

Title:

Lima - The Forgotten Peru Holiday Destination

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652

Summary:

Ideas for how to best spend time in Lima during your Peru holidays. Where to go, what to see, and why you shouldn't ignore the attractions of Peru's capital city.

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Article Body:

When planning a holiday in Peru, many people stress that they are keen to "get out of Lima as quickly as possible" but while historically Lima has had a bad press, and while it may not be the most beautiful or the most easy city in Peru, you certainly aren't short of things to see and do and the place has a real buzz about it. Indeed, for many people, Lima ends up being a real highlight of their Peru holiday.

Lima was founded in 1535 by Francisco Pizarro himself and became known as the "City of Kings". From the early colonial period until the colonies won their independence, Lima was the capital of Spanish South America. The city was famous for its wealth and beauty and it rivalled most European cities for its cultural life. Unfortunately, the city was destroyed in a horrendous earthquake in 1746, with only 20 of the original 3,000 houses left standing. Although the city was entirely rebuilt, the new buildings were often more functional than before and what was undoubtedly one of the world's great cities has almost entirely disappeared.

Today, Lima is a big, bustling city of about 8 million people and is a city of contrasts. It has everything from 17th century colonial architecture to glass-faced skyscrapers, tremendous wealth and obvious poverty. A common refrain is: "Peru is Lima, Lima is Peru" and it's certainly true that you can find everything here: it's the perfect place to start your Peru holiday.

In the centre (or 'Old Lima' as it is often known) you can find some of the best colonial and neo-colonial architecture Peru has to offer. Hundreds of stunning colonial buildings line streets bustling with every type of person and business.

As well some superb churches, museums and other public buildings, the busy streets lead to some tranquil squares where you can sit down and enjoy an Inka-Cola while you reflect on your holiday in Peru so far!

Although the centre has the best of the architecture, the cosmopolitan suburb of Miraflores is a great place to stroll around. There's usually plenty going on in Parque Kennedy but if you fancy a slightly longer stroll then why not take a walk down to the ocean? It's about a twenty minute walk from the centre of Miraflores, down Avenida Larco to the Larcomar shopping centre, which is built into the sheer cliffs that separate Lima from the sea. If you walk north (turn right at Larcomar) along the coast for quarter of an hour, you will arrive at the Parque del Amor, where young Limeños traditionally come to court.

Barranco has been Lima's seaside resort since the 1600s and at night it's like a slice of Brighton transported to the Pacific! By day, however, it's a trendy, bohemian kind of place where many of Lima's artists live and where you can check out the coastal scenery from El Puente de los Suspiros (the Bridge of Sighs). Barranco is also Lima's premier nighttime destination so if you fancy unwinding with a few Cuzqueñas then this is the perfect place to start or end your holiday in Peru!

About 31km from Lima, Pachacámac is a huge temple/palace area originally devoted to the god of the same name. The site includes a partially-restored Temple of the Sun originally dating to 1350. The complex is huge and is a really valuable addition to your Peru holiday itinerary. It's handiness for Lima means that you can squeeze it into any free time you have in the capital waiting around for flights.

All in all, Lima is too easily dismissed when considering where to spend time during your Peru holidays. It has something for everyone and there are some great sights in the surrounding areas as well. Above all, don't forget that Lima never stands still, and those Peru holiday guidebooks from 5 years ago just might be behind the times...