salt, pepper and hot peppers to give this dish its typical flavour. Once cured, it is served with julienned onion, slices of sweet potato and white corn.

Lomo Saltado – An example of the fusion of cultures that is present in many of Peru's dishes, this is stir-fried beef, tomatoes, red peppers and french fries (chips) in a soy based sauce served with rice. For the meat lovers, this is a great option.

Seco – This meat stew can be made with goat, beef or chicken with potatoes, carrots and peas in a coriander based sauce and served with rice.

Quinotto – Traditionally from the Andes and used in soups, quinoa is now being used in a host of creative ways, one of them being Quinotto. This is the Peruvian version of a risotto and is a great alternative for the vegetarians out there.

Ají de Gallina – This is a creamy chicken stew with a yellow pepper (slightly spicy) based sauce. It is traditionally served over slices of boiled potato with a quarter of a hard-boiled egg and an olive. **This dish always contains peanuts.**

Chifa – This refers to the Peruvian version of "Chinese" food. There are easily recognizable staples such as fried rice but also Lemon Chicken that usually included Inka Cola as one of the ingredients.

Cuy – This is the Quechua name for guinea pig which are livestock and not pets in Peru. Cuy is served in a variety of ways, one of the best being fried. The meat is dark and not unlike the texture and fattiness of duck. Most people are pleasantly surprised if they can get past the look but a word of warning, if you are going to try cuy in stew don't be surprised if you get a whole head, teeth and all in your portion!!

Alpaca – Being a source of wool, alpaca is not often eaten by Peruvians but is more often kept for their fleece. It is however a richly flavoured, very lean and cholesterol red meat that can be prepared in the same way as beef and often is in Peru's more upbeat restaurants. It is definitely worth a try.

For vegetarians – Much of Peru's cuisine does include meat however there are many dishes with legumes (lentils, chickpeas and lupines), quinoa, pastas and delicious vegetables to keep you happy. If you don't see anything on the menu you can ask the waiter if they can prepare a vegetarian version of another dish or maybe create something just for you.

Not to be outdone by the food, there are a variety of drinks that should also be tried while in Peru.

Pisco Sour – This is Peru's signature drink. Made from pisco, a fortified grape based liquor, lime juice, sugar syrup, egg white and a dab of bitters, this drink is easy to drink but packs a punch and should be drunk with care.

Chicha Morada – This drink is made from boiling purple corn with pineapple peel, cinnamon and cloves. Once ready and cooled sugar, lime juice and sometimes pieces of fruit are added given the drink the appearance of sangria but this is family-friendly and alcohol-free.

Chicha de Jora – Although not for everyone, this fermented corn drink has been used ceremonially for centuries. Its alcohol content is low (2-3%) but its flavour is pungent. Normally served in a caporal which is somewhere close to a pint-sized serving, we do not recommend this to start with. Many chicherias offer small samples and this is usually enough.

Fresh Fruit Juice – With 60% of the country's service area consisting of the Amazon jungle there are some beautiful fruits that grow in Peru. Passionfruit, pineapple, mango and other more exotic fruits are among some of the best to try in juice.

Inka Cola – This bright yellow soft drink tastes to many like cream soda and to others like bubble gum. It is incredibly sweet and not for everyone although some people do fall in love with it.

Mojitos – This is not a Peruvian drink but there is lovely mint that grows here making for some great mojitos. If you like this drink, we recommend giving the Peruvian mojito a try.

Lima

Often overlooked by travelers heading to the wonders of the Andes or Amazon, sprawling, cosmopolitan Lima deserves a closer look. Founded in 1535 by the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro, for 300 years Lima served as the epicentre of a huge colonial empire that stretched from present-day Panama to Tierra del Fuego. Lima's place as a centre of power and wealth shows in its colonial architecture, from spacious plazas and intricate churches to the ornate Governor's Palace and adjacent cathedral, where Pizarro's remains are interred.

Home to fully one-third of Peru's population of 30 million, Lima has a little something for everyone. Here, the leisure class shops in air-conditioned comfort in affluent Miraflores; bohemian artists drink pisco sours in funky bars in Barranco; indigenous women hawk traditional weaving in bustling markets; and, on the outskirts, a huge underclass ekes out a living in the ever-expanding makeshift barrios that ring the city. The city is blessed with the country's best museums, a cultural and arts scene to rival any in Latin America, and a sophisticated and varied culinary scene that may surprise you.

Over it all, a fog (the famous garúa) blankets the city for half the year with a dense mist, a reminder that you are never far from the Pacific Ocean—you can even surf with a view of the city!

Cusco

UNESCO World Heritage Cusco is one of the world's great traveler centres. South America's oldest continuously inhabited city and historical capital of the Inca Empire, Cusco (in Quechua, Qosqo meaning —umbilicus of the world||) has served as both literal and spiritual crossroads for centuries. It is in Cusco that the famous Incan roads from each quadrant of the empire converged, such that the sacred city was not only a centre for culture and trade, but literally the centre—or navel—of the Inca cosmos.

However, if you visit expecting some museum-piece historical restoration or Dinsey-esque re-creation, guess again—Cusco is alive and as vibrant as ever. Today, Cusco's mix of travelers has expanded to include the globetrotters of today, who mingle with the indigenous Quechua and mestizos from around the country who still come here to do business. Still a centre of Andean culture, in Cusco the present and past coexist: colonial mansions with exposed Incan foundations have been converted to hotels and funky bars, and backpackers, businessmen and llama herdsman all rub shoulders.

Sitting at a breathless 3300m, surrounded by Andean peaks and ringed by Incan sites of spiritual importance, Cusco is a visually dramatic city. The city is dotted with churches and plazas and crisscrossed by cobblestone streets, and from bustling markets and colorful festivals to thriving nightclubs, the city is always buzzing with energy.

Sacred Valley

Considered sacred for centuries, the wide, fertile Urubamba River valley lies at the very heart of the Incan Empire. Starting high in the Andes near Puno and stretching as far as the jungles of the Amazon, the Urubamba (also known as the Vilcanota or Wilcamayu – literally —sacred river||) flows past some of the most important sites in the Inca world. One verdant stretch between two of the most significant of these—the ancient towns of Pisac and Ollantaytambo, perched high above their modern-day equivalents—became known as the Sacred Valley.

In its heyday the valley's temperate climate and fertile soil made it some of the most productive in the Incan world. Cusco's —bread basket,|| the valley was so valuable it was considered personal property of the Inca (emperor) himself, and thus sacred land. Even today, the wide floodplain remains blanketed with green fields flanked by terraces of maize, potatoes and quinoa. Only a short drive from Cusco, the Sacred Valley is as dramatic as it is beautiful. White-capped Andean peaks tower over the deep valley, cut by ancient footpaths and peppered with Inca-era ruins. Farther downriver, the valley snakes around perhaps the most famous of all pre-Columbian ruins: Machu Picchu.

About Machu Picchu

Located precariously on the spine of an amazingly beautiful, verdant mountain 120 km from the ancient imperial capital of Cusco, Peru and 2400m.s.l. (8,000ft) sits Machu Picchu, perhaps Peru's most legendary Inca landmark. Often called "the forgotten city", Machu Picchu is one of the last remnants of the great Inca empire. For years, this archaeological site was forgotten by the rest of Peru, until Hiram Bingham rediscovered it in 1911. Seen by some as an ancient sanctuary buried deep

within the wilderness of Peru, thousands of tourists travel to these ancient ruins every year. The ancients in the city of Machu Picchu were of the Quechua culture and spoke a language of the same name, which was outlawed by the Spanish conquistadors when they conquered Peru in 1532. Some time before the Spanish conquest, the city was deserted, probably due to plagues that were sweeping the region at the time (brought by the Spanish attackers). Perhaps the most attractive feature of Machu Picchu is the ancient architectural ruins. Comprising of over 140 structures, this city is an architectural masterpiece. The Incas did not use traditional mortar and stones to build their walls- they used a process called ashlar. Ashlar is a process by which stones are simply laid next to each other, to compose a wall. This process is often so precise that a knife blade cannot be forced in between two stones. In addition, the ancient Incas also created a built-in irrigation system. This advanced system of irrigation allowed the Incan citizens to support their agriculture needs. We do not know how the ancient civilization managed to build this magnificent city using basic architecture technology, since the Incas did not have a written language at that point in time. Unfortunately, this is left as a mystery in the history books of today.

Inca Trail

One of the great accomplishments of the Inca civilization was its famed road system. Crucial to ruling an extensive and diverse empire, at its height the Inca road system covered over 20 000 km and stretched from Ecuador to Chile.

Today, the best-known of all Inca roads is a section commonly known as —the|| Inca Trail; in fact, this was merely the final, dramatic stretch of the Inca road leading to the famed ruins of Machu Picchu. Traditionally covered over four days, the modern Inca Trail is a challenging trek, starting from the Sacred Valley floor, crossing steep mountain passes and passing through cool cloud forest. Trekkers pass from spectacular vistas to thick jungle, and nights are spent camping along the trail, assisted by porters who make the strenuous trip a well-fed and well-rested one, if not an easy one.

A rite of passage for many visitors to Peru, the Inca Trail culminates in an early morning arrival at the aptly-named Sun Gate, high above Machu Picchu—an experience that makes the days of sweat and sore legs easy to forget.

If your tour includes the Inca Trail and for any reason you are not interested in hiking the Inca Trail please advise us at the time of booking as accommodation in Cuzco will need to be arranged. Additional fees for this accommodation will be determined at the time of advising. You will spend two nights in Cusco and will then spend one evening in Aguas Calientes (recently renamed Machu Picchu Pueblo) before joining the group in Machu Picchu for your guided tour.

The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu Regulations

As of March 2004, no more than 500 people (including support staff such as cooks and porters) per day are allowed on the Inca Trail and this number is strictly adhered to.

In an effort to preserve and protect the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, the Peruvian governing bodies have taken drastic measures to limit the amount of people hiking the Trail. The regulation currently states that no more than 500 people per day are allowed to start the Inca Trail trek. This number includes all support staff (ie. porters, cooks and guides) and is very tightly controlled. Once this limit of 500 people is reached, the Trail is effectively closed off for the day and no further bookings can be made. Reservations are not held on the Trail and all permits to trek must be bought as far as possible in advance with complete and correct passport information, to which no modifications can be made. Any attempts at modifications may result in the loss of

the permit and any money paid. However, you do not need to worry about it; as Etnikas Healing and Travel will take care of everything.

The rules and regulations controlling the Inca Trail and Machu Picchu are continually changing and it is important to be aware of the issues detailed in this document before embarking on your adventure to Peru.

Manú

Covering 3 million hectares, the remote Manú Biosphere Reserve is one of the largest conservation areas in the world. The most pristine area of the Peruvian Amazon, Manú claims the highest bird, mammal, and plant diversity of any park on Earth; over 1000 species of birds alone call the reserve home, including 32 parrot species—10% of the world's total.

The key to Manú's biodiversity is its wide range of habitats: the park encompasses almost the entire Manú River watershed, from the high-altitude grasslands of the Andean highlands around its headwaters (4200m), through some of the world's last remaining cloud forest, eventually dropping to the lowland rainforests of the Amazon basin, only 150m above sea level. Within the reserve, over 200 species of mammal, 90 species of frog, 1200 butterflies and 10,000 species of higher plants are protected...not to mention 13 kinds of monkey!

Peru's largest park, Manú has been most effectively protected by its inaccessibility; in 1987 it was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in recognition of its stunning biodiversity and importance as a refuge for rare species, such as giant otter, jaguar, tapir and giant armadillo.

A few days' visit to Manú is a life-altering experience, a trip back in time to a wilder, more primal world. Hike along the forest floor, explore tributaries of the river by boat for a glimpse of life at the water's edge, get a bird's-eye view from canopy platforms and visit huge clay licks where parrots and other animals come in search of salt. And of course, always keep your eyes peeled for the elusive jaguar, which still inhabit the park.

Puno and Lake Titicaca

The unforgettably-named Lake Titicaca and the lakeside town of Puno offer a glimpse into a very different side of Peru. The largest lake in South America and highest navigable lake in the world (3812 m above sea level), Lake Titicaca has always played a prominent role in Andean history, and ancient sites in the area date back to pre-Inca times. According to mythology, it was from the lake that the creator god Viracocha rose up to craft the cosmos, including the first humans.

The people who inhabit Titicaca's shores and islands have developed distinct cultures over millennia; the most famous of these is the Uros people, who live on man-made 'islands' which are in fact giant rafts made of floating reeds. The larger islands of Amantaní and Taquile have also developed their own unique cultures, customs and dress, and it's worth taking time to visit both distinct islands.

The city of Puno is the centre of business and trade for the Peruvian side of the lake (which is shared with Bolivia), but is perhaps best known locally for its festivals and dances, which number over a hundred! Puno loves to throw a party, and live music is a regular feature of the city's processions and nightlife. Just be sure to keep dancing—because of the high altitude, Puno can get chilly at night.

What to pack

The key to staying comfortable while on an active trip is layering. To obtain maximum comfort with minimum weight, you need versatile layers that mix and match to create the right amount of insulation, ventilation and weather protection. This gear list has been created to help you choose your clothing and gear for this trip. Try to bring only what is necessary.

All items on this list are optional and suggestions only. You must determine your own needs, but these have been suggested by those familiar with the demands of the tour and the local services and environment.

You must determine what you are able & willing to carry daily while travelling throughout and while hiking if you will be doing a trek.

For treks:

We recommend you pack carefully and lightly so you may enjoy the tour and the experience to its fullest!

During any treks you will be able to store unnecessary gear and luggage at the hotel in the start city in your main bag. While trekking, porters or mules will carry between 5kg and 6kg including your sleeping bag, in a duffel bag provided to you by Travel and Healing. The remaining gear will be carried by you in your daypack. Pack wisely; you won't be able to get anything from the porters during the day. Your guide will give you a briefing and will help you with packing questions the night before we leave for the Sacred Valley.

If doing a homestay:

During your home-stay, you will spend a night with a local Quechua family. This is a great opportunity to bring school supplies, colouring books, crayons or even sun-block for the children of the home-stay family.

There will be an opportunity to buy things at a local market if desired. Talk to your guide for suggestions. Something from home makes it even more special. Bring a photo of your family, your house, your pet, you will be surprised at how interested your host family is.

Travel / Tour Documents

- Passport + photocopy of passport (leave in hotel safe when available)
 - Visa if necessary
 - Airplane tickets & Travel Itinerary
 - USD Cash – exchange for local currency at the airport, in banks or as recommended by your local rep.
 - Credit cards & emergency contact info if lost/stolen
 - Emergency Contact info – friends / family back home
 - Health / medical / insurance coverage, policy and contact information for emergency services & care
 - Spanish dictionary / phrase book
 - Journal / notebook / pen / highlighter / calculator
 - Tour / travel / map info – any personal documents
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It is a good idea to scan your important documents before you leave home and to send it to your own email. This way you always have access to a copy in the event that the original gets lost or stolen.

Clothing – the number of items will depend on the length of your stay but we have to put together this list to give you an idea of what you will need.

- Be ready for dramatic temperature change. Pack for cold weather (close to 0 °C) and warm weather in sun (23-25 °C), and rain.
- Plan to dress in layers – by climbing from early morning thru to mid / late day, from low to high altitude you'll experience low to high temps fluctuating throughout the day
- Local laundry services are available
- Comfortable Jeans/pants
- Shorts
- T-shirts
- Long sleeved shirts (a quick-dry shirt with a collar is a nice alternative for hiking and dining)
- Windbreaker, sweater, fleece, Goretex or other waterproof jacket
- Comfortable walking / running shoes, sandals
- Long underwear
- Pyjamas
- Socks
- Under garments, quick dry clothes
- Gloves and scarf (woollen gloves and scarves can be purchased locally if desired)
- Hat – one for sun protection and one for warmth (local women will be selling wool Peruvian hats throughout the trip)
- Sunglasses – sun protection
- Bathing suit if visiting areas with thermal baths

Gear / Luggage for treks

- Light Hiking boots or shoes – above ankle, waterproof, already broken-in and comfortable, not new boots
- Thin Lining sock (Polypropylene or Capilene to put under your hiking sock) to avoid blisters
- Mole skin or similar product in the event of blisters
- Rain gear, rain poncho (ponchos can be purchased locally)
- Day pack – 20-25l for carry-on, daily touring & for the Climb
- Walking stick with rubber tip– can be rented on site
- Zip-off travel pants or other comfortable pants for hiking – 2 pairs
- Zip lock bags – to waterproof miscellaneous items
- 2-3 large plastic bags - to waterproof/store/carry items miscellaneous
- Camelback or refillable water bottle – only use bottled water to replenish
- Flashlight or headlamp and spare batteries/bulb
- Sleeping bag – can be rented locally (if renting it is recommended to bring a liner)

- Foam or inflatable mattress (can be rented locally)

Optional but recommended rentals (Your local representative will assist you with the rental process.)

- Sleeping bag (\$4US per day)
- Poles (\$5 USD each pole per trek)
- Sleeping Mat (\$4US per day)
- Rain Poncho (can be purchased locally for \$3 USD)

Toiletries

- Personal toiletries – travel size
- Toilet paper – often unavailable in local facilities
- Sun block SPF 40 and sun protection lip balm SPF 20 – a must, the sun is extremely strong
- Wet wipes (very handy as there are no showers on the Inca Trail) and hand sanitizer
- Tenser bands / support products / support brace (if required)
- First aid kit / bandages
- Contact lens & solution / extra pair eyeglasses (if required)
- Female products

Medicines

- Travel vaccinations as indicated by a travel doctor
- Medication for motion sickness – Gravol
- Altitude medication – If desired
- Digestion / diarrhoea – Imodium
- Pain killers
- Personal prescriptions – labelled, for carry on
- Personal first-aid kit including band aid and blister kit

Camera/Ancillary devices (Optional)

- Camera / Video
- Extra batteries for cameras/devices (Please bring rechargeable batteries if possible. Batteries are very toxic and there are no proper facilities here for their disposal.)
- Camera lens filter – polarized – recommended for Machu Picchu / altitudes
- Memory Stick / memory card / Disk (many camera stores can burn your photos onto a CD for you for less than \$10)
- Travel convertor / adaptor – 220v
- Travel / Alarm clock
- Cell phone / Laptop (optional – there are computer in or near each hotel)

- Associated recharging chords
- Binoculars, especially for the jungle

Other

- Insect repellent and 'sting relief'
- Mini-Sewing kit
- Luggage tags & Locks
- Passport and Money pouch
- Sterilizing tablets (iodine/chlorine-based) just in case.
- Refillable water bottle (i.e. Nalgene or SIGG)

Time Zone

Lima Peru falls under PET; Peru Time which is the same as the Eastern Standard Time (New York / Toronto), but during having the daylight saving time (GMT -4). Since Peru does not have daylight saving time, during our trip the time difference will still be five hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT -5) and the Eastern Time Zone will be (GMT -4).

Staying in Touch

While on the trip, you will have access to the internet and pay phones. Internet cafes can be easily located in all of the cities visited. They are quite inexpensive often costing less than \$1.50 per hour. For making long-distance phone calls you should purchase an —Hola Peru|| card or set up a Skype account before leaving. Many internet cafes have Skype access and you can call people who do not have Skype accounts for a minimum fee. You can also use the indicated phone booths in local stores. You simply have to pay the cashier once you are done. You can easily talk for 5 minutes for 15 Soles.

We hope this detailed overview helps you with your trip planning!

In case you have any inquiries or open questions, please contact us directly (info@travelandhealing.com).

See you in Peru!

Your TravelandHealing Team

