



Peru

Peru

Capital

Lima

National Symbols

The Flag



The Peruvian flag was changed several times. Before 1950, it looked like the current national flag and was used as both the civil and state flag, when General Manuel Odria removed the coat of arms from the national flag and created the state and war flags. The national or civil flag is used by citizens.

National Anthem

After Peru declared its independence, General Jose de San Martin began a public contest to select the National March, which was published on August 7th, 1821, in the Gaceta Ministerial (the Ministerial Gazette). The contest called upon professors of poetry, composers, and general public. The author of the selected composition would be compensated with the government's and the public's gratitude.

Seven compositions entered the contest.

They were reviewed and played. When hearing the last composition from master Jose Bernardo Alcedo, General Jose de San Martin stood up and exclaimed, "Without a doubt, this is the National Anthem of Peru". The following day, a signed decree confirmed this opinion expressed with great enthusiasm. The anthem was first performed publicly on the night of September 23rd, 1821, in the Theater of Lima, in the presence of San Martin and the supporters of the independence. The beautiful voice of lady Rosa Merino, was the first to entone the anthem, from the original verses of the poet Don Jose de la Torre Ugarte from Ica. Upon hearing the music and the lyrics of the National Anthem for the first time, the audience responded with a standing ovation.

The last attempt to change the anthem was during the administration of General Juan Velasco Alvarado who attempted to change the second and third stanzas. In similar form to previous attempts, it was imposed during official ceremonies and in schools and the last stanza was sung instead of the first. But this attempt also had no success and the original anthem was once again sung.

The First President

Jose de San Martin

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Government

Peru is a presidential representative democratic republic with a multi-party system. Under the current constitution, the President is the head of state and government who is elected for five years and may not immediately be re-elected. The President designates the Prime Minister and, with his advice, the rest of the Council of Ministers. There is a unicameral Congress with 120 members, also elected for a five-year period. Bills, which may be proposed by either the executive or the legislative branch, become law if approved by Congress and promulgated by the President. The judiciary is legally independent from the executive and legislative branches.

The Constitution

The Constitution of Peru is the supreme law of the nation.

1979 Constitution

The 1979 Constitution was promulgated on July 12th, 1979 by a Constituent Assembly elected in June 1978 following 10 years of military rule and replaced the suspended 1933 Constitution. It became effective in 1980 with the re-election of deposed President Fernando Belaúnde Terry. It limited the president to a single five-year term and established a bicameral legislature consisting of a 60-member Senate (upper house) and a 180-member Chamber of Deputies (lower house). It also eliminated the literacy requirement for voting and extended suffrage to all adults 18 or older.

The Current Constitution

The current constitution, enacted on December 31st, 1993, is Peru's fifth in the 20th century and replaced the 1979 Constitution. The Constitution was drafted by the Democratic Constitutional Congress that was convened by President Alberto Fujimori during the Peruvian Constitutional Crisis of 1992 that followed his 1992 dissolution of Congress and was promulgated on December 29th, 1993.

The current Constitution of Peru differs from the 1979 Constitution by giving greater power to the president. For example, it allowed his immediate reelection, and not only affirmed the president's power to veto found in the 1979 Constitution, but also gave him the power to use a line item veto, and mandated that all tax laws receive prior approval by the Ministry of Economics and Finance. The new constitution reduced the bicameral 240-member congress to a unicameral 120 Congress of the Republic. While the Constitution of 1979 allowed the president to dissolve congress after congress censured cabinet members three times, the current constitution allows the president to do so after only two censures. The Constitution allows the president to decree laws as long as he first informs Congress of his intent to do so. If the president dissolves congress, the Constitution gives him the power to simply rule by decree.

The Supreme Court of Justice

The Supreme Court of Justice is the highest judicial court in Peru. Its jurisdiction extends over the entire territory of the nation. It is headquartered in the Palace of Justice in the national capital of Lima.

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The supreme court is composed of three Supreme Sectors. The Civil Sector presides over all topics related to Civil rights and Commercial law. The Criminal Sector presides over all topics relating to Criminal law. The Constitutional and Social Sector Presides over all topics relating to Constitutional rights and Labor laws.

Integrated into the Supreme Court are the Supreme Speakers and Supreme Provisionary Speakers, who substitute the Supreme Speakers in case of absence. Each Supreme Sector has five Supreme Speakers who elect a president among themselves. The President of the Supreme Court and the Chief Speaker of the Office of Control of the Magistrature are not integrated into any Supreme Sector. Under the Peruvian Government, the Constitution guarantees the right to double instance, which the Supreme Court recognizes. In the event that this right fails, it is appealed in the processes interposed before the Superior Sectors, or it is brought before the Supreme Court.

Peruvian Political Parties

Peru has a multi-party system with several political parties competing in legislative elections according to a Party-list with a proportional representation system. As a consequence it is rare for any single political organization to obtain an absolute majority in the Congress of Peru. Because of this, parties often work with each other to form coalition governments. Parties participating in the 2006 elections are: Union por el Peru, Partido Nacionalista Peruano, Partido Aprista Peruano, Unidad Nacional, Partido Popular Cristiano, Solidaridad Nacional, Renovacion Nacional, Alianza por el Futuro, Cambio 90, Nueva Mayoria, Accion Popular, Somos

Peru, Coordinadora Nacional de Independientes, Peru Posible, Restauracion Nacional, Alianza por el Progreso, Frente Independiente Moralizador (FIM), Fuerza Democratica, Justicia Nacional, Partido Socialista, Movimiento Nueva Izquierda, Avanza Pais, Partido por la Democracia Social, Partido Movimiento Humanista Peruano, Frente Popular Agricola FIA del Peru (FREPAP), Renacimiento Andino, Con Fuerza Peru, Peru Ahora, Reconstrucion Democratica, Proyecto Pais, Resurgimiento Peruano, Y Se Llama Peru, Progresemos Peru.

Social Recognition

Historic Figures



Ramon Castilla
31 August 1797
25 May 1867

He was President of Peru four times. He led the country when the economy boomed due to the exploitation of guano deposits. Castilla's government abolished slavery and modernized the state.



Grand Admiral
Miguel Grau Seminario
July 27, 1834
October 8, 1879

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He was a renowned Peruvian naval officer and hero of the Naval Battle of Angamos during the War of the Pacific (1879–1884). He was known as the "Knight of the Seas" or "Gentleman of the Seas" ("El Caballero de los Mares") for his very polite and honorable behavior and was held in high esteem by both colleagues and opponents.

Miguel Grau also became director of Peru's Naval Academy. When the war against Chile began on April 5th, 1879, Miguel Grau held the rank of Captain in the Peruvian Navy. Captain Grau played an important role in the sea campaign by interdicting Chilean lines of communication and supply, damaging, capturing or destroying several enemy vessels, and bombarding port installations. Commanded by Captain Grau, the ship Huáscar became famous for moving stealthily, striking by surprise, and then disappearing. These actions put off a Chilean invasion by sea for six months and resulted in his promotion to the rank of Rear Admiral.

During the year 2000, Miguel Grau was recognized as the "Peruvian of the Millennium" by popular vote.

Social Figures



Mario Vargas Llosa

To talk about just one famous Peruvian would be difficult. In the modern era, the

work of an erudite Amerindian, Julio Tello (1880–1947), became internationally known in archaeological circles. Jorge Chávez (1887–1910) made the first solo flight across the Alps in 1910. Santos Chocano (1875–1934), Cesar Vallejo (1895–1938), and Jose Maria Eguren (1882–1942) are considered Peru's finest modern poets. The novelist Mario Vargas Llosa (1936) was the first Latin American president of PEN, an international writers' organization. Peru's best-known contemporary painter is Fernando de Szyszlo (1925).

Holidays

Alasitas

Popular celebrations are the product of every town's traditions and legends. These celebrations gather music, dances, meals and typical drinks. In addition to the religious celebrations like Christmas, Corpus Christi or Holy Week, there are others that express the syncretism of the indigenous beliefs with the Christians'. An example of this kind of celebration is the "Alasitas" (an Aymara word that, according to some, means "buy me") which combines a crafts and miniatures fair with dances, meals and, a mass.

Inti Raymi



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The "Inti Raymi" or "Festival of the Sun" was a religious ceremony of the Inca Empire in honor of the god Inti. It also marked the winter solstice and a new year in the Andes of the Southern Hemisphere. During the Inca Empire, the Inti Raymi was the most important of four ceremonies celebrated in Cusco. The ceremony also indicated the mythical origin of the Incas, lasting nine days of colorful dances and processions, as well as animal sacrifices to ensure a good cropping season.

The last Inti Raymi with the Inca Emperor's presence was carried out in 1535, after which the Spanish conquest and the Catholic Church suppressed it. Some natives participated in similar ceremonies in the years after, but it was completely prohibited in 1572 by the Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, who claimed it was a pagan ceremony opposed to the Catholic faith.

Since 1944, a theatrical representation of the Inti Raymi has been taking place at Sacsayhuamán (two km. from Cusco) on June 24th of each year, attracting thousands of tourists and local visitors.

Tourist Sites

Machu Picchu



Machu Picchu was constructed around 1450, at the height of the Inca empire, and

was abandoned less than 100 years later, as the empire collapsed under Spanish conquest.

Although it is located only about 50 miles from Cusco, the Inca capital, it was never found nor destroyed by the Spanish, as were many other Inca sites. Over the centuries, the surrounding jungle grew to enshroud the site, and few knew of its existence. In 1911, Yale historian and explorer Hiram Bingham brought the "lost" city to the world's attention. Bingham and others hypothesized that this site was the spiritual center of the "virgins of the sun," while curators of a recent exhibit have speculated that Machu Picchu was a royal retreat. One theory maintains that Machu Picchu was a settlement built up to control the economy of the conquered regions and that it may have been built with the purpose of protecting the most select of the Incan aristocracy in the event of an attack.

It is thought that the site was chosen for its unique location and geological features. In 1913, the site received significant publicity after the National Geographic Society devoted their entire April issue to Machu Picchu. On July 7th, 2007, Machu Picchu was voted as one of New Open World Corporation's New Seven Wonders of the World.