

Directory

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ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations in Peru range from basic crash pads and cozy Spanish-style B&Bs to luxury lodges that offer bath butlers and turn-down service. In touristy areas, you'll find plenty of accommodations, and in every imaginable guise; choices in small villages are usually limited. In well-trodden destinations, hotel staff will generally speak some English (in addition to other languages), but in rural areas, you'll need a grasp of Spanish basics. Many places will store your luggage for free if you have a late bus or flight to catch after

checkout; some spots may charge for storage of more than one day. When storing bags, it is always a good idea to lock them and get a receipt.

Hotels are the most standard type of accommodations and will normally include private hot showers, telephone, TV and other facilities, such as a café or restaurant. Smaller than a hotel, an *hostal* is like a guesthouse, offering private rooms with en suite bathrooms and fairly reliable hot water. In some cases, these will include a very simple continental breakfast. Better *hostales* offer hot breakfasts and many of the same services as small hotels, while cheaper ones may have shared bathrooms. *Hospedajes* and *albergues* are generally small, family-owned inns. Expect basic rooms, including dormitory-style accommodations, and, in some cases, a shared kitchen. In remote settings, don't count on *hospedajes* and *albergues* to have hot showers, private bathrooms or too many other amenities. Popular traveler destinations such as Cuzco and Lima are cluttered with modern hostels offering everything from communal lounges to free wi-fi. Street noise can be an issue in hotels at all budget levels, so choose your room accordingly.

Within most types of accommodations, *habitación simple* refers to a single room, *habitación doble* to a double room with two twin beds, and *habitación matrimonial* to a double room with a double or queen-sized bed. If you're traveling as a couple, be sure to ask for the latter, or you'll find yourself sleeping in separate beds. Shared rooms or dormitory-style lodging is generally referred to as *un habitación compartida*. Prices in these might be listed *por cama* (by bed).

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider low-down on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

PRACTICALITIES

- **Electricity:** Electrical current is 220V, 60Hz AC. Standard outlets accept round prongs, but many places will have dual-voltage outlets which take flat prongs. Even so, you may need an adapter with a built-in surge protector.
- **Magazines:** The most well-known political and cultural weekly is *Caretas* (www.caretas.com.pe), while *Etiqueta Negra* (etiquetanegra.com.pe) focuses exclusively on culture. For alternative travel journalism in Spanish and English, pick up the monthly *Rumbos* (www.rumbosdelperu.com).
- **Newspapers:** The government-leaning daily *El Comercio* (www.elcomerciope.com.pe) is dry, but it's the leading daily. For opposing viewpoints, see the slightly left-of-center *La República* (www.larepublica.com.pe). A number of small, tabloid papers – known colloquially as *diarios chicha* – report on sensational crime stories and celebrity capers. In English, look for the long-running *Peruvian Times* (www.peruviantimes.com).
- **TV:** Cable and satellite TV are widely available for a fix of CNN or even Japanese news. Local stations have a mix of news, variety shows, talk shows and *telenovelas*, Spanish-language soap operas. Ask if your hotel has cable or you'll be watching the latter.
- **Video:** Buy or watch videos on the NTSC system (compatible with North America).
- **Websites:** Two helpful online resources in English are expatperu.com and www.theperuguide.com.
- **Weights & Measures:** Peruvians use the metric system except for gas (petrol), which is measured in US gallons.

Homestays are sometimes offered to people taking Spanish courses, but are an infrequent option. Lima, Cuzco and the area around Lake Titicaca tend to be the places where you are most likely to find these.

There aren't many camping grounds, except around trekking and river-running sites.

There are many more places to stay than we're able to list in this book. We've focused on including the best and most convenient spots. If you try any new spots, be sure to let us know how it goes!

Rates

Costs for accommodations vary greatly in Peru, depending on the season and the region. Rates in this book are generally for the high season, but note that prices can often fluctuate from one year to the next.

Cuzco is the most expensive town for hotels, despite being stuffed full of them. During the high season (June to August) demand is very high; the busiest times are Inti Raymi, Semana Santa and Fiestas Patrias (see p517), when advance reservations are a must.

Other cities that are pricier than average include Lima, Iquitos, Huaraz and Trujillo. In Lima, prices generally remain steady throughout the year, although many midrange and

top-end places will feature last-minute specials online. In other cities, at off-peak times, you can get good deals with a little bit of negotiation. Walk-in guests should ask for the 'best price' (*mejor precio*). Paying cash always helps; and be sure to ask for discounts if you're staying somewhere for more than five nights.

Many places will add a surcharge of 7% or more to all credit-card transactions, not including the foreign-currency exchange fee that your own bank may add. When paying cash, either *nuevos soles* (local currency) or US dollars (US\$) are often accepted. Note that the exchange rate featured at hotels may be different from that being offered at local banks or *casas de cambio* (foreign-exchange bureaus); you can count on it being less favorable.

In the remote jungle lodges of the Amazon and in popular beach destinations such as Máncora, all-inclusive resort-style pricing may be the norm.

Apartments

Midrange and high-end travelers can find a limited number of furnished homes and apartments available for short-term rentals (primarily in Lima). Check www.vrbo.com and www.cyberrentals.com for listings.